

HEART THROBS



CARDIAC SUPPORT GROUP
CARING FOR YOUR HEART

The ECHO

Heart Throbs Newsletter December 2024

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JOHN'S UPDATE

Bill Brewer

We learned last month of the sad passing of Bill Brewer, long time Heart Throb exerciser, committee member and Chair; he was ninety-three. Bill joined Heart Throbs following his triple Bypass in 2001, he exercised regularly and, along with his late-wife Margaret, helped to organise the social evenings. He always had a quiz up his sleeve if a speaker failed to show and was an immense help to our previous secretary, Joan Firth. He also collected the entrance money at Rob Bird's Tuesday exercise classes back in the pre-covid days when we paid cash for each class.

Bill's funeral will be held on Friday 20th December at Woolensbrook Cemetery in Hoddesden at 11am and afterwards at the Crocodile pub in Cheshunt. Bill wanted donations to the British Heart Foundation rather than flowers as it was his favourite charity.

Our Oldest Exercising Member

Our oldest exercising member, David Cox, reached ninety-two last month. Many congratulations to a stalwart of the Monday at 9am LITE class. I am delighted to say that David will be joining us at our Christmas Lunch on 17th December so we can give him the 'bumps' then.

New Speaker at Holtwhites

The observant of you will have noticed that the music is now even louder! We have purchased a new speaker with flashing lights. The main reason for this is that the new model comes with a microphone which will be particularly handy at quiz nights and social

There is nothing like being self-sufficient!

Merchandise

We have added some items to our list of Heart Throbs training and leisure gear. We now have shorts, joggers, leggings and zipped hoodies to add to T-shirts, polo shirts and sweats. I am about to take delivery of a new batch for distribution to those that ordered them. I will be placing another order in the New Year for those who wish to add to their wardrobe.

Christmas Lunch

The Christmas lunch is once again being held at Enfield Golf Club on Tuesday 17th December. At this event we will be announcing the male and female **EXERCISER OF THE YEAR 2024** so if you feel you are in the frame for this most prestigious of awards you need to be there! Remember it is not awarded to the person who 'gets the sweatiest' but the persons who give of their best every week both to their exercise and to Heart Throbs. We hope as many of you as possible will join us, it is a most enjoyable way to end the year amongst friends.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone and their families and friends a happy Christmas and New Year and I look forward to seeing you at the Christmas lunch or in January 2025.

John Golby



The Committee

The committee meets each month except August and the Annual General Meeting usually takes place during the summer. The committee members are:

John Golby (Chair/Treasurer), Fintan Gallagher (Deputy Treasurer), Stefano Francioso (General Secretary), Jim Yates (Events Manager), Jim McCluskey (Membership Development & NHS Liaison), David Hollifield, Peter Bevan, Deborah Roberts, Corinne Woods (Joint Membership Secretary), Barbara Miller (Joint Membership Secretary) and Catherine McCarthy (Newsletter/Website Editor).

John Golby

Health Matters with Barbara - Sue and David Davies

Carry on Zooming

Sue and David Davies have belonged to Heart Throbs since 2009. Originally neither of them had a diagnosed heart problem but since then first Sue and then David have become authentic HT members. Sue joined friend Mages Siva at Mark's class on Thursdays (5-6pm) at Bourne Hill Methodist Church in Southgate and was surprised to find that so many men were in the exercise class; they then learnt that more men than women have heart problems. So Sue encouraged David to join. They also started Mark's Monday class (5-6pm) at St. Stephen's Church in Bush Hill Park as it was closer to where they live in Southgate than Holtwhites; in fact they have only exercised once at Holtwhites and that was when Daria made a short return visit to Enfield.

A bit more about Sue and David

They are both from the North of England and met at the University of Edinburgh (1961-5). They married in 1966 and have lived in Colchester, Chicago and in London since 1970. They have three children, one lives in San Francisco, another lives in the Netherlands and the third lived with them, whenever he was not travelling the world. They both worked in Education; Sue mainly taught in the Enfield Language Service since 1980, whilst David taught Chemistry at the University of London. They both formally retired in the 2000s, Sue in 2005 and David in 2006.

Heart Throbs

Sue became a true 'hearthrober' after developing arrhythmia over a number of years, and was treated with successful ablations in 2009 and 2012, whilst David had to wait until 2019 to develop heart problems, which were treated by a triple heart-bypass operation at Barts at the end of February 2020, just before Covid locked us down. They were very thankful for the efforts of the HT trainers to keep us exercising at home during lockdown, first with Mark and his daughter Abbi and then 'Zooming at Home' with Hara, Daria, Lynn and then Ben. It was brilliant!

Zoom classes

When classes resumed after lockdown most people preferred to go back to Holtwhites but Sue and David are very grateful that HT continued with Zoom exercise classes twice a week at 10-11am, Ben on Tuesday and Daria on Thursday. They live in the south of Enfield and it is a 20 minute drive to Holtwhites for classes, whereas it is very convenient to do the exercise at home, saving time for other activities such as their allotment. Over the years they have experienced many trainers (Mark, Hara, Pete, Lynn, Daria, Ben and even Stefano). All are different, though many core exercises are the same. It's the differences in approach that keeps it fresh for them.

There is a hardcore group of exercise devotees at 10am on Tuesday and Thursday and they would love more people to join the Zoom classes. They have been able to continue with the classes when away from home, though not when visiting their daughter's family in California because of the 8 hour time difference! For those not familiar with using Zoom they have kindly offered to provide some help, as long as you have a computer or smart phone. Just contact Sue at sue_davies@fastmail.fm.



Barbara Miller

Meet the Trainers - Daria Hamraeva

Daria leads the Thursday 10am Zoom class from her home in Lithuania.

1) How long have you been a trainer with Heart Throbs? 5 years.

2) What do you enjoy about being a trainer with Heart Throbs?

I feel as if I am part of the big family, family that is supportive to one another and kind.

3) What made you decide to have a career as a trainer?

I wanted to choose a career that serves other people one way or another. Movement science is my great passion and so helping other people to move better and feel better makes my job purposeful.

4) What football team do you support?

I have been watching more basketball lately.

5) What's your favourite food?

I have been eating loads of soups lately, 24 hour bone broth has so many health benefits.

6) What's your favourite drink? Herbal tea. Its getting cold outside.

7) What's your favourite holiday destination? My parents house in the woods.

8) Do you have a pet, if so what?

I have a hairless cat. Sphynx breed. His name is Goga. He is very vocal and playful and saved us from robbery once.



Catherine McCarthy

Heart Throbs Social Events 2024

Our Autumn programme included:

3rd October- Professor Tony Hurford - 'Ten good reasons for being a Geologist'

7 November - Robin Claydon - Wildlife Photographer

19 November - Dr. Simon Kennon, Cardiologist and Patron of Heart Throbs

Upcoming:

5 December - Quiz Night - "Travelling Home for Christmas"

17 December - Christmas Lunch, Enfield Golf Club

Our Spring Programme:

6 February - Paul Davies, former ITN news man - "The Life and Trials of a Television News Man"

March - Visit to Wrotham Park (dates to be confirmed)

If you have any thoughts on relevant topics/guest speakers for our future Social Evenings or any hobbies/interests/career experiences etc. that you might like to present a talk on please contact Jim Yates. Please note social evenings are on the first Thursday of each month.

Jim Yates

New members

A warm welcome to all our new members who have joined in the last few months; John Beeston, Yvonne Cappetta, Rob Gibbons and John Ward.

Newsletter suggestions

If you have any suggestions for newsletter items or want to submit an item please contact Catherine at cmccarthy4@sky.com.

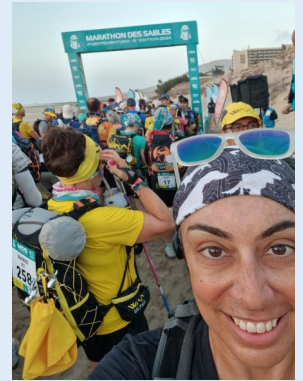
Website improvements

We're looking to make improvements to the website. If you have any suggestions please forward them to Catherine at cmccarthy4@sky.com.

Hara - Superstar

What made you get into running?

Hara Markos is one of our trainers and she explained that she tried to dabble in running a few times in her life, but she felt she wasn't particularly good, nor did she enjoy it. She ran the Blackpool Marathon in 2012 at a time of 4 hours, 44 minutes and 44s, and decided she was never going to run again! In the spring of 2023 Hara was diagnosed with severe anaemia, which made sense to her as she was often sleeping 12-15 hours a day and had barely any energy. After a course of iron tablets, she said she felt like a new woman. She decided to download the Couch to 5k app and start to do a bit of running to help strengthen her cardiovascular system and to help clear her mind. One thing led to another and in April 2024 she ran the London LandMarks half marathon to raise money for the charity she is a trustee of. Never one to rest on her laurels she started to look for other types of adventures and competitions to enter. She has travelled a lot in her life, frequently alone, and always to the most random places. She has climbed a mountain in nearly every continent, and she's at her happiest with her backpack on, trainers on her feet, and a long road ahead of her, which winds through different terrains and towns.



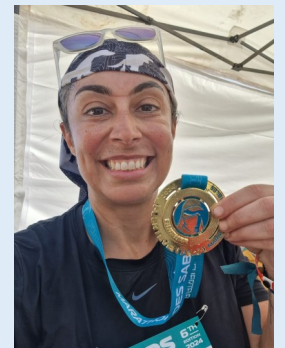
Why the Marathon des Sables (MdS)?

Hara had heard of the Marathon des Sables (MdS) as her cousin had run it, but she never, in a million years, thought she could achieve something like this. Her cousin completed the "Legendary" MdS, which is 250km in 6 days in the southern Moroccan Sahara which is incredible. When she visited their website she saw that there was another version in Fuerteventura's desert and when she saw the distances and times she said her stubborn pig-headedness thought: well, I've done X, Y and Z, how much harder could thus be?! ...well, apparently, it was MUCH harder! Hara knew the terrain and heat would not be replicated in the UK, so she spent 10 days hiking from Porto in Portugal to Santiago in Spain, which was 177 miles, to help prepare her. She tested her equipment, strength, and resilience, and felt good upon her return. However, in the 5 week gap between returning and starting the MdS, she only ran 3x 6km. On reflection that was a big mistake!



What was it like?

Having completed the MdS Hara said that in hindsight it was the most humbling, incredible, life-changing experience. She has tried to remain relatively fit her whole life, but she's never had to push her physical, emotional, and mental limits so much. She explained that the terrain was relentless, with miles and miles of energy sapping sand; uneven, rocky ground; unforgiving climbs; and the sun beating down on her every step of the way. On paper, 80kms over 3 stages is fine. But once you add sand, climbs, and 40 degrees heat, plus you're carrying all of your food, clothes, water, and bedding, that 80km becomes monumental. All of these factors made it an amazing experience. However, it is the friendships she made that will forever make this the most wonderful experience. Without the support of her other UK teammates she said that this experience would not have been so impactful. Out of 300 participants, there were only 8 from the UK and they all finished in the top 35 in all of their distances. Hara came 13th out of 64 women and 22 overall in her distance group out of 86 participants. This is an incredible achievement! When Hara was on the hills, she said she would never do this again. However, she has already signed up for another crazy challenge next year. Hara would like to thank everyone at Heart Throbs who supported her especially Peter Bevan who updated everyone on her daily progress! Well done Hara, you are a superstar!



Catherine McCarthy

Ten Good Reasons for Being a Geologist

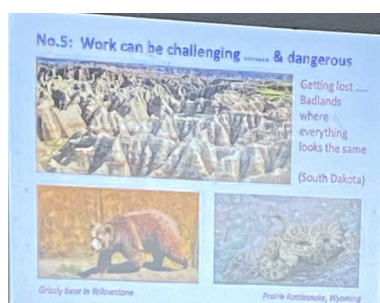
On 3rd October we had a very interesting and enjoyable evening when one of our own, Emeritus professor Tony Hurford, shared a personal perspective on Ten Good Reasons to be a Geologist. Tony has been a Heart Throbs member from the late 1990's and attends one of the Monday morning classes. Last year he delivered a talk on Volcanoes.

What is Geology?

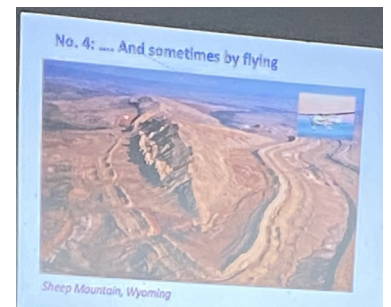
Tony introduced his talk by explaining that a geologist studies the composition and structure of the Earth, endeavouring to understand the evolution of the planet over the last 4.6 thousand million years. This includes looking at rocks, mountains and structures, tectonic plates, volcanoes, earthquakes, minerals, metal ores, fossils and the evolution of life, oil and gas, water, foundations and materials for civil engineering and building. A geologist is not an archaeologist. Archaeology only goes back one or two million years. Tony explained that the surface of the earth is 29% land and 71% ocean. Land is mainly made of granite and the ocean floor is mainly made of basalt. The outer skin or crust of the earth comprises a series of plates made of granite and basalt, a bit like a fractured eggshell. These tectonic plates move around and collide resulting in the creation of mountains. We learnt that almost all earthquakes and volcanoes relate to tectonic plate movement.

Being a Geologist?

Telling people about our fantastic planet has been a major part of Tony's professional life, lecturing in the University of Bern, Switzerland and University College London as well as giving talks in schools, to societies, at U3A and running a series of programmes on Potters Bar Radio during lockdown. In his research he has worked in East Africa, China, India, USA, Australia and throughout most of Europe unravelling the age and thermal history of rocks that we find at the surface. Often the research has been in collaboration with hydrocarbon exploration companies such as BP and Shell.



Tony shared some of his experiences with us, combining a little science with pictures and tales of field and laboratory projects, to illustrate something of our wonderful planet Earth. He highlighted some of the dangers from encountering grizzly bears in Yellowstone, snakes in Wyoming and crocodiles in the waters of Kenya. In addition, he shared a story from the Badlands of South Dakota where everything looks the same. It's essential to park your Land Rover high up so you can see it. Someone didn't do this, got lost for two days and sadly didn't survive.



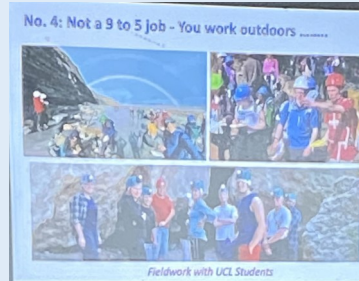
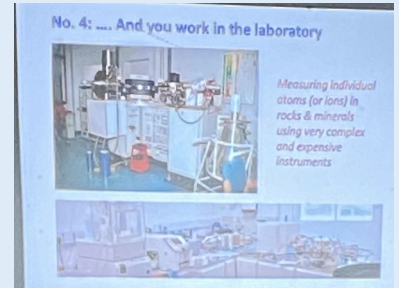
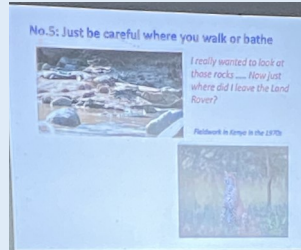
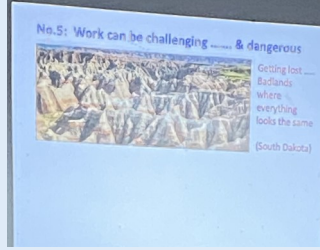
He also had stories about being careful when near volcanoes and cliffs. In April 2021 4000 tonnes of cliff collapsed near Seaton on the Dorset coast and in 2014 the volcano Mount Sinabung in Sinatra, one of the Indonesian Islands erupted. We heard about the eruption of Vesuvius at Pompeii and Herculaneum. We then saw a range of fascinating photos from around the world where rocks were bent you see some fantastic and beautiful things.

In retirement Tony has run a Job Club for the unemployed in Potters Bar, builds model railways, sings with a local choir and enjoys drinking a glass of pinot noir or real ale!

We also had the grand raffle.

Catherine McCarthy

Being a Geologist - More photos



Catherine McCarthy

'Gene silencer' drug shows promise in treating heart disease

A drug known as a “gene silencer” has shown promise in reducing hospitalisation and deaths from a devastating condition known as transthyretin (ATTR) cardiac amyloidosis, according to a new study led by UCL researchers. The study, presented at the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) congress, with results simultaneously published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, found that a drug called vutrisiran reduced the risk of death and recurring cardiovascular events – such as hospitalisation – by 28% over three and a half years and by 33% in patients not already taking another drug, tafamidis, which also delays disease progression.

The drug is one of four currently being trialled that show promise in transforming the treatment of ATTR amyloidosis, a disease that until recently had limited treatment options. The results of all four drug trials, led by Professor Julian Gillmore and Professor Marianna Fontana (both UCL Division of Medicine), have been published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* within the last three years. Early results of one of these treatments, a novel gene-editing therapy based on CRISPR/Cas9, indicate it may stop disease progression. In addition, the UCL team showed last year for the first time that the condition could be reversed, reporting on three men who spontaneously recovered from the disease. At the time the team said the discovery raised the bar for what might be possible with treatments. ATTR cardiac amyloidosis occurs when a protein in the bloodstream called transthyretin (TTR) misfolds and accumulates in the heart tissue as amyloid, making the heart stiff and less able to pump blood. If left untreated, it is almost invariably fatal within four to six years.

Stefano Francioso

The Tale of Two Bears

On Thursday 7th November we enjoyed a fascinating talk from award winning wildlife photographer Robin Claydon (www.rclaydonphotography.co.uk). He has been a wildlife photographer for twelve years and has travelled the world. Before that he was a pre hospital trauma medic in the police based in Hackney. Robin shared with us his photographs and stories about brown bears from Salmon Creek, Alaska, and polar bears from Churchill, Hudson Bay, Canada.

Brown bears in Salmon Creek, Alaska

You can only fly to Salmon Creek and there are about 300 bears, coastal brown bears and grizzlies which are found more inland. He explained that you should never get between a mother bear and her cubs and told us a story where a cub hid behind him and the mother bear charged at him. All ended well when she saw that the cub was safe. It's important to never leave food out and understand that humans are prey. Fishermen are not allowed to fish if the bears are there as they grab the fish and get caught in the hooks.

Polar bears in Churchill, Hudson Bay, Canada

In Churchill cars must remain unlocked at all times because if a polar bear appears anyone can get to safety by hiding in the nearest car. Air raid sirens go off at 10pm every night signalling that children and teenagers must be at home. We learnt that polar bears will never forget an individual scent and they will continue a hunt their prey years later.

Robin was asked why he does this and his answer was simple. It's his hobby, he loves it, enjoys being in nature but also finds it emotional and exciting. It also beats the stress of being a wedding photographer! At home he has gold fish and koi carp. His fee from the talk is going towards orangutans in Borneo.



Dr Simon Kennon

Cardiovascular Pharmacology

On Tuesday 19th November at Enfield Gold Club we welcomed our patron, Dr Simon Kennon, Consultant Cardiologist at Barts Heart Centre and Royal Free Hospital. Over 60 of us attended and listened attentively as he gave a very informative talk about the different types of medication that are used to support patients with heart disease and specifically the side effects. At the end he took a range of questions about medication but also about heart disease in general which we all appreciated.



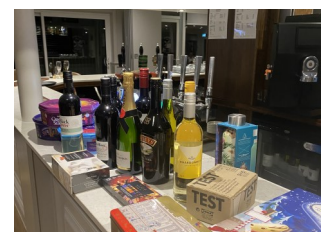
Medical advances

He explained about the advances in treatment over the years and that before 1986 there was no treatment for heart attacks and patients were just sent home and told to take it easy. We also learnt about randomised controlled trials and randomised placebo controlled trials where those taking part in the trial won't know if they are taking the drug being tested or one that looks like it but has no effect. This is used to test the efficacy of the drug being tested. This is the gold standard way of undertaking research about new drugs to help treat and prevent disease. Simon explained that fortunately there are a large number of randomised controlled trials for heart medication. Stefano Francioso, one of our members, is currently taking part in a trial. It is a Phase 3 Randomised, Placebo Controlled Clinical Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety of MK-0616 in Reducing Major Adverse Cardiovascular Events in Participants at High Cardiovascular Risk. MK-0616 is an experimental drug and the trial is testing to see whether MK-0616 reduces the risk of major cardiovascular events in people who are at high risk for these events. It is for adults with raised cholesterol. The trial will compare MK-0616 to a placebo. A placebo looks like a trial drug, but it has no active ingredients. About 14,550 participants will take part in the trial from approximately 30 countries. The drug you get depends on which group you are placed in, Group 1: will get MK-0616 and Group 2: will get placebo. A computer will decide randomly which group participants you are put in with an equal chance of being put in Group 1 or Group 2 so Stefano doesn't know if he is taking MK-0616 or the placebo. We look forward to hearing more from Stefano and his experience with being involved in this clinical trial.



Heart medication

Simon explained how blood clots work and that they serve an important purpose to stop bleeding. The same mechanism can cause heart attacks when blood clots form around the internal part of plaques which can block vessels. Drugs play an important role in preventing blood clots and the formation of plaques. Aspirin inhibits platelet formation and aids the transformation from clot to healing. It can however cause indigestion and bleeding. Statins prevent the liver from making cholesterol and trials show it is of value. However, some patients have reported muscle aches although this is often reported in those that don't take statins as well. We also heard about a range of other drugs including those to lower blood pressure and beta blockers. We finished the evening with the grand raffle.



Catherine McCarthy

Heart Throbs visit to Wrotham Park

How many of you have driven along the A1000, between Barnet and Potters Bar, and wondered what lies behind the large hedge on the left-hand side before the Duke of York public house. On Tuesday the 18th or Thursday 20th March 2025 (provisional dates) Heart Throbs in conjunction with one of our members, Charles Dace, Archivist at Wrotham Park, are giving you an opportunity to find out with a visit to this Palladian 18th century house.

A bit about the history of Wrotham Park

The house was commissioned by Admiral John Byng, who invited the renowned 18th century Architect Isaac Ware to design a house on land he had purchased from the Manor of South Mimms and the disbanded Royal hunting ground of Enfield Chase. Originally built in red brick, with stone detailing around windows and doors and with stone columns. It was only after numerous modifications that the house took on its rendered appearance of today.

Unfortunately, Admiral Byng never lived in the house. His Mistress, Suzanne Hickson fell ill early in 1756. Rather than risking her life, being isolated from the best London Physicians of the day, he decided to remain at his London home in Berkeley Square. Despite his best endeavours, she died. The Admiralty then called upon his services to strengthen Fort St. Philip, on the Island of Minorca, a major British trading post, from capture by the French.

By the time his Squadron of ships had been mustered, the French had taken the Island, landing 15,000 men. The task had changed from strengthening the Island's fortress to re-taking the Island. The Admiral's assignment had become impossible. When it failed, he was arrested, court martialed and executed, on 14th March 1757, not "for cowardice" but "for not doing his utmost".



Wrotham Park today

The house was left to his nephew George Byng and has remained in the family ever since. Many houses of this period were built using "Slavery Money". However, Wrotham Park was built using French money acquired through spoils of war. Over the intervening years the house has been modified many times



without the intervention of Slave Money. Settlements from marriages, bequeathments from Wills, rental income from Estate property and the sale of Estate land have enabled the house to be enlarged and updated for modern usage.

Today, much of the money to maintain the house comes from filming. You may have seen the house on television or on the big screen, as it has been used in Gosford Park, The Crown, Downton Abbey and most recently The Diplomat amongst many others. Now is your opportunity to visit the house. There will be two tours, one on the 18th March and one on the 20th. Each tour will be restricted to 25, as some of the rooms do not permit a greater number.

If you are interested in visiting Wrotham Park please email Jim Yates on jly16@btinternet.com. Jim is collecting names at this stage and will confirm details, including dates, in due course.

Charles Dace/Jim Yates