



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

# UPBEAT

HEART SUPPORT IN WEST SUFFOLK

## Lockdown Newsletter Number 11 April 2021

I'm sure I can't be alone in thinking that Lockdown when the weather is cold and wet and grey is far worse than when the sun is shining. The last couple of weeks have seen frosty starts to the days but by ten o'clock the sun has been out, melting the frost and nurturing all sorts of lovely things in the garden. Last month I celebrated the profusion of daffodils. Sadly, most of the ones we had in the garden have faded but oh! What gorgeousness has taken their place! Tulips! I found a poem by Alice Baker entitled 'In May' and it seems to fit very well my thoughts when looking at the beds and pots I planted last year and which are now repaying my efforts:

***The rain that's fallen soft and slow  
Has set the tulip bed aglow,  
A flaming mass of colour.  
And oh, the yellow and the red  
Against the blackness of the bed—  
The garden seems enchanted.***



I'm sorry to say that these tulips are not in my garden but in the glorious Keukenhoff Gardens in Amsterdam, which I know some of you have visited. However, on a much smaller scale most of us can enjoy these beautiful natural works of art in our own gardens and they are definite harbingers of summer. Maybe you've been able to have tea in the garden as we did at the weekend (or even something a little stronger?). I hope so, and we look forward to more sunny days to come as the month progresses.

I'm sure many of you will be delighted to read the news on Page 6 of our gradual re-opening of Upbeat activities. As I've said, it's only a small beginning but is definitely a step in the right direction and as soon as restrictions are eased further we will be extending the range of activities we can offer. Watch out for up-to-date information in future newsletters.

We are still tentatively hoping to have our Annual Lunch in the autumn and our theatre visit is still scheduled for next year. Sadly, several of the coach companies we used to use to carry us on our trips have gone out of business during Lockdown, but don't worry, Ilva is busy searching out alternatives!

**[www.upbeatheartsupport.org.uk](http://www.upbeatheartsupport.org.uk) Reg Charity No. 1087415**

# Trekking in Nepal

by Jain Robertson

About fifteen years ago returning from a holiday in Canada, sightseeing and walking in the Rockies with my close friend Patricia, we were discussing our next holiday. Maybe Switzerland, Andorra, Austria, the Canaries or my native Scotland? About two weeks later Patricia phoned me, all excited; she had found this fantastic holiday, - "Trekking in Nepal"!

When I was younger, I had been fascinated with Nepal and Mt Everest, never thinking in my wildest dreams I would ever visit, but March 2006 found us in Kathmandu. On our walking tours we were fascinated with the many Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries, palaces, and various other buildings, by busy open market squares, shops spilling onto crowded pavements, and everywhere very noisy with traffic chaos.



Temple, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu

We spent two days in Kathmandu then flew west along the Himalaya Mountains to Pokhara. Nepal's second largest city was peaceful in comparison to Kathmandu, and is the centre for Ghurkha recruitment.

The next five days were spent trekking after travelling by bus along mountain roads for about fifty miles, each day moving on to a different rest house in the Annapurna region. The trekking was hard, with poor paths, endless steps, and the occasional dodgy rope bridge!! We had a porter to carry our holdalls in his basket, which could weigh up to thirty kilos! He made light work of it as we puffed our way up. The countryside with views of the Annapurna range was spectacular. The Nepalese people we found very friendly, especially the children. On our trek we passed a number of schools, all with desks but no visible books or pictures. One was doing regimented drill in the playground to the beat of a drum. All the children wore school uniforms, pale blue shirt with navy skirt or trousers.



Local children who danced and tried (unsuccessfully) to teach us Nepalese.

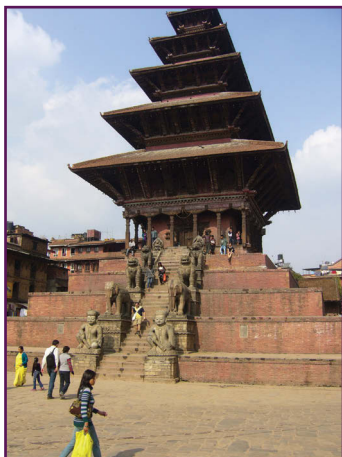
Due to the villages being in remote areas, often there were no roads. Everything had to be carried in by the people in their large baskets and by donkey trains. We saw live chickens in cages, trays of eggs, all the materials for building, and even a solar panel.

During this visit Nepal had a king, but Maoist terrorists were gaining control. Our group was stopped twice and our guide had to pay a small ransom fee. Our temporary captors were quite friendly and asked about the UK and ourselves. Our guide even received a receipt so that if we were stopped again, we would not have to pay twice! I'm not sure how we would have fared if our guide had refused to pay but clearly it was an accepted system.



*Drying maize or millet*

On our second trip, two years later, we had the same sherpa. At the end of the trek we met his wife and three children in Pokhara, visited their school (English), and met their headmaster. For a few years we received updates of the children's progress via e-mail from the eldest son until he completed his education and he moved to Dubai.



*Temple, Durbar Square, Kathmandu  
- before the earthquake.*



*Temple, Durbar Square, Kathmandu -  
after the earthquake.*

Since our first visit, we have returned a total of four times, the last time being in 2016. This was after the large earthquake and it was sad to see the devastation in Kathmandu. Some ancient buildings had been totally destroyed, and others were propped up with wooden battens and bamboo poles. Everyone had suffered.

It is unlikely we will return again as we all get that bit older but we have lots of photos and great memories of a poor, but fascinating country which we were so lucky and privileged to have visited.

*Tain*

# Tackling My 'To Do' List

by David Baldree

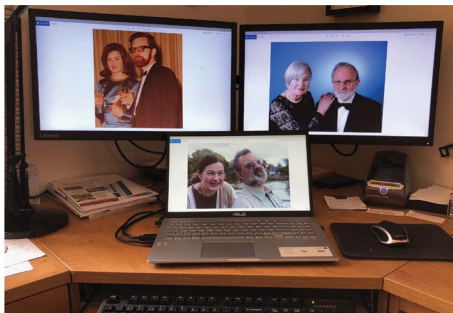
At a recent Upbeat Zoom coffee morning I mentioned that I have found a new lockdown activity. In fact it is taking over my life, much to the annoyance of my wife. We all have 'To Do' lists where items continually get bumped up, leaving some things continually at the bottom. That has been the case with the long-overdue digitisation of all our old photos.

I have had a film, slide, and photo scanner for some time but never got into the full swing of it until the latest lockdown. There are upsides to lockdowns! We have boxes of slides from the 1970s, 35mm film from the 80s and 90s, and then piles of old photos going back to the early 50s, not to mention a lot of family photos going back to WW1!! From early 2000 we have digital photos, a lot as prints but some saved on the PC, so where to start?



There were 698 slides in thirty-one boxes labelled with dates and occasions so, easy bit first, and after a few days I got these onto the PC and started a filing system of folders, sub-folders, and files in chronological order, identifying the events. Next, I found seventy-three packs of 35mm film negatives in no particular order, 2040 photos in all, with boxes of loose prints, but some prints in albums which were marked up. After many more days of neglecting my wife and domestic chores I finally got these negatives onto the PC! I then set about reconciling the PC files with photos in albums which got me going with labelling in chronological order.

I was then left with unidentified film on the PC and a lot of prints which did not have negatives. With some of these I could not recollect where or when they were taken even though I was in them. I must have slept through a lot of years! I needed reference points to start some sort of chronological order so I went to the files where dates were verified by numbers on birthday cards or similar. I have had a beard continuously since 1968. It has changed considerably: from red and very bushy it has changed to shorter versions; then the colour changes to darker, with silver streaks; then it becomes dark only around the mouth, finally progressing to the all-over white that I have now. These served as my reference points using the verified date photos, comparing



with the random ones to get into date batches. By a process of elimination, I was able to identify which Christmas or holiday it had been. This enabled me to use a machine to scan all the remaining prints which were not identified from the films on the PC, then I could date and place them.

The next task was to sort out the 5311 digital photos already on the PC in date order but not labelled. Again, there were some where I could not recognise the place or event but at least I had a date so eventually got them labelled up. So far, I have gone back to 1970 and the rest are just boxes of loose photos so this will be a new challenge.

Resilience of these records with the ever-changing IT world has to be a consideration. My PC has an external back-up hard drive for recovery but I also have a pack of 64GB memory sticks which I am loading up, some as back-up in my fire safe and some to distribute around the family, so all is not in one place if the house burns down or drops into a sink hole. If there is IT innovation phasing out memory sticks, they should be able to be used to transfer to new storage gizmos. You can only go so far with this but no doubt the previous jumble of boxes would have ended up in the skip.

### 100 Club Winners for March

**1st Prize £100 No 166 Mr D Cook**

**2nd Prize £65.50 No 296 Mr I Emmerson**

### 100 Club Winners for April

**1st Prize £100 No 246 Mrs P Ebborn**

**2nd Prize £70 No 0112 Mr B Penson**

Congratulations to our winners!

### New Members

Mr Gareth and Mrs Pamela Davies

We extend a warm welcome to you and look forward to meeting you in person.

### More Smiles from Giles!

- I saw an ad for burial plots, and I thought: "That's the last thing I need."
- Need an ark? I Noah guy.
- My ex-wife still misses me, but her aim is starting to improve.

# WELCOME BACK!

**It's only a beginning, but it's a step in the right direction.**

I am happy to report that we intend to restart Upbeat exercise sessions the first week in June. However, we have to make some changes which may alter as the situation regarding Covid allows.

Please kindly note:

- Zoom exercise sessions will continue to run until further notice. You can join in on Monday mornings at 9.30am and for a coffee room get-together chat session on Fridays at 11am;
- Please note that until the 21st June 2021 only 15 people will be allowed to exercise at one time;
- There will only be 2 exercise sessions per morning, each lasting 45 minutes. Members will be responsible for bringing their own drink as no tea and coffee will be available.
- Before and after each session cleaning will take place. Immediately after class you will be expected to exit the building;
- Members must comply with Upbeat and the venue's rules covering the Covid regulations on social distancing: 1-way system – wearing of masks in premises (no need to wear whilst exercising) - sanitation will be available;
- Tuesday 2nd June exercise classes start in Long Melford with a Nurse on duty for BP checks;
- Wednesday 3rd June restart in Bury plus a Nurse on duty for BP checks;
- Sadly, we are not able to operate on Friday evenings for the time being;
- Unfortunately, we have no choice but to increase the price to £5 per session, including seeing the nurse, but the charge to visit the nurse alone will be £3 (this visit needs to be booked in advance);
- Because of the limited numbers anybody wishing to exercise must book ahead to reserve a place in the class. Please either email or

telephone Sylvia Baker (sylvia.baker16@btinternet.com tel: 01449 774333) to book for Bury sessions and Hilary (hils1947@yahoo.co.uk tel: 01359 232678) for Long Melford;

- Toilets – should anyone need to use the toilets you must clean them after use (cleaning materials will be provided). We would therefore suggest you try to use your own facilities before coming to class.

We hope this is the way forward and will review the situation to open up more classes if required. Hopefully we can look forward to getting back to regular classes and resume our tea and coffee supply when we can all gather together, face-to-face, to enjoy laughter and conversation like we used to do.

I hope you will support this slow move back to full occupancy and look forward to seeing you all again.

*Sylvia*

### *Absent Friends - Loved and Lost*

We are sad to report the death of our member Mr Lewis Woolnough. Lewis was for many years a teacher in Suffolk, including serving as Head Teacher of Combs Middle School in Stowmarket. We extend our sympathy and condolences to Janet and the family.

Sadly, we have also lost Sudbury member Mrs Valerie Jones who had been a member since 2016. Our thoughts are with Valerie's family and friends.



Following the sudden death of Ron Lawes, as reported in last month's newsletter, members and friends have generously donated the marvellous sum of £1,114 in his memory. Many thanks to everyone concerned.

# Patient Partnership Groups (PPGs)

In Sudbury, the now merged Hardwicke House and Siam Surgery PPGs, have been meeting monthly using Microsoft Teams. Although not ideal, this method of enabling groups to continue with their regular meetings has been very helpful.

Unfortunately, for the second year running our plans for a Health Awareness Day have had to be shelved. It is hoped that a similar event will take place next year; more information will be forthcoming in due course.

The West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group has, in recent months, launched a PPG Network that will be promoted across West Suffolk. This is the second attempt by the WSCCG to form a network of PPGs, and it is hoped that as the restrictions imposed by Covid are lifted more information -sharing between the PPGs can take place.

The background and formation of PPGs can be found on the WSCCG web site: [www.westsuffolkccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/patient-participation-group-network/](http://www.westsuffolkccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/patient-participation-group-network/)

In our surgery we have a PPG Notice Board. Information about the group is advertised, together with other items of interest. However, at the present time very few of us visit our Doctors' surgeries and therefore notices in the waiting areas are probably not being seen. If you are interested in finding out if your surgery does have a PPG do ask the Reception staff who should be able to give you any information.

*Sylvia Bambridge*

Editor's note: Perhaps like many of you, I had not heard about Patient Participation Groups (or, as the Sudbury group prefers to be known, Patient Partnership Groups). I found the following information which explains a little about how and why they came into existence:

## **Patient participation groups**

*From April 2016, it has been a contractual requirement for all English practices to form a patient participation group (PPG) during the year ahead and to make reasonable efforts for this to be representative of the practice population. Establishing such a group helps:*

- *To develop a partnership with patients.*
- *To discover what a range of patients think about services and to establish their priorities.*
- *To provide a platform to test and modify ideas and plans.*

I know from Sylvia Bambridge that the group to which she belongs has found their participation very helpful in many ways. She believes we might all benefit from being part of similar groups in our own GP practices so she wanted to share this information. Thank you, Sylvia.

David