

# NHS Retirement Fellowship

Reg. Charity No: 287936

Patron: Ken Jarrold CBE



## News from the Director, Mike Brown Autumn 2011

This is my first news item on the website and I am pleased to start what I plan will be a regular feature, published three times a year after our National Council meetings. Information is sent to branch secretaries and to all postal / national members. Publishing information on the web will, I hope, provide an opportunity for all members to keep up to speed with all our activities.

**Two events specifically for Postal / National members** have been arranged, for Wednesday 2nd May 2012 at the NW Strategic Health Authority, 3 Piccadilly Road, Manchester M1 3BN and another on Thursday 17th May 2012 at the Royal Free Hospital, London. Invitations and information about both these events will be sent to postal members in the new year but please take this as advance notice for your diary. The Honorary Officers and Director hope to welcome you to one of these interesting and enjoyable days.

**The interest groups** for Photography and Golf are progressing well. Both these activities are joint ventures with the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship. Work is also progressing to establish a Book Club for members of both organisations.

**The Photographic Competition**, Active Ageing, has received a massive boost with sponsorship from the Civil Service Insurance Society to provide major prizes of photographic equipment worth up to a £1,000. The competition will now run into 2012. Further details will be included in the next newsletter and can be viewed on the website.

Recent surveys have indicated that members are very interested in holidays for Fellowship members; **a programme of holidays in 2012** is available on the website; holidays in previous years have been very popular and in 2012 we have added two walking holidays, a Christmas markets cruise in addition to holidays in Jersey and Sardinia.

**A Phone a Friend Scheme** will be piloted over the next few months, with a limited number of postal members and one branch. This is a scheme for postal members who are housebound or unable to get to a branch but would like to be put in touch with another member in a similar situation. A pilot will also take place with a branch, to extend the already excellent welfare activity. Members will be asked if they would like to keep in regular telephone or postal contact with a member who is no longer able to attend the branch. Prior to this, existing schemes and guidelines will be researched to ensure best practice.

The Fellowship staff are investigating a range of **benefits for members** including discounted membership of the Gourmet Club; an exciting opportunity to visit quality restaurants in your area and across the country at considerably reduced rates. Details of how to access these benefits will be in the Newsletter.

**The annual conference** is being held in the Chesford Grange Hotel in Warwickshire from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June to Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012. The venue is close to Leamington Spa and a trip is being planned to Warwick Castle. I do hope that you will consider joining us. On Saturday we hold our

conference when we have excellent speakers and a very short AGM and the Sunday is our day out. More information is available on the website. Branch secretaries and postal / national members have been sent information and booking forms.

The Government has changed the reimbursement through **Gift Aid** from 28% to 25%. There is no need for members who have already signed a Gift Aid declaration to complete a new form but if you have not already signed a declaration you can obtain one from your branch secretary or from Central Office either by post or electronically.

The drive to increase membership has been successful, and in 2012 we hope that the Pensions Agency will include a promotional flyer for membership of the Fellowship to every new NHS pensioner. If this can be done on an ongoing basis, every NHS pensioner will have been informed about the Fellowship and will have been given an opportunity to join.

An application form for a grant from the **Benevolent Fund** is available to members directly from Central Office; the form can also be downloaded from the website. Any member of the Fellowship who is in need may apply for a grant and all enquiries are treated in confidence.

In May I informed you about some very useful guides and factsheets that are available from **Age UK**; topics include disability benefits, computer scams advice, staying safe, when someone dies, finding the right care home, amongst many others. These factsheets can be downloaded from the web at <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/publications/age-uk-information-guides-and-factsheets/>, you can contact Age UK by telephone 0800 169 6565 or you can get them from your local Age UK shop or office

Please note the new email addresses for Sherry, Kay and Lucy in Central Office. Can you amend your records immediately as emails to their old addresses will cease to be delivered shortly.

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