



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service



## Lockdown Newsletter Number 8 January 2021

**W**elcome to our first newsletter of 2021. After December's issue you may have been expecting to receive this one by email as we needed to economise. However, thanks to a donation from Treatt, who have been generous supporters of Upbeat for several years and whose CEO, Daemmon Reeve, is our patron, we are able to cover printing and postage costs for a while longer. This means, of course, that you will continue to receive the newsletter through the post for the next few issues at least.

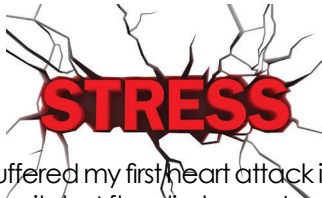
Who knows when we will return to some form of normality and, among other things, restart our exercise classes and social activities, and start producing our magazine again? Progress does seem to be being made in some areas and I know many members have already received at least the first vaccination against the Corona virus. I am scheduled to get my first jab next week. It seems that being in one of the earliest cohorts to get vaccinated is one of the very few advantages of being older! I hope you have either had the jab or have received notification of a date when you will get it. We are told that having the vaccination doesn't mean that we no longer need to maintain social distancing and other precautions, so continue to take care!

I am sad to say that we have lost quite a few members during the lockdown. Normally we would include in our 'Absent Friends' section of the magazine an obituary on each, together with a photograph, but there is not really room in the newsletters. However, we hope to acknowledge our lost friends fully whenever we are able to produce our next magazine.

In the first of these newsletters in June various members told us what they'd been up to when confined to the house. I notice that 'Look East' on BBC television has been running something similar recently and one of the viewers sent in a clip of her walking her camel! I don't expect any Upbeat members to have such exotic creatures to exercise but maybe you've been doing something unusual or interesting during the lockdown? If so, please share it with our members by emailing me a couple of photographs and a few lines of text. I look forward to including your contribution in the next issue. Thanks. Look after yourselves.

*David*

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



## **and how you might reduce it**

I suffered my first heart attack in November 1996 and was treated at the West Suffolk Hospital. After discharge I was referred to the rehabilitation classes which at that time were led by Ali Shorten, whom many of you may know. I remember very well Ali's session on stress. A degree of stress can be beneficial, we were told, but too much can be deadly. 'Stress is like making love to an elephant,' Ali said. 'It's all right if you're on top of it!' I think the current pandemic and restrictions imposed have brought a great deal of stress and worry to many. Denied our usual social activities, we may have to find different ways of reducing the stress levels we feel, so I looked on the internet to get some ideas to share with Upbeat members.

The feeling of isolation when you have to stay indoors, not seeing friends and family, can be one of the main causes of stress. It's very important for our mental health and well-being that somehow we stay connected with people. We all need to feel connected, so keep in touch with people you normally saw often or perhaps contact those friends you've not spoken to for a while.

Today there are lots of ways to stay in touch with friends and family when you can't meet in person. Try scheduling time each week to speak over the phone or make time for regular video calls. Every Friday our secretary, Hilary, holds virtual coffee mornings using Zoom. For an hour or so we can see each other, catch up on everyone's news, or simply sit back and listen. It would be good to have more members joining us. If you haven't joined in yet, why not give it a try next Friday? Zoom is freely downloadable and very easy to use. It would be good to see you there. I have a Zoom get-together every Sunday evening with my sister who lives in New York, her adult daughters, two of our daughters, one in London and one in Devon, and sometimes we're joined by my son who lives in Australia. And don't forget Michelle's exercise sessions on Zoom every Monday morning at 9.30. Again, it's a way of talking with other members as well as exercising in the comfort of your living room.,

Social media is another good way to stay connected – WhatsApp, Facetime, Instagram - if you haven't tried these, don't be afraid of them. My late sister who died aged 97 a couple of years ago, lived alone in sheltered accommodation but she was in touch daily with friends and relatives in this country and around the world via Facebook and her I-pad. A few words of caution, however: make sure you take breaks from your digital devices and switch off before bed!

Lots of the websites recommend getting out and about to enjoy nature and the countryside. Even on cold winter days there is much to be seen and heard if we are on the look-out. We have a Basset hound who needs walking every day and

we are fortunate to have several routes around Fomham St Martin where we can go. Some recent mornings have been misty, others frosty, and some even sunny. The same fields and hedgerows can look quite different on different days, and now we can see the first signs that spring is close at hand. In the local recreation ground this week we saw tiny groups of snowdrops at the base of the trees skirting the field, and saplings which were planted last year have the first signs of new leaves appearing. Elsewhere daffodil shoots are emerging, with the promise of banks of gorgeous flowers to be enjoyed in a few weeks' time. Such things can bring joy to the heart and really cheer us up.



Valerie and Winston, the Basset, enjoying the countryside.

A few days ago, whilst on our walk, we heard some lovely birdsong and stopped to try to see the one singing. Neither of us could identify the bird by its song but when we finally spotted it on a nearby bush, we saw that it was a robin. Such a common bird, and one of the few most of us can recognise and name, but making such a beautiful sound! Again, it was something to gladden the heart.

Another website suggested that if for some reason you can't get out, you can still enjoy some of the benefits of nature from home, sitting by a window and seeing what you can spot as the seasons change, what noises you can hear, or what animals you can see. It's reported that bird-watching has increased in popularity enormously during the lockdown and the last weekend in January the RSPB is asking people to spend an hour recording all the different species visiting their gardens. They offer a free bird identification chart which you can download from <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/biggardenbirdwatch/2021>. Although we've missed the national event, we can still relax and get pleasure watching our feathered friends from our windows at any time.

Even growing a plant on a windowsill, or anywhere indoors that gets some natural light, it suggested, can also help you connect with nature. We've certainly found that to be true recently as we've watched some potted hyacinths which we were given as presents, coming into bloom and filling the kitchen with their heady perfume. Lovely to see and to smell!

Apparently research suggests that even just the view of a forest from a hospital room helps patients who are feeling down, and that twenty minutes in nature could significantly reduce our levels of cortisol (the stress hormone). The mental health charity 'Mind' suggest that being in nature could also improve our mood, reduce feelings of anger, and improve our confidence and self-esteem.

Finally, watching the news with its constant reminders of the pandemic can be depressing. Instead, try taking your mind off things by going to iPlayer, Catch-up, or YouTube and watch your favourite TV shows or performers.

**January**

1st Prize    £100    No. 250    Mrs. Rita Howell  
2nd Prize    £27        No.123    Mr. John Land

***Smiles from Giles***

Q: Why can't a leopard hide?                    A: Because he's always spotted!  
Q: Can February March?                        A: No. But April May!  
Q: Why can't a nose be 12 inches long?      A: Because it would be a foot!  
Q: Why was the maths book sad?              A: Because it had problems!



by Bob Mountfort

SCAMS! At times we are all subject to them. Some are spoof phone messages telling us that we have placed an order for the purchase of an iPhone, or you have a Prime account with Amazon and payment is due. Or you may

get a bogus text message claiming to be from a delivery company that tried to deliver a parcel to you but couldn't. You will be asked to click on a link. DON'T! I have just received another one purporting to be from Royal Mail telling me that a parcel, number so-and-so is on its way but my package has been stopped at their office because sufficient postage has not been paid. It then asks that I pay by opening a link, a URL. This one I send off to customer service@royalmail. Later they will send me an email of thanks. I also have received a SCAM text from Paypal.

A fake NHS text has been circulating, telling people they're eligible to apply for the Covid-19 vaccine. The wording is as follows: 'We have identified that you are eligible to apply for your vaccine'. It then advises you to follow a link to get more information and 'apply'. This URL takes you through to a very convincing, but fake, NHS website that asks for your personal details, including bank and bank card details to check your identity. A genuine NHS site would never ask for your personal and bank details so please do not fall for this scam. You do not pay for your vaccine.

For SCAM ALERT advice go to Barnet Age UK website:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet/our-services/latest-scams>

# ***I thought I was savvy enough not to get caught***

***says your Editor***



***If we could see the scammer we wouldn't necessarily recognise him as being a robber. He might look just like you or me. However, if you receive a suspicious email or text, try to imagine that it's this guy who's sending it and really all he's after is YOUR MONEY!***

At about the same time as I received Bob Mountfort's article about scams, our Secretary, Hilary Neeves, also sent me some information warning about scammers, many of whom who are trying to take advantage of people's worries and uncertainty about the pandemic, especially those who are alone, self-isolating, or in financial difficulty. I considered myself to be quite 'savvy' where such things are concerned but I went onto the website

**<https://www.independentage.org/get-advice/money/scams>**

where there was a short test you could take to see if you were good at identifying what was a scam and what was a genuine email. Out of the ten examples, I only got five right! So, obviously I'm not as sharp as I thought I was. This made me think that maybe other members might benefit from some advice regarding scammers, how they sometimes work, and how we can avoid being caught out. So, fellow members, read on, and take note!

As I said before, many villains are taking advantage of people's uncertainty over the Corona virus and trying to con us out of our cash.

Scammers may contact you saying that they're calling from your bank or the

police. They then trick you into revealing your PIN and handing over your debit or credit card.

They may:

- Say a fraudulent payment has been spotted on your card;
- Ask you to call back using the number on the back of your card. They'll keep the line open so when you call, you're connected straight back to them
- Ask for your PIN number or ask you to key it into your phone.

The scammer then sends a courier or taxi to pick up your card. Once they have your card and PIN, they can spend your money.

You should wait for 20 minutes before you call your bank. If possible, use a different phone or call somebody else in the meantime.

Never reveal your PIN to anyone – your bank or the police will never ask you for your PIN, your bank card, or to withdraw money.

There are many variations on this scam. For example, they may say it's an undercover operation, so you mustn't tell your bank or the police. They may ask you to transfer all your funds into a 'safe account' or to buy an expensive item to help them identify counterfeit goods.

Coronavirus-related scams include:

- People claiming to be able to arrange a COVID vaccine for a fee. The NHS is the only organisation which has access to the vaccine, and will never ask for money;
- Sales of fake products such as face masks, supplements, anti-virus kits, and sanitisers, which may be harmful or simply never arrive;
- Bogus healthcare workers who try to gain access to your home by claiming to offer testing for COVID-19;
- People pretending to be from charities offering to do shopping or carry out cleansing tasks;
- Emails asking for donations to the NHS.

**DON'T click links in any suspicious emails or texts.** Similarly, DON'T call the phone numbers listed in the messages. If it is a phone call, ring off immediately if you are suspicious. Don't use the phone for a few minutes after you have rung off. The baddy may have kept your line open.

*Be warned! Beware! Be safe!*

## **From Our Chairman**

Hello, Everybody,

It's nice to see from our Zoom meetings that lots of you are now receiving invites to have the vaccine, which is such good news. I Just wanted to let everybody know that I have cancelled our Annual Lunch at Stoke-by-Nayland which was due to be held in March this year. Until we have government approval and have ended lock down etc., sadly we are unable to get together in a large group, but we will go ahead as soon as it is safe to do so.

I wanted to point out that all monies paid are safely in our bank and any raffle tickets purchased and all the counterfoils are safe, ready to produce once a date is set.

Please keep on supporting us by joining the 100 Club and let us know if anybody needs help or wants to get in touch. All committee members' details are in our magazine.

Keep safe and look after each other.

*Sylvia*

## **From Our Secretary**

Hello!

At the moment, we are running well behind previous years for applications for the 100 Club. Currently we have 164 shares compared with 254 last year. This would give us monthly prize money of only £82. Clearly there are still postal delivery problems and there may be more applications in the post. However, can we encourage you to send your 100 Club forms back to David Camp, please, as soon as possible. This is a good way of helping Upbeat, especially as fundraising ground to a halt in 2020 and is still not restored. It costs £12 for a whole year's subscription for ONE number to be entered in the monthly draw. If you need another application form, let me know and I will send you one.

What is encouraging is that many people have taken up the suggestion of helping us with bank and post charges and a good number are adding a 50p donation or more when sending cheques. Thank you very much for this additional help.

Thanks everyone; stay safe.

*Hilary*



## Off to the Sewage Works ...

Some years ago, I wrote a short piece for Upbeat, about my grandmother, who attributed her long life and steady heart to a regular diet of brandy and rabbit stew. Recently, I came across a description of other traditional heart treatments. Did you know that hawthorn (also known as mayflower) was a herbal remedy believed to help with congestive heart failure (or "dropsy" as it used to be called)? This use of the shrub can be dated back to the 1st century A.D. It was thought that its leaves, flowers, and red berries improved the heart's pumping ability and blood flow through the body and maintained a healthy blood pressure.

Lemon balm, a lemon-scented member of the mint family, was also a standby for heart patients. In the 16th Century. It was thought to be "good against biting of venomous beasts, comforts the heart, and driveth away all melancholy and sadness." So, a firm recommendation there for lemon balm!

All of which brings me to my Uncle Sammy. A strange man, he was convinced that inhaling powerful odours was the key to a healthy heart. He would find great satisfaction in the strong, cloying smell of Bury's sugar beet processing factory. I seem to recall that November was the prime month for capturing this stench. At times, it was almost unbearable for some of us. Not so for Sammy.

If there was no processed sugar beet smell to be had, he would drive out to the village of West Stow. He would heave health-giving lungfuls of the sewage works air which used to prevail there. "Earthy," he would call it. I hasten to add that I was related to the eccentric Sammy by marriage only, not by blood.

Should you feel tempted to dabble in such offbeat remedies yourself, do consult your doctor first! I have no doubt that he or she will tell you that modern, sophisticated treatments are the safest and the best.

**Barry Baddock**

## *From our Treasurer, Valerie*

Following my letter in November about the charges being introduced by the bank in January for paying in cheques, I would like to say 'Thank you very much,' to all those who have paid for the 100 Club by BACS or have added 50p to their cheques. Also, many thanks to the many people who have made donations instead of, or as well as, 100 Club shares. The response has been incredible and makes a fantastic difference to our financial position. I know that some of you had trouble with BACS but persevered. Well done!

It is a business account and the details are:

**Upbeat CAF Bank Sort code: 40-52-40 Account number: 00009019**