

Celebrating 60 years of service: 1965-2025

Fellowship News

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

United in Service



ALEXANDER BEER PHOTOGRAPHY



In March, we were delighted to be involved in the Third annual Civil Service Charities Week, a week-long celebration of the work of the Civil Service welfare bodies (us, the Charity for Civil Servants and CSSC Sports & Leisure). The week began with an event at Lancaster House that was opened by the Cabinet Secretary and feature presentations

from all the organisations. It was then followed our participation at events in the Ministry of Justice in London and HMRC Buildings in Leeds and Glasgow. A particular vote of thanks goes to our Civil Service Champion and Board Director Simon Baugh as the Government Communication Service were amazingly supportive of the whole campaign.

Happy Birthday to us

Our 60th year is well underway and we have celebrations taking place across our local group network during the year. Chief Executive David Tickner joined the celebrations with members of the Catford & Lewisham Group at their March meeting. They enjoyed a beautiful 60th birthday cake.



Thank you

We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who responded to our fundraising appeal mailshot. So far, we have raised £15,000 for our Diamond Appeal. Your generosity and support of our organisation has been both humbling and inspiring and has given us extra energy to push hard to achieve all our marketing and communications goals this year.

If you'd like to help us towards our goal of £60,000 you can donate using the donation form on page 11.

**Exclusive Travel
Offer from
Wendy Wu Tours**

**Wendy Wu Tours are offering CSRF Members
a 5% discount on bookings –
find out more on pages 22-25.**

Chief Executive's Message

Dear Readers,
Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2025 edition of Fellowship News! This is a particularly special issue as we celebrate our Diamond Anniversary this year—an incredible milestone marking 60 years of service, community, and friendship.

Throughout this edition, you'll find stories that highlight our rich history, the incredible work being done across our network and the exciting plans we have for the year ahead. From the inspiring 60 Voices interviews, where members share their Civil Service experiences, to updates on our Follow the Leader initiative, which recognises the impact of our local groups, this issue is a testament to the strength and vibrancy of our Fellowship.

We are thrilled to see so many of you participating in our 60th-

anniversary celebrations. Whether you joined us for Civil Service Charities Week, took part in a local group event, or supported our Diamond Appeal, your enthusiasm and generosity continue to inspire us. Thanks to your support, we are well on our way to reaching our £60,000 fundraising goal, ensuring that our befriending schemes and charitable services continue to thrive.

As we look to the future, we continue to promote our marketing campaign aimed at engaging current civil servants as donors. This initiative help us build a strong foundation for the next 60 years.

We hope you enjoy this special edition and as always, we welcome your feedback and contributions. If you have a story to share, a memory to recount, or simply want to get in touch, don't hesitate to reach out.



Thank you for being part of our Fellowship.

Warm regards,
David Tickner, Chief Executive



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Thanks to the Boundless Foundation

We are very pleased to be working with our friends at CSMA/Boundless on several projects including our pre-retirement course design. But for the last few years we have also received an annual donation from the Boundless Foundation. Chief

Executive David Tickner popped down to their headquarters in Brighton to thank them for their 2024 donation and to 'pick up a rather large cheque' from Chief Operating Officer Pete Worster.

Follow the Leader → → →

Our group network was the rock on which the Fellowship was built 60 years ago. To acknowledge the tremendous impact our groups have made over the last 60 years Chief Executive David Tickner is embarking on a national tour that will take in every single one of our active groups. During each visit, each group will receive a special 'Diamond Group Award' that recognises their contribution to our organisation.

David started in January with a visit to the York & District group and this was followed by a visit to Stubbington in February and Catford & Lewisham in March.



York



Stubbington



Catford & Lewisham



You can follow his progress on the website by clicking here > <https://csrf.org.uk/follow-the-leader/>



'BEE'-FRIENDING

Our befriending services are free for any member of the CSRF community

Volunteering as a Befriender

If you have some time and are looking for a flexible volunteering option, then we'd like to recommend befriending. It can fit into your week and do some good too. At the moment we have service users looking for a home visit in

Fakenham, Swaffham and Romsey. If you'd like to find out more about our befriending schemes you can give us a call on 020 8691 7411 for a confidential chat or email: enquiries@csrf.org.uk to request one of our information leaflets.

Make a new friend, sign up for the schemes

If you don't know already, we provide befriending services as a charity. Trained DBS Checked volunteer befrienders can visit you weekly, fortnightly or monthly (depending

on your preference). All visits are friendship based only – we're not able to provide any care or health related support via this scheme.

Would you like a home visit?

We currently have trained befrienders in Croydon, Southampton, Lincoln and Walsall without anyone to visit. If you live in these areas or anywhere

around the UK and would like to register to receive a home visit you can give us a call on 020 8691 7411 or email: enquiries@csrf.org.uk



2025 Befriending Conference

Befriender and service users came together to enjoy the 2022 Online Befriending Conference last month. The event had an incredible line up of speakers who informed, inspired and celebrated the service that is provided by the befriending schemes. After a welcome from Chief Executive David Tickner, Board Director and

Chair of the Befriending Working Group Richard Wildash gave an update on the work the group is doing on our befriending services strategy. This was followed by guest speaker Sir Muir Gray who gave an update on his How To Live Longer, Better initiative. Dr Wendy Martin spoke on the topical subject of Ageing and Digital and there

was an instructional laughter yoga video with Dr Madan Kataria. The events are an important part of our befriending community and thanks goes to our Operations & Services Support Manager Letticia Rushaija for all her hard work in preparing the conference.

Books, friendship and food

Some members of our book groups got together for their annual winter lunch in London in November. We run two monthly book discussion groups via Zoom where views are shared on a reading list chosen by members. The Zoom platform is accessible whether or not you have the internet as it is possible to join a call as a telephone delegate. If you are interested in joining one of the discussion groups we'd love to hear from you.



Having a Sing Song

You may not know that we have actually have a Fellowship Song. It was written by one of our former Board members, the late Evelyn George (pictured) and intended to be a 'rousing song' to sing at the beginning of group meetings and Annual General Meetings. For those of you who may remember Evelyn she was a larger than life personality who loved the Fellowship and she was the longest serving Board Director (clocking in over 10 years). An accomplished pianist she wrote the song and its lyrics and passed a copy to our Chief Executive before she passed away. As a tribute to her it seems appropriate to share the song with you in our 60th year, so we have printed the lyrics here as the speak to the heart of what we are about as an organisation.



giftaid it Making a gift aid declaration

If you pay tax, then we can claim gift aid on your subscription or donation. You may already have signed a gift aid declaration form but if not, we can send you one to complete and return. You can check your status by emailing: enquiries@csrf.org.uk or calling us on 020 8691 7411.

The Fellowship Song by Evelyn George

Reach up and take the hand of Fellowship
Perhaps you'll find a friend in need

Stretch out and shake the hand that friendship offers
To let the human touch succeed

And if retirement is regarded as the
sunset of life
Stand proudly in its rosy glow

Speak out and make the words of
friendship matter
If you encounter grief or pain

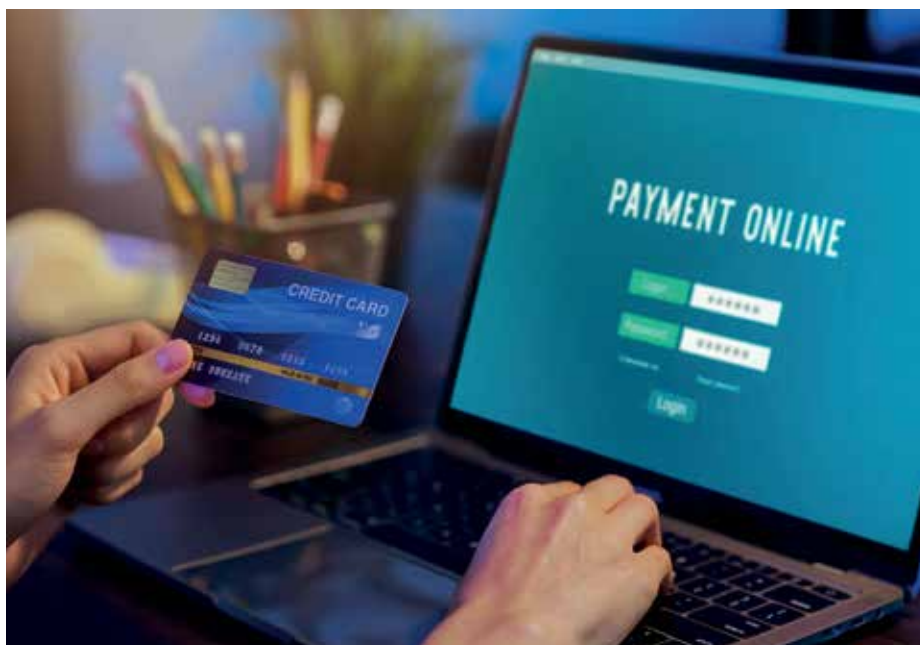
And remember if you really practise
fellowship

You need never be alone again



Help us by shopping online with Giveasyoulive

Donation platform Giveasyoulive gives access to thousands of online retailers who will make a free donation to us every time you shop. You can register and nominate us as your chosen charity and each time you shop online just go through the platform and they'll do the rest. Find out more online at www.giveasyoulive.com/join/csrf



Online Payments

We have had some reports of people finding difficulties with making payments via the website. If you do encounter a problem and the site appears to be buffering our web support company recommend 'clearing your cache' (which usually works) or trying a different web browser (e.g Edge, Chrome etc). If all else fails, we are able to take payments over the telephone – so you can call us on 020 8691 7411.

Liven up your correspondence with some CSRF notelets

We have some stock left of our Limited-Edition blank notelets that are available for sale. There are 5 blank cards per set and each includes a different travel picture. The images were selected from members pictures submitted as a part of a travel photography competition in 2019. The price per set is £5 but as an extra incentive we're offering three sets (15 cards) for £10. That's less than £1 per card! You can order by using the form on the donation form on page 15.





2025 Member Survey



Thanks to those of you who completed the online member survey we circulated via our electronic newsletter in January. It has provided some interesting insight into your use of our charitable services, thoughts about how we communicate with you and what you would like to see us do in the future. We are looking at the potential of including a similar survey in the Autumn/Winter issue of Fellowship News which means any of you who don't have email will be able to give your feedback. Some interesting ideas for consideration included: online creative activities, connecting with old colleagues and more activities in the North of the country, none of which we disagree with.

Welcome to our new Digital Donors

We introduced a new membership category to encourage working civil servants to sign up to support us and we are delighted to welcome a new cohort of Digital Donors who come from the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Education. If you are a working civil servant, you can sign up as an annual Digital Donor for a minimum of £3 per year. For more information visit <https://csrf.org.uk/digitaldonor/>



Got an email? Why not sign up for our e-newsletter

If you do use e-mail, then you can sign up to receive our electronic e-newsletter directly into your inbox. The e-newsletter is produced alternate monthly and covers news, information and updates of interest. You can sign up via the CSRF website here <https://csrf.org.uk/contact-us/> (scroll down to the heading that says 'To Sign Up for the CSRF E-Newsletter' and click underneath to complete your name and email address). Alternatively you can email us directly using: enquiries@csrf.org.uk



Tune into the 60 Voices Podcast

If you fancy tuning into something new to listen to over coffee or lunch, then why not give our 60 Voices Podcast a go. We have been interviewing members of our community about their time in the civil service and the podcast conserves and preserves these important work memories. You can hear from our office volunteer Jean about the challenges of her first interview with the civil service, Fred who shares insight into his work at HMRC and Keith who was involved with the setting up of the CSRF in the 1960s. One of our most recent interviewees is **Living Longer Better** campaigner **Sir Muir Gray** who shares his thoughts on health and wellbeing in the civil service.

You can access the podcast via the CSRF website by visiting this page <https://csrf.org.uk/60-voices/> - the page is located in the drop menu under 'About Us' on the top of the website

New Guests

If you'd like to join David and Denise as a guest on the 60 Voices Podcast for some informal chat about your civil service memories then we'd love to hear from you – email: enquiries@csrf.org.uk to find out more.



Civil Service Charities Week 2025

We celebrated the third annual Civil Service Charities Week last month with a week-long series of events and activities all designed to promote awareness of the services provided by the three Civil Service Welfare Bodies (the Charity for Civil Servants, CSSC Sports & Leisure and us).

The initiative was started following an intervention by our former Chair (and Vice President) Madeleine Alessandri CMG and the Chair of the Charity for Civil Servants, Sir Peter Schofield KCB.

This year the week began with a special event at Lancaster House in London (hosted by the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Chris Wormald KCB) and was followed by departmental events at the Ministry of Justice in London, HMRC in Leeds and HMRC in Glasgow. These events provided an excellent opportunity for us to re-affirm the services we offer and to remind civil servants how they can get involved and support us.

Our Fellowship Team of David, Denise, Letticia, Hasnath and Charan worked very hard throughout the week to run our stands and provide some fun and engagement for all those involved. It was also lovely to work alongside our friends at the Charity for Civil Servants and CSSC Sports & Leisure proving very clearly that we do all work 'better together'!

Our grateful thanks go to the CS Charities week team at Cabinet Office (Dawn Lennie and Louise Little), to our Civil Service Champion Simon Baugh and the team at Government Communication Service and to Alexandra Whiteley (Head of Events at Cabinet Office) and her team.



FROM TOP: David with other CS Charities partners in HMRC Glasgow; Sir Chris Wormald with Dawn and David; Hasnath and Charan at HMRC in Leeds; Fellowship Team with DT at Lancaster House. **LEFT:** Ministry of Justice London



Why Legacy Giving can really help us

We are members of the Remember a Charity initiative which helps to raise awareness of legacy giving. A gift in your will can make a big difference to us.

Many organisations, including ours, have benefitted from the generosity of legacies left by former members of our community to support the continuation of the work that we do. By leaving a legacy in your will you can make a lasting contribution to the longevity of the CSRF and make a difference to our ability to develop and evolve our core charitable services.

Did you know?

- 7.3% per cent of the UK have left a gift to charity in their Will. A 4% increase would raise a further £1 billion for good causes every year.
- Remember A Charity has 200 member charities working together to encourage more people to leave a gift in their Will for good causes.
- We understand that loved ones usually come first – remembering a charity in your Will doesn't mean excluding others.

How can your legacy help?

Each of our charitable services has costs associated with it and we have worked very hard in recent years to support our local groups and befriending schemes by fundraising. This has enabled



us to give over £12,000 in grants to our groups this year and to regularly support our befriending volunteers who make regular home visits and phone calls to service users seeking companionship.

What type of gift could I leave?

There are three different types of gift you can leave to charity in your Will:

- Pecuniary gifts - a set amount of money

- Residuary gifts - a percentage, or the whole, of your estate (what's left after other specified gifts, costs, and tax)
- Specific gifts - a specific object, asset or property

Access to will writing services with Co-Op Legal Services

As we are members of the Remember A Charity initiative that means any of our supporters can get up to 20% off will writing Services from Co-Op Legal Services with prices starting from only £118.80 for a standard single will

or £202.80 for standard mirror wills. This does require access to the internet as you would initially need to register your interest via a dedicated URL which is: www.co-oplegalservices.co.uk/partners/remember-a-charity-referrals/

Further information

The Remember A Charity website has lots of useful information and advice on how and why you might consider leaving a gift to a charity in your will. You can follow a useful step by step process that includes a video online at this URL: www.rememberacharity.org.uk/leaving-a-gift/how-to-leave-a-gift-in-your-will/



MAKE A DONATION

Please use this form to make a donation and/or order some CSRF notelets.

☐ General Donation ☐ Diamond Appeal

☐ **CSRF Notelets** (£10 for 3 sets – 15 cards, each set contains 5 cards) indicate the number of sets you want

Return the completed form including your donation to: **The CSRF, Unit 11, Pepys House, Greenwich Quay, Clarence Road, LONDON SE8 3EY** Cheques should be made payable to 'The CSRF'.
Alternatively you can make a donation online at www.csrf.org.uk

Please accept my gift of:

£5 ☐ £10 ☐ £20 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ £250 ☐ Other

How would you like us to acknowledge your donation?

By Post ☐ By Email ☐

I do not wish to receive an acknowledgement ☐

We are extremely grateful for all donations we receive; you can help us save money by ticking the box to opt not to receive an acknowledgment

NAME:

ADDRESS:

.....

.....

.....

POST CODE: TEL NUMBER:

EMAIL:

Set up a Direct Debit



The quickest and easiest way to set up a direct debit now is to contact us at Fellowship Office for a dedicated web link that will enable you to create your direct debit mandate.

Once you've done that you can advise us of the amount and frequency of the donation (monthly, quarterly or annually)

and we can set the collection date by mutual agreement.

All our direct debit collections are carried out by Go Cardless.

For more information call 020 8691 7411 or email: enquiries@csrf.org.uk

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Don't forget to Tick the Box if you are a UK Taxpayer
Make your gift worth a quarter more at no extra cost to you!

If you are a UK taxpayer The CSRF can reclaim the tax you've paid on your donation.

Please tick the Gift Aid declaration box below

☐ I want to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code. Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.



2 CSRF Vice President Kate Losinska at a tree planting ceremony in Plymouth in 1989

Photo Memories

We've accumulated a fair number of pictures in 60 years. In this issue and the next we will be printing a selection of images from our photo archive. We hope you enjoy them.



- 1:** East Devon Branch in the 1970s
- 3:** The Highland Branch in Pitlochry in May 1996
- 4:** The East Berkshire Branch at Basildon Park Recruitment Event in 1990s
- 5:** The CSRF Annual Conference in York in 1979



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9 The CSRF Welsh Branches
Get Together in 1985



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Do you have any CSRF related pictures you'd like to share?
If so we'd love to see them. You can email them directly
to David using: david.tickner@csrf.org.uk OR you can send
them to Fellowship Office using the address on page 2.
We can then scan and resend the original to you.



- 6: The Lytham St Annes Group celebrating its 10th Birthday in the 1980s
- 7: Presentation of 100th Birthday book to HM The Queen Mother in 2000s
- 8: Former Lancashire Branch Chair Vida Pritchard with Ted Fellowship in 2011
- 10: Harrow Group delegates at the 1984 CSRF Conference
- 11: Sutton Group Chair Peter Hodson with group members at Kenwood House in 2014



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- 12: The Dorset Branch at Bovington Tank Museum in 1990s
- 13: Salisbury Group at the races in the 1970s
- 14: Salisbury Group at the races in 2012
- 15: CSRF Board Members celebrating the launch of the Golden Jubilee Buttercup
- 16: Members of the Bury Group at their Christmas Dinner in 1973
- 17: Catford group members at a fancy hat competition with the Mayor of Lewisham
- 18: Board Director Tony Hazeldine joined members of the Chandlers Ford Group to celebrate the Golden Anniversary in 2015



Remembering the Ministry of Labour



Our former Edinburgh Branch Chair Trudy Thomas shares her civil service memories.
Words by Adam Bell.

Leaving school at age 14 in 1945, Trudy Thomas started work at a lawyer's office and then at the post office, which she held until she married, before picking up a job in the Civil Service. She entered the Civil Service as a clerical officer for the Ministry of Labour in Glasgow, then later became an executive officer before finishing up as a staff welfare officer for the Department of Employment.

Trudy was able to slip into her job rather quickly within the Civil Service, especially since a lot of the people she worked with at the post office were part of the Civil Service too. She proved herself adaptable very quickly, especially since the nature of her role changed dramatically as those returning from the forces went back to their old jobs.

Trudy specifically loved her time at the Department of Employment, especially since she did not have to work on the front counter, instead focusing on dealing with other personnel and staff. Part of the highlights of the job for Trudy were the people she worked with, especially her bosses as clerical officer as they were very supportive of her, as well as very helpful with her work. Much later, as a staff welfare officer, Trudy found great value in being able to help the people around her.

Trudy eventually retired in 1990 and immediately joined a fellowship group nearby. She was strongly encouraged by a former

colleague, Harry Hawthorne, who was heavily involved in the local group to come along and join. Subsequently, she joined and ended up running her local fellowship group for 18 years, later stepping down from the committee, but still turning up to meetings. She has also spent retirement exploring Scotland and Northern England, with activities that included a lot of walking.

The advice Trudy has for retirement is to get involved in groups like the CSRF, as it is a worthwhile endeavour for your well-being and to keep in contact with those who are like-minded. She particularly enjoyed going on walks with these groups and encourages others to do the same to enjoy the company of the world and others around her.

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The advice Trudy has for retirement is to get involved in groups like the CSRF, as it is a worthwhile endeavour for your well-being and to keep in contact with those who are like-minded.

Edinburgh Group Chair Liz Beedie with Trudy Thomas and Harry Hawthorne and the Fellowship Tree in 2015



Processing Passports

Lidia Holmes reflects on her twenty-year career in the Home Office. Words by Adam Bell.

Lidia Holmes became a civil servant and worked for the Home Office for 20 years. She always wanted to become a civil servant for patriotic reasons.

She started off her career working for the Home Office library, working on the 10th floor of a main apartment building complex. After a short time working in the library, she moved to work in the passport office. She would hold her position working behind the desk at the passport office for almost 10 years.

At the Passport Office she would be faced with many different scenarios ranging from humorous to difficult. On one humorous occasion, Lidia remembers how a policeman came into the passport office on horseback, after she had told the policeman previously that he would have to pick up his passport in person.

However, she was tough at questioning and always on watch for the possibility of criminal activity. When Lidia had a suspicion that something could be up, she would often ask personal questions such as specifics of where someone grew up and what school they went to in order to read the person and work out if they were lying or telling the truth. In certain situations, she would have to be in contact with the home office in Surrey to ensure that certain people were eligible and that details were correct.

After working in the Passport Office, Lidia moved on to work for the Prison Service, a unique, tough yet rewarding position. She received training at home office before working in the prisons themselves, dealing with a wide variety of characters and scenarios.

Lidia subsequently retired from work

and the Civil Service and now lives happily in a gated community. Within her gated community, she is visited frequently by many friends and family. Through the CSRF she has a telephone befriender who calls every week to catch up and also to partake in a quiz over the phone; something Lidia particularly looks forward to and enjoys. She is also part of the Civil Service Pensioners Alliance.

Moreover, Lidia keeps herself healthy during retirement by only eating organic foods and takes good care of herself. She previously had a carer but is now well enough to look after herself on her own.

The advice Lidia gives to those preparing for retirement is to exercise both your body and your brain. She recommends doing crosswords regularly from newspapers, something she calls the brain gym.



Working or retired from the public sector or civil service?

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Boundless will donate **£10 to CSRF** for every new member.*



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Unlimited admission to Kew Gardens and Wakehurst



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Instant access to Kids Pass membership



tastecard

Instant access to tastecard, including Coffee Club



"I've been a member for over 30 years and wouldn't be without it."

Adrian, Torquay

"Great opportunities for lovely days out."

Mark, East Sussex

"Super value – lots of great offers, days out and online events."

Nigel, Surrey

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**The value of Boundless Plus instant benefits are calculated by combining comparable membership deals at RBG Kew, National Trust for Scotland, Kids Pass, tastecard including Coffee Club and the Ramblers, as well as equivalent admission offers at WWT Slimbridge and the Tower of London (HRP). Additionally, it includes annual Roadside Assist by LV* Britannia Rescue. Terms and conditions apply.

For information on all the CSRF's services visit **www.csrf.org.uk** 17



My Time at the Exchange

Janice Wood remembers her time at the Department of Employment & Productivity. Words by Adam Bell.

In 1967, Janice was unemployed and looking for work. On a visit to the Salford Labour Exchange, she was recommended to apply for the Civil Service. She then attended an interview in Manchester which she subsequently passed. Janice was then allocated to the Department of Employment and Productivity.

Janice entered the Civil Service at Clerical Officer grade and was assigned to the benefits section of the Aytoun Street Employment Exchange in Manchester. Her first job was in taking and recording the details of claimants before moving on to rating and calculating the benefits claims. Janice worked at the Manchester office until she left the civil service in 1970.

Upon leaving the Civil Service, Janice worked as a cashier/sales assistant in an electricity showroom in Manchester. Whilst working there, she heard of the large pay increases awarded to Civil Servants. As a result of the pay increases, she decided to rejoin the Civil Service, which provided her with much better working conditions and career prospects. She subsequently rejoined the former staff team at the Aytoun Street office in 1972, resuming her duties in rating benefits claims.

Later in the year, Janice moved

house from Manchester to a smaller office in Royton. By moving to a smaller office, Janice found her duties were less compartmentalised, so she expanded her experience and knowledge as she was working. She did this across all facets of the work carried out by the Manpower Services Commission Office. This included rating benefits claims, overlooking weekly benefits, interviewing jobseekers, issuing travel warrants, issuing 12-month British Visitor Passports, and checking documents for Full British Passports. She was also the cashier.

During Janice's time at Royton the Employment Act was revised, covering The Equal Pay Act, Employment Rights Act, The Equality Act, Employment

Protection Act and Employment Rights Act. Janice found a great deal of satisfaction working at Royton, as she enjoyed the challenges faced via the different aspects of her work. Also, with Royton being a small town, she got to know the individual claimants and members of their families quite well. It felt to Janice, a tight knit friendly environment.

In 1975, the Royton Manpower Services Commission Office was split into two sections, with Benefits one side and Employment on the other. With this change, Janice now dealt solely with Employment. Royton also covered the Shaw office, which Janice would attend once a week, primarily to check the employment details of claimants.

By 1976, the office now was closed and relocated to a new site. The office has now become a Job Centre, the smallest in England. This change expanded Janice's duties. She began to type out the job vacancies for display in the window of the Job Centre. She also began arranging training for jobseekers, whilst continuing with the many roles she had before.

Looking to advance and develop her knowledge, Janice began to look for openings at other Job Centres and later in the year she

She also began arranging training for jobseekers, whilst continuing with the many roles she had before. Looking to advance and develop her knowledge, Janice began to look for openings at other Job Centres and later in the year she moved up to a temporary Executive Officer position at the Denton office in Greater Manchester..."



moved up to a temporary Executive Officer position at the Denton office in Greater Manchester, this was on a temporary work experience program.

Two years later in 1978, Janice joined the Birmingham Office as a Visiting Executive Officer.

The office expanded her experience further, as she was involved in the Youth Opportunities Programme by the setting up of Work Experience Schemes for 16–18-year-olds, dealing with Job Creation, Job Training Programmes and Workplace Experience Courses. During her time in Birmingham, she was interviewed by the Shortages Panel Board for positions in London, the South East and Sheffield. She passed the interview and applied for a move to the Department of Employment headquarters in London and the South East.

Janice joined the team in Watford in 1984 as a Higher Executive Officer. She was engaged in surveys dealing with statistics and calculating the number of people employed across

different areas of the UK. With her experience based on working extensively with jobseekers and their issues, statistics-based work was not playing to her strengths as she was primarily more of a people person. Therefore, she began to look for work that was more people orientated.

In 1987, Janice moved from Watford and joined the Runcorn staff team, in the Department of Employment headquarters, working in the Staff Salaries section. Working within this section required Janice to attend frequent meetings at the Treasury in London. She worked there until retirement in 1998.

Throughout her career in the Civil Service, Janice had many stories. The funniest of them all being during her time at the old Royton Manpower Services Commission before the relocation to the new Job Centre. Along with another member of staff, Janice was detailed to sort out and organise the stationary cupboard prior to the move. During the task, they found stationery dating back to the Second World War, but the

greatest find was a sealed envelope dating from the war. On the front of the envelope read the words: "ONLY TO BE OPENED IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY". Curiosity got the better of them and they opened the envelope. The envelope revealed a sheet of paper. On it was written: "All unemployed citizens must be called in to clear snow from the road".

Janice retired in 1998 due to ill health. Since retiring she has spent time with her family, reading and walking the family's various pet dogs. She is also an active member of the Women's Institute and is involved in the CRSF Phone Buddy Scheme.

Janice felt she could make a difference to jobseekers, matching them up to job vacancies and arranging their interviews. This is what gave her the most job satisfaction whilst working for the Department of Employment.

Janice says to look back on your career at the things you enjoyed rather than the things you didn't.



A Life in Public Service

Former CSRF Board Director and local group Chair Keith Sullens remembers his time in the Civil Service. Words by Adam Bell.

In 1962, fed up with exams, Keith Sullens decided to skip University and start his career in the civil service. He immediately joined the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance as a short-term benefits supervisor, overseeing about eight members of staff in Lewisham, commuting from Hassocks, near Brighton. Two years later, in 1964, having transferred to the Paymaster General's Office, he became a supervisor of a Civil Service pension section in Crawley. A year later, because of passing a computer aptitude test, he became a computer programmer in the department.

Keith helped program the systems which paid the pensions for civil servants but also pensions for teachers, NHS retirees and those in the armed forces, dealing with a payroll of over a million public service pensions. He eventually became a senior programmer and assisted with analytical data, later becoming a project leader. Moving across from the computer group in 1973 he became head of a pensions division.

Still working in Crawley, Keith had been promoted to Establishment Officer around 1985, before becoming Assistant Paymaster General roughly five years later. By this stage, there were over a thousand employees in the Crawley office, and the department also dealt with government accounts alongside pensions payments.



In 1993, the office became an Agency, and subsequently Keith was made Chief Executive following a public competition. The Agency was due to be privatised in 1997, and Keith led a team to try and buy the office. However ultimately his team was outbid. Therefore, he moved in 1997, to work for EDS, one of the winning bidders. Keith worked for EDS for around two years and then managed to secure his redundancy. He would travel a lot for his role as global data protection officer for EDS going to places like Germany and the United States.

During the earlier part of his career in the mid-1960's, Keith was an integral part of the construction and growth of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship, as upon the inception of the charity, his section sent out letters to all civil servants, notifying them of the charity's existence and seeking recruits. Keith had built a relationship with those involved with starting the charity and ensured that the relevant people knew about the Fellowship to get it off the ground.

Keith retired from EDS in 1999, before rejoining the Civil Service a year later in the new millennium,

During the earlier part of his career in the mid-1960's, Keith was an integral part of the construction and growth of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship, as upon the inception of the charity, his section sent out letters to all civil servants, notifying them of the charity's existence and seeking recruits.

working for the civil courts in a part time back-office role for three years. He was doing data entry at this time which he found to be his most difficult job ever. Several of his colleagues were trained typists able to input the relevant data at a much faster rate than him. He then officially retired in 2004.

During his long career in the Civil Service, Keith enjoyed many highlights, including being the chairman of the restaurant committee during his early days. He also remembers some of the preparation for the computers going into the year 2000, because of the paranoia surrounding the Y2K bug. Meeting the late Queen when



receiving his CBE was of course a particular highlight.

A particularly funny memory that Keith has from his career: One year on Red Nose Day, employees were messing about and pulling pranks, throwing, and breaking eggs on to the road outside. However, one brave colleague decided to break an egg over Keith's head whilst Keith was the head of the office. Keith eventually saw the funny side, but he was unable to get the person back.

Since retirement, Keith has been able to spend his time going on holidays and also enjoys looking after his garden. In his garden he enjoys growing vegetables like asparagus, potatoes, and French beans, alongside fruits like raspberries and blueberries.

A keen sportsman, Keith enjoys an active lifestyle and also enjoys playing football and tennis, something he still does today, at the age of 80. He plays five-a-side

matches with friends of a similar age every Monday night. Furthermore, he is a big fan of Brighton and Hove Albion, being a season ticket holder for many years, and he still goes to home matches.

Keith also meets up with his local Mid Sussex CSRF group monthly to meet and chat over coffee and cake at a café to discuss their lives and stories from their careers. Keith enjoys the sense of companionship that his local group provides, and he particularly enjoys hearing about the wide variety of different experiences others have had working for different Departments of the Civil Service.

The advice Keith gives to other civil servants is to have something to look forward to, and to start getting involved with those types of things prior to retirement, to make the transition more seamless. Preparation is key!

PREVIOUS PAGE: Keith Sullens (3rd from left, Br 37)

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: Mid Sussex Group Visit; Mid Sussex Group members at a recruitment event in 2015



The Best of Vietnam

Vietnam is a land with lots of attractions. Wendy Wu Tours have kindly shared their first timers guide and are offering all CSRF members an exclusive 5% discount on bookings.

Vietnam is a land of numerous enchantments. Too many to resist in fact, which is why it's so difficult to decide what you want to do and see because, really, the list would have one thing on it... everything! In situations like this, it's easy to just visit a couple of big-name places - in Vietnam's case, probably Hanoi, Halong Bay and Saigon - and bypass all the great stuff in-between. So, we're here to guide you, to tell you all about those other sights so you don't miss out on something magical. Whether it's culture you crave, natural wonders or spectacular landscapes that you love, it's history that gets your heart racing, or food that you're most fond of – we've got you covered!

Best of Nature: Mekong Delta

Travel two hours west of Saigon and you'll find yourself in the heart of the Mekong Delta, a particularly bountiful area of Vietnam where rice, fruits and vegetables are grown. On arrival you'll hop into a small boat and cast off into the maze of palm-lined canals that criss-cross a landscape of paddy fields, orchards, flower farms and lush meadows. Life in this riverine world is dictated by the rhythms of the Mekong and everything takes place on the water – markets feature boats piled high with fresh fruits like dragon fruits and mangos, houses stand high on stilts or bob gently at the river's edge, farmers work along the bountiful banks with teams of buffalo and small crafts flit across the water carrying locals to and fro – a truly fascinating sight.

Best of Food: Tra Que Village

At Tra Que, an organic farming village just outside of the utterly charming town of Hoi An, you have to 'work' for your supper. And by work we mean try your hand at a series of traditional farming techniques like watering, tiling, trenching, and tending herb gardens with the locals as your guides. Once you've worked up an appetite among the vegetables, you can head to the kitchen where the produce you just saw in the ground is ready and waiting to become something delicious. There are opportunities to get involved in the cooking process or to sit back and watch your chef teacher in action, picking up tips on one of the world's healthiest and most flavourful cuisines. Tucking into that meal of just-out-of-the-ground vegetables and herbs will be an absolute game changer.



60 ——— ◆
"Vietnam's culture can be easily experienced throughout your time exploring the country, but nothing showcases it in quite such spectacular fashion as Hanoi's Quintessence of Tonkin"

Best of History: Tomb of Minh Mang

The city of Hue was the seat of Vietnam's emperors from 1802 until 1945. The place to discover the country's imperial history is full of treasures, albeit scarred by war, like the Imperial City and the Forbidden Purple City. The tombs of bygone rulers scatter the banks of the Perfume River outside of the city, and Minh Mang's, in its forest setting, is the most impressive of the lot. The second ruler of the Nguyen Dynasty, Minh Mang's mausoleum is

a complex complete with courtyards, pavilions, lakes, staircases, and stone bridges, featuring bright colours and elaborate ornamentation. Although significantly damaged in the Vietnam War a series of conservation and rebuilding projects have returned the tomb to its former glory.

Best of Culture: Quintessence of Tonkin

Vietnam's culture can be easily experienced throughout your time exploring the country, but nothing showcases it in quite such spectacular fashion as Hanoi's Quintessence of Tonkin. The show invites the audience to look at northern Vietnam's past from a contemporary perspective while focusing on different aspects of the region's culture including poetry, music, art and festivals. On a huge set at the foot of Tay Pagoda Mountain, everything about the staging is magnificent, from

its setting to the huge number of performers to the folktales, music, and culture essence highlighted. It is a must see!

Best of Landscapes: Halong Bay

Halong Bay is Vietnam's showstopper sight, a seascape unlike any other with a fascinating mythology to match its beauty. Formed over centuries from the easily erodible limestone karst rock, the turquoise waters of this secluded corner of the Bay of Tonkin are strewn with sheer, jaggedly sculpted towers and islets, many perfectly crowned with a scattering of green foliage. Legend tells that the bay was created by ancient dragons who descended from the heavens

MAIN IMAGE: Halong Bay.
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Mekong Delta; Thien Mu
Pagoda, Hue; Hoi An; Hoi An



to help the Vietnamese people protect their homeland from foreign invaders, a story that suits its mystical aura. Naturally, the best way to explore this picturesque panorama is by boat, drifting tranquilly through the formations, watching the comings and goings of junk boats, exploring caves, and seeing life on the islands and floating villages.

Best of Southeast Asia: Temples of Angkor

Ok, this one is a little cheeky as it's not in Vietnam, but we strongly feel that if you're in Southeast Asia, the Temples of Angkor are a sight you really shouldn't miss. Spread across a landscape of jungle, lakes and plain, just outside the Cambodian city of Siem Reap

“The Temples of Angkor are a sight you really shouldn't miss. Spread across a landscape of jungle, lakes and plain”

(easily reachable from Vietnam by road or plane), Angkor is home to 72 major temples and 100s of minor ones. The seat of the Khmer Empire between the 9th and 15th centuries, many of the structures have been left to the elements, leaving behind atmospheric ruins entwined with nature. At the heart of it all is Angkor Wat; in constant use as a temple since its construction in around 1145AD, and the world's largest religious monument, it is Cambodia's national treasure.

Angkor the Bay

17 days from **£4,450pp**

Take a voyage of discovery from the breathtaking majesty of the Temples of Angkor, through to the spectacular natural grandeur of Halong Bay, experiencing all manner of delights en route.

Siem Reap – Phnom Penh – Saigon – Hoi An – Hue – Hanoi – Halong Bay

Price includes – flights, all meals, four-star accommodation, transport, touring with guides and entrance fees.

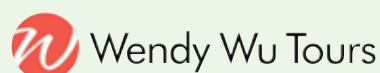


How to redeem your CSRF members exclusive 5% discount

Call Wendy Wu Tours' booking hotline on **0808 239 5017** and use code CSRF5 to claim your 5% members' discount. The discount is over and above any other offer from Wendy Wu Tours, so presents a real benefit. **For more information on all the tours run by Wendy Wu Tours visit them online at www.wendywutours.co.uk**

Terms and conditions

The discount code must be used at the time of booking and cannot be added retrospectively. Membership will need to be ratified to ensure membership criteria is met. The discount is applicable to direct bookings only with Wendy Wu Tours. Wendy Wu Tours reserve the right to withdraw the discount at any time and without prior notice.





Around the Groups



Caerphilly Certificate of Merit

Ron Kingham from the Caerphilly Group received a Certificate of Merit from Group Chair Barbara Caddy last month. The award recognised his 30 years' service to the group committee.



Lisburn at Stormont

Our Lisburn group enjoyed a tour of the parliament buildings in Stormont with lunch in the Members' restaurant in February.

Trip to Docklands

Members of the East London & SW Essex group enjoying a visit to the Museum of Docklands last year.



Catering Lunch for Eltham

Eltham group enjoyed lunch at the North Kent Catering College's View Restaurant in February.



Choctastic Trip for Caerphilly

Members of the Caerphilly group enjoying a trip to Cadburyworld last year.



Thanks to Liskead group for sharing a picture from their Christmas lunch last year.



2025 Group News & Listings

We have groups spread across the country waiting to welcome you along to a meeting! You can use this directory to find out where your nearest one is and then give them a ring to find out what they have planned. To give you a flavour of the type of activities offered by our groups you can refer to our new symbol guide. But the best way to find out up to date information about planned group activities is to ring (or email if available) the listed Group Contact.

You can also view all group listings online at www.csrf.org.uk

SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH



Liz Beedie Chair/Secretary

T: 0131 229 7422

Café/Bar at the Mercure Hotel, Princes Street, Edinburgh

Third Tuesday of each month at 2pm

(except January (Winter Lunch) and September (Summer Lunch – no meetings in August or December)).

HIGHLAND



Mrs Pam Barnett T: 01463 790265

Red Pepper Café, 92 Academy Street, Inverness IV1 1LU

First Wednesday of each month, coffee morning at 11am

NORTHERN IRELAND

BANBRIDGE



Margaret Hassan Secretary T:07884 073401

E: hassanmargaret@yahoo.co.uk

Bannside Presbyterian Church Hall 21 Castlewella Road Banbridge BT32 4AX

First Wednesday of each month at 2pm
(No meetings in July or Aug)

BELFAST



Miss Wynne O'Neill Secretary

T: 028 9067 1157

Mcelhinney Room The Pavillion Stormont Estate Upper Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 3TA

First Monday of each month at 2.00pm
(except June, July and August)

KEY



Refreshments



Trips Out



Walks



Lunches



Holidays



Speakers

CRAIGAVON



George McConnell Secretary

T: 028 8676 4395

E: joannearcher1@hotmail.co.uk

Portadown Town Hall, 15 Edward St, Portadown, Craigavon BT62 3LX

First Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm

LISBURN



Mrs R Hope Secretary

T: 028 9268 3610

Bridge Community Centre 50 Railway Street Lisburn County Antrim BT28 1XP

Second Monday of each month at 2.30pm
(except Jul & Aug)

WALES

CAERPHILLY



Barbara Caddy Chair,

Tel: 029 2086 2091

No.2 Meeting Room Caerphilly New Library The Twyn Caerphilly CF83 1JL

Second Monday of every month at 10.15am (except Aug)

CARDIFF



Jane Lewis Secretary T: 029 20 757174

Ararat Baptist Church Plas Treoda Whitchurch Cardiff South Glamorgan CF14 1PT

First Wednesday of the month at 10.30am

NEATH & PORT TALBOT



Mr W Pugh Chairperson T: 01792 864299

Neath Community Centre, 10-12 Orchard Street, Neath SA11 1DU

Last Monday of each month at 2pm
(except where there is a Bank Holiday)

SWANSEA

Mrs S Edgell Chairman/Secretary

T: 01792 851125

E: sylviaedgell@btinternet.com

This is a telephone/email group only.

ENGLAND

YORK & DISTRICT



Lisa Gill Local Group Contact

Tel: 0208 225 8479, Mob: 07917 067 860 or email: lisa.gill@defra.gov.uk

Last Tuesday of each month at 1pm.

LET'S DO LUNCH!



As part of our 2025 campaigns, we're actively looking for a new cohort of volunteers interested in being local lunch group volunteers in areas we don't have a group running. If you're interested in volunteering then please contact us to request a copy of our Lets Do Lunch leaflet that outlines what's involved.

Areas of interest: we have had expressions of interest in going along to a lunch group from members of our community in the following areas: **London (South Bank), Orpington, Kettering, Basingstoke, Andover, Folkestone, Cambridge, Kilmarnock and Abergele.** So if you work/live in any of these areas and interested in co-ordinating a local lunch group we'd love to hear from you

OSWESTRY



Mrs R Clarke Chair/Treasurer

T: 01691 623380

The Wynnstay Hotel Church Street

Oswestry SY11 2SZ

First Tuesday of each month at 10.30am

GLOUCESTER/HUCCLECOTE



Mrs J Neale, Chairman T: 01452 506949

Christchurch, Heron Way, Abbeydale,

Gloucester GL4 5EQ

First Thursday of the month at 2pm

NUNEATON



Rachel Homer Secretary T: 024 76 385845

E: homer351@btinternet.com

Tea & Chat Café, 2 Chapel Sreet,

Nuneaton CV11 5QH

First Tuesday of each month at 11am

SLEAFORD & ANCASTER



Mike Smith Chairman T: 01526 833273

E: mjs_consultation@hotmail.com

Bristol Bowls Club Boston Road Sleaford

NG34 7HH **First Thursday of the month**

from 9.30am-12noon followed by lunch

WORCESTER



Helen Connelly Chair T: 01905 830451

Perdiswell Young Peoples' Leisure Club

Droitwich Road (opposite Checketts Lane)

Worcester WR3 7SN

Second Wednesday of the month at 1pm

(except Aug)

COLCHESTER



Joan Gomer Secretary T: 01206 794656

Hythe Community Centre, 1 Ventura

Drive, Colchester CO1 2FE

Third Monday of each month at 2pm

(except December)

ASCOT & SUNNINGDALE



Graeme Holt Chairman T: 01344 48170

E: graemeholt@gmail.com

Lynwood Village, Rise Road, Sunninghill,

Ascot SL5 0AJ

Third Friday of each month at 12 noon to

4pm (No meeting in August)

BEXHILL & HASTINGS



Elizabeth Leahy Secretary

T: 01424 214042

Bexhill Sailing Club Marina Bexhill-on-sea

TN40 1LA

Fourth Tuesday of each month at 10am

MID SUSSEX



John Taylor Chairman T: 07470 124125

E: r.taylor40@sky.com

Third Wednesday of each month at

2.30pm

STUBBINGTON



Peter Cornish Treasurer T: 02392 345457

Catholic Church Hall Bells Lane

Stubbington Hampshire PO14 2PL

Second Thursday of each month at 2pm

(except April)

TADLEY



Mr D MacLean Chairman T: 0118 970 1290

Tadley Community Centre Newchurch

Road Tadley RG26 4HN

First Thursday of each month at 1.15pm

for 1.45pm

BRADFORD-ON-AVON



Mr M Wickham Secretary T: 01225 864541

E: lindamorgan1975@sky.com

United Reformed Church Hall St.

Margarets Street Bradford-on-avon BA15

1DD

Second Monday of each month from

2.15pm to 4pm

CHIPPENHAM



David Gardner Chairman

T: 01249 658431

Chippenham Museum 10 Market Place

Chippenham SN15 3HF

First Wednesday of each month at 2pm

(except Aug)



Local Groups

LISKEARD & PENSILVA



Pam Ford Chair Tel: 01579 349147
Liskeard Public Hall (the Emily Hobhouse Room) West Street Liskeard Cornwall PL14 6BW
Last Wednesday of each month at 10am

SIDMOUTH



Margaret Adams Chair T: 01395 577622
Lunches at local pubs on second Thursday of the month

TROWBRIDGE



Sue Arnold Secretary T: 01225 761627
E: suearnoldwfh@blueyonder.co.uk
1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month
at Palmer Gardens Cafe, The Shaw Trust Garden Centre, Islington, Trowbridge. BA14 8QJ at 10.30am Coffee mornings twice a month at the Palmer Gardens Cafe (call to confirm the meeting is on)

WESTBURY (WILTSHIRE)



Mr W Clark Chairman T: 01373 822892
Paragon Hall Haynes Road Westbury Wiltshire BA13 3HA **Third Monday of each month at 1.45pm for 2pm**

WEYMOUTH



Geoff Greenstreet Secretary
T: 01305 832432.
E: geoff.marion@btinternet.com
Weymouth Bay Methodist Church, 23 Melcombe Avenue, Weymouth, DT4 7TH
Fourth Wednesday for coffee at the café at the church at 10.30am

YATE & DISTRICT



Val Gannaway Group Leader
T: 01454 317968
Yate Parish Hall Station Road Yate BS37 4PQ
Fourth Tuesday of the month from 1.30pm-4.30pm.

HOUNSLOW



Jane Cocking Secretary T: 020 8568 6159
United Reformed Church Hall 114 Hanworth Road Hounslow TW3 1UF
Second Tuesday of the each month 1.30pm for 2pm

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT



Anne Thomson Secretary T: 01372 373258
E: anner.thomson@talktalk.net
John Rumble Hall Fetcham Village Hall The Street Fetcham KT22 9QS
First Friday of each month at 10am

LONDON - CATFORD & LEWISHAM



Jane Duffy Chair T: 020 8697 2840
St Laurence Church Hall 37 Bromley Road Catford London SE6 2TS
Second Tuesday of every month at 10am.

LONDON - CROYDON, DULWICH & NORWOOD



Hilary Waterhouse Secretary
T: 020 8239 9814
E: hilary.waterhouse@virginmedia.com
Friendship lunches at The Crown Inn, 28 Wickham Road, Croydon CR0 8BA and The Fox on the Hill, 149 Denmark Hill, Camberwell, London SE5 8EH
Fourth Thursday of each month at 12 noon (January to November)

LONDON - EAST & SOUTH WEST ESSEX



Neil Keskar Treasurer T: 020 8531 5461
The Great Spoon of Ilford, 114-116 Cranbrook Road, Ilford IG2 4LZ
Third Monday of the month at 2pm

LONDON - ELTHAM



Phyllis Duignan Chair/Treasurer
T: 020 8265 0810
E: phyllis.duignan@gmail.com
New Eltham Methodist Church, 435 Footscray Road, New Eltham SE9 3UL
Fourth Thursday of each month from 10am to 12 noon

MAIDSTONE



Ms R Williams Contact T: 01622 693312
Various venues for lunches.

RICHMOND & TWICKENHAM



Philip Blow Secretary T: 020 8748 7477
E: p.blow1@btinternet.com
Meetings in various venues in and around Twickenham.

SUTTON



Hazel Hoare Social Secretary
Tel: 020 8642 8328
E: hazel-hoare@hotmail.co.uk
We run regularly monthly lunch events

WORCESTER PARK



John Wright Secretary T: 020 8337 8965
E: johnandglenisw@gmail.com
Old Malden Scout Hall Rear of 411 Malden Road Worcester Park KT4 7NY. **First Monday each month from 2pm to 4pm** (if the first Monday is a Bank Holiday then the meeting will be held on the second Monday)

FIRST TIME GROUP VISIT?

It can be daunting visiting a group for the first time. All our groups provide a welcome to any new faces wanting to come along and enjoy their activities. Why not give the group contact a buzz to find out what they have planned for the coming months.

