

**CHESTERFIELD & NORTH DERBYSHIRE
TINNITUS SUPPORT GROUP**

Registered Charity Number: 1188354



34 Glumangate, Chesterfield, S40 1TX

Tel: 01246 380415

Newsletter: Edited by Audrey Carlin

Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Tinnitus Support Group

34 Glumangate

Chesterfield

S40 1TX

Telephone 01246 380415

E-mail mail@tinnitussupport.org.uk

Website www.tinnitussupport.org.uk



**Inquisitive Sheep on a Spring Morning Walk by
Audrey**



@tinnitusbuzzwords



@TinnitusSupport



Tinnitus_support

CONTENTS

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
(Talk by Stefan Donnelly)

PLANET EARTH by Denise Healy

FLY TIPPING IMAGES
by Sarah Richards

I REMEMBER by Sandra Johnson

A BIG THANK YOU

POETRY COMPETITION

JOHN WESLEY'S RULE (from Sylvia White)

TREASURES OF MY DAILY EXERCISE
by Joanne Gordon

RAVISHING RHUBARB by Sarah Walters

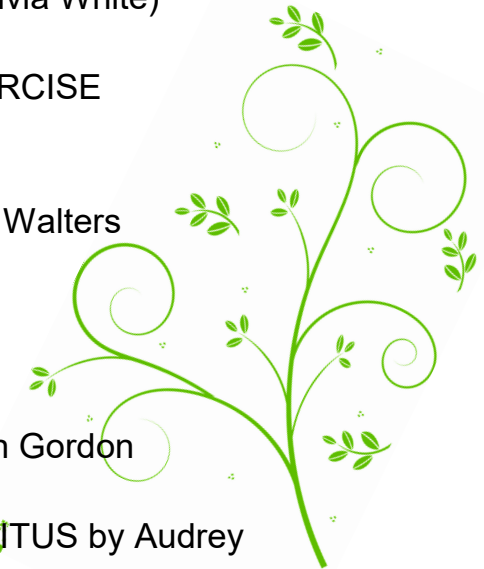
A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP
by Audrey Carlin

MINDFULNESS by Dr William Van Gordon

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR TINNITUS by Audrey

MINDFUL BREATHING by Audrey

TINNITUS RESEARCH UPDATE FROM BTA



We have also developed our Music to Your Ears report with the University of Nottingham, with funding from Help Musicians. Find out more below and read about Covid-19, vaccines, and hearing loss.

Many thanks, **Dr Georgina Burns O'Connell**
Research Officer, British Tinnitus Association

FUNDING BRAIN ACTIVITY RESEARCH

We are delighted to announce that we are jointly funding research with RNID that will increase understanding of the causes of tinnitus, improve its diagnosis, or advance the development of effective treatments.

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS REPORT

Our 'Music to Your Ears' report documents the findings of a study into the experiences of professional musicians with tinnitus in the UK, including what support they receive, or might need, to help them manage living with the condition.

Based on the findings, four key recommendations were developed:

1. Support: tinnitus support groups for musicians, by musicians
2. Tinnitus management: support focused on relaxation techniques
3. An understanding and informed approach: encouraging knowledge, empathy, and awareness of tinnitus amongst friends, family and those who work with musicians
4. Music education evaluation: tinnitus prevention and promoting healthy hearing

As mentioned in the report from Dr Van Gordon, mindful breathing is so important and really does help in all sorts of situations. This is a technique that can be used at any time, anywhere and is taken from another of our leaflets.

MINDFUL BREATHING

- Sit in a comfortable position*
- Breathe in through your nose (to a count of 5) hold (to a count of 5) then breathe out through pursed lips slowly
- Let go of your thoughts
- Purposely watch your breath, focusing your sense of awareness on its pathway as it enters your body and fills you with life
- Repeat for as many times as you feel comfortable with (adapt “holding” your breath to what feels comfortable for you)

*This exercise can be as long or as short as you feel comfortable with. It can be used as part of your daily routine before or after your daily chair-based exercises. I use it on days when it's not fit to go into the garden so I stand at the door and breathe in the air. It really does help. It is also very effective if you feel overwhelmed, it will calm you down.

APRIL 2021 – TINNITUS RESEARCH UPDATE FROM THE BTA

As we enter springtime, we have wonderful examples of collaboration to highlight. We are delighted to announce that we are jointly funding brain activity research with RNID that will increase understanding of the causes of tinnitus, improve its diagnosis, or advance the development of effective treatments.



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT – 22ND FEBRUARY TO 8TH MARCH 2021

For our online support group meeting on the 2nd March, we invited Stefan Donnelly who is Campaigns Supporter Engagement Manager, to talk about the work of Fairtrade. As climate change is such an important issue, we thought you would be interested to learn how we can all contribute in some way by making lifestyle changes; with an article about what we can do from Denise Healy and some outstanding photographs by Sarah Richards, both of whom highlight this very important issue.

FAIRTRADE'S MISSION

“Our mission is to connect disadvantaged farmers and workers with consumers, promote fairer trading conditions and empower farmers and workers to combat poverty, strengthen their position and take more control over their lives.”

THE THEME OF FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT THIS YEAR FOCUSES ON “CLIMATE CHANGE”

THE DIFFERENCE THAT FAIRTRADE MAKES

Emerging evidence through impact assessments has found that Fairtrade can make a significant difference to the lives of farmers and workers.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE

- The Fairtrade Minimum Price is supporting the farmers that grow products such as cocoa, coffee and bananas to become more income-secure and less vulnerable to poverty.
- Fairtrade is gradually empowering communities to organise into co-operatives and improve their negotiating position within the supply chain. This can enable them to negotiate a higher price for their product than the conventional market price.
- Fairtrade improves access to agricultural services like - organic training and premium markets. As a result, farmers have an incentive to farm better and sell more.
- Additional income through the Fairtrade Premium is supporting better farming, strong co-operatives and investment in collective assets to improve crops and yields.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE

- The Fairtrade Standards cover key areas for environmental protection, including energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction, soil and water quality, pest management, biodiversity protection, prohibition of genetically modified organisms and harmful chemicals and waste management.
- The Fairtrade Standards promote training for farmers, which can include advice on switching to environmentally friendly practises, such as developing nutrient-rich soils that support healthy plants and encouraging wildlife to help control pests and diseases.
- For some farmers, the Fairtrade (and organic) Standards have resulted in switches to less-toxic pesticides, which, as well as being better for the environment, has a positive impact on producers' health.
- Fairtrade can provide access to finance, support and expertise in tackling climate change, supporting long-term environmental sustainability.

you to overcome the negative emotions created by your perception of tinnitus. You will begin to appreciate the world around you and this will add to your quality of life.

This could simply be stroking a cat or dog, listening to beautiful music, singing or dancing. The crucial thing is that you find what you enjoy, build more moments into your life and immerse yourself in the experience to find real pleasure in your life.

Living in this way will trigger endorphins, the feel-good hormones that are responsible for the physical sensations of pleasure. It may take time to build up the new awareness into your life but at least once a week, set aside a few hours and consciously decide to be fully aware of your senses. Fill your environment with things that evoke happy memories. Play music you love and be aware of smells and textures of everything around you. Surround yourself with pleasant experiences such as happy and memorable photographs, colourful and tactile items, flowers and plants. Build up a sanctuary of calm.

Experiencing tinnitus may be a point in your life where you look at where you are and how you have been treating yourself. A “crossroads” through which tinnitus has created an awareness that you should ‘stop’ and consider what changes you can make to create a life that embraces all the things that make you happy and contented.

Always remember you have a choice in life. Stand back and consider the choices you can make that will make it more peaceful and pleasurable.

“We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves” (Dalai Lama)

Headspace for **meditation** has been shown to increase **happiness** by 16%.

Some years ago, based on years of experience of tinnitus, Joanne and I developed our own tips and techniques to help people to understand and manage their tinnitus. However, reading through one of our leaflets “Make Peace with Your Tinnitus” this can also be helpful for people experiencing stress through other situations in life, because it’s about “making peace with yourself”. I hope you will find it helpful to you.

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR TINNITUS

It may sound strange, but once you actually make peace with your tinnitus, you will no longer be consciously aware of it and it just becomes part of who you are. If you are forever fighting or running away from your tinnitus, you are constantly in a battle with yourself. You are forever “beating yourself with a big stick”. This will never work. You wouldn’t try to help anyone by beating them with a stick. You would treat another person with kindness and empathy and you should do the same for yourself.

In learning to make peace with your tinnitus, you need to provide yourself with an environment that is conducive to peacefulness. Therefore, ensure an environment that will awaken your sensory awareness to everything that is around you, so you don’t let your autopilot just focus in on tinnitus. This will help you to connect with your full range of senses – sight, taste, touch, smell and of course sound and especially those sounds that give you pleasure.

Embrace everything around you, the sound of the birds singing, the joy of hearing people laugh and many more beautiful sounds. Becoming aware of your senses all of the time will help

SOCIAL BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE

- Farmers and workers who choose to participate in Fairtrade often feel a real sense of control over their future with greater power and voice.
- Fairtrade can support workers to realise their rights and negotiate the terms and conditions of their work through trade unions and collective bargaining.
- Fairtrade can provide producer support and expertise in deepening gender equality.
- For workers employed on Fairtrade certified plantations, investment of the Fairtrade Premium into education, better housing, better schools and medical facilities is highly valued.
- Investment of the Fairtrade Premium by co-operatives in community development projects is improving the quality of lives of rural communities
- Achieving development impact is a long-term process and results vary significantly based on regional context, product and supply chain specifics and external factors.



Sorting cocoa beans

Most cocoa comes from small family-run farms in West Africa. These farms have little market access and rely on middlemen to bring their products to market. Sometimes middlemen are unfair to farmers. Farmers do not get a fair price for

their product despite relying on cocoa sales for the majority of their income. One solution for fair labour practises is for farmers to become part of an Agricultural co-operative. Cooperatives pay farmers a fair price for their cocoa so farmers have enough money for food, clothes, and school fees.



FAIRTRADE SETS STANDARDS

Fairtrade sets social, economic and environmental standards for both companies and the farmers and workers who grow the food we love. For farmers and workers, the standards include protection of workers' rights and the environ-

ment, for companies they include the payment of the Fairtrade Minimum Price and an additional Fairtrade Premium to invest in business or community projects of the community's choice.

Fairtrade independently check that their standards have been met by the farmers, workers and companies that are part of products' supply chains. And in order to reassure consumers that this has happened, they licence the use of the **FAIRTRADE** Mark on products and packaging to signify this. Companies can choose to source only one ingredient on Fairtrade terms for their ranges, in which case products may carry this Mark.

FAIRTRADE LOBBIES GOVERNMENT

Fairtrade mobilise its grassroots support from the British public to demand fairer treatment in trade deals towards farmers in developing countries who supply us with so much of our food.

FAIRTRADE DRIVES AWARENESS WITH THE PUBLIC

Through our Fairtrade Towns, Schools and Faith groups, and through our campaigns, we drive awareness of the issues of unfair trade and ask the public to choose Fairtrade.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Environmental protection is a key element of Fairtrade's view of sustainability. Fairtrade Standards require smallholder farmers and larger hired labour production set-ups to comply in key areas. The Standards also promote training for farmers, which can include advice on switching to environmentally friendly practises. This has been shown to lead to good agricultural practises, which have encouraged environmentally sustainable production.

The future never arrives – when it does – it is *“the present moment”*. Learn to **accept** and **embrace** and work with the here and now. This includes accepting and working with uncertainty which is particularly pertinent in the pandemic climate. The future, by its very nature, is uncertain.

Understanding the uncertainty is normal and natural and Mindfulness helps us to understand this and it helps us to be in the here and now. If we do not have expectations about the future – we can improve the future. Mindfulness is about observed participation. We have the skills and resources within ourselves; it is about living with them and cultivating them. Try to get into the habit (several times throughout the day) just take a step back and consciously breathe in and out. Be gentle towards yourself. Be aware of what is happening within yourself.

The session ended with questions. One in particular was about Mindfulness and Happiness. The answer to this question was that, by practising Mindfulness we should be happier on a day-to-day basis.

Dr Van Gordon has written a book called “The Way of the Mindful Warrior” which can be purchased on the internet.

Note

Mindfulness has been shown to help us be healthier, less affected by stress, more relaxed, more creative, more open to learning, sleep better, improve our relationships with others and feel **happier** and more satisfied with our lives.

I checked on the internet and there is a **Headspace** app which offers guided meditations for **happiness**, using a guided visualisation technique in order to **achieve** a sense of ease and **joy** within the body. Just 10 days of using

- ♦ Relax and begin again
- ♦ Ground yourself in the present moment
- ♦ Use to move forward in a gentle manner

♦ **Breath Awareness**

- ♦ A meditative anchor
- ♦ 'Tie' the mind to the present moment
- ♦ Each breath is unique
- ♦ It has a beginning, middle and end
- ♦ It has a texture and a taste
- ♦ Let it follow its natural course
- ♦ Don't be a 'breather'
- ♦ Focus should be open and encompassing

A breath never repeats itself and hopefully wherever we are we always breathe. It is a very protective way to practise Mindfulness. Start to form a relationship with your breath. Be consistent with your breathing.

- ♦ Follow the breath inwards and become aware of the body
- ♦ Allow the body and emotions to be bathed by the breath
- ♦ Follow the breath out of the body and see where it goes
- ♦ When you breathe out, the trees breathe in
- ♦ Follow the breath through time and space
- ♦ There is only one breath and we all share it

Use Mindfulness to engage with the present moment – not to escape from it. Use breath awareness of our lungs as it rises and falls also to become aware of feelings and thoughts. It is a powerful technique. If you follow your breath out of the body you can introduce wisdom into the body.

- ♦ When you practise Mindfulness try to be spontaneous
- ♦ Practise wherever you might be
- ♦ Integrate it into your everyday life

The Standards also guide producers in adapting to climate change and mitigate their impact.

MARKET ACCESS AND FAIRER TRADE

Fairtrade is about doing trade differently. It empowers farmers and workers to take control of their lives, businesses and communities through trade. Fairtrade also enables businesses – and through them, consumers – to understand the whole supply chain because it is tracked from producer to buyer. Challenging unfair trading practices is also a crucial part of what Fairtrade does.

TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY



Fairtrade believes the role of women in agriculture needs more visibility, recognition and value, and that gender equity is important to social sustainability. Currently, 350,000 women farmers and workers are part of Fairtrade, a quarter of the total.

But they know there is a significantly larger number involved in Fairtrade supply chains that are not registered as formal workers or members of co-operatives.



BANANAS

One in three bananas bought in the UK is Fairtrade and it makes a huge difference to thousands of farmers, workers and their families.

CHOCOLATE

Buying Fairtrade chocolate can make a difference to the lives of cocoa farmers and their families around the world.



COFFEE

When you choose Fairtrade coffee, not only can farmers build a better quality of life for their families and communities, they can invest in growing better quality beans too.

CLOTHES

Stefan didn't talk about clothes, but there are quite a lot of ethical brands that can be purchased. However, I decided to check out the ethical statement of a brightly-coloured booklet that arrives through the post every year – called “Culture Vulture” – in which there are beautiful products from around the world. In their ethical statement (online) they say “We are pleased to be working with inspirational and innovative Fairtrade companies who are making a real difference in countries including India, Nepal and Zimbabwe. With long-established relationships across the globe, our Fairtrade partners have created beautiful products that improve the livelihoods of disadvantaged people in developing countries, benefit local community projects and keep alive traditional skills that might otherwise be lost.”



It exists on a continuum and with an opposite – Mindlessness. You can be Mindful and Mindless at the same time.

What is Mindlessness?

This is where we are “much like a robot; thoughts emotions and behaviours.....are determined by programmed routines” (Bodner & Langer, 2001)

The only place we can experience our lives is in the “**present moment**”. The past can never be re-lived – it's gone! The future remains (just that) - the future! So, if we live in the future, we will miss out on the present moment. Therefore, being aware of what is happening in the ‘**here and now**’, we are fully experiencing our life .

The Chattering Mind



Stop

Observe the breath

Step back and watch the mind

When this happens, you can send out an **SOS** to yourself

S T O P!
OBSERVE!
STEP BACK AND WATCH
THE MIND!

- When your mind won't be quiet
- When you get lost in yourself
- When you become small-minded rather than big-minded
- When the mind is about to react unskillfully
- When you are living ‘the soap opera of self’

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS:

- ♦ Step back and observe the mind
- ♦ Bring yourself back to the present moment

The following was covered in the session:

- What is Mindfulness?
- Mindfulness – Mindlessness
- Breath Awareness
- Some Research Evidence
- Guided Mindfulness Exercise

Mindful Revolution

Lots of people and organisational contacts (big brand names) use Mindfulness as a means of wellbeing and job satisfaction.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a process of “Observed Participation” of the present moment. -as it is happening in the **here and now**. The **experience** of an “experience”. And as a tool for engaging with the present moment. Observing ourselves in the process of “observing”.

When we practise Mindfulness there should be the ‘experience’ of enjoying the task or activity of “doing” - but at another level of experience. Step back perceptively and experience yourself ‘experiencing’ that activity.

Mindfulness and Mindlessness

Mindlessness

Mindfulness



FLOWERS

There are nearly 70,000 flower workers working with Fairtrade to get a better deal. They grow, harvest, pack and care for the flowers so we can enjoy them all year round. Fairtrade flowers are traceable back to the original farm. Fairtrade certified farms must ensure safety and working conditions for their employees. These farms receive a premium of 10% for every stem sold, which allows workers to invest in healthcare, education and other social benefits. Fairtrade works with flower workers in countries including Kenya, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Uganda and Tanzania.

Many of the major supermarkets and stockists offer Fairtrade flowers. These include not just Roses and Spray Roses and Lilies but also, Eryngium, Calla Lilies, Sunflowers, and Alstroemerias, suitable for all occasions.



TEA

Fairtrade tea refers to all teas which stem from the leaves and buds of the *Camellia sinensis* plant. Grown year-round, this is the source of all white tea, green tea, oolong tea, black tea and pu'erh tea. Fairtrade also works with herbs and spices, which form the basis of many herbal teas.



When you buy Wine and Beauty Products look for the Fairtrade logo.



SUGAR, SPREADS AND OIL

British consumers and companies choosing Fairtrade sugar sent more than £5million in Fairtrade premium back to sugar cane smallholders last year.

Impact of Covid19:

- Failing crop price
- Loss of access to markets
- Direct impacts in vulnerable communities
- Workers face more challenges
- Tea prices plunged by 8% in the past year and the import restrictions devastated a fragile industry

Impact on Fairtrade Flowers

- Fallen demand re import restrictions
- Not allowed to sell their produce
- Dock delays and flowers rot
- 90% of Kenya flower growers affected by this by losing jobs or less income
- Many of the farmers are not in places where they have the safety nets and no equivalent of furlough scheme for the farmers

Climate Change means farmers experience

- Floods/droughts
- High temperature
- More disease
- Loss of fertile land
- Crop destruction
- Lack of food
- Climate change is responsible for a decline in production and poor growth of their crops
- Coffee and cocoa are more vulnerable

Warm Almond Chai Milk - Serves 2

This is a recipe that Joanne uses as her nightcap and she says, this drink is full of magnesium to encourage the muscles in your body to relax and compounds that help to reduce inflammation, which is one of the negative aspects of not sleeping for a prolonged period of time.

500ml almond milk
 1/2 tsp ground turmeric
 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
 1/4 tsp ground cardamom pods
 2 tsp honey
 small pinch of sea salt

Place all the ingredients in a small saucepan and set over a medium heat.

Warm the milk slowly and be careful not to let it boil. Once warmed, serve in small mugs.

MINDFULNESS

Our group was invited to An Introduction to Mindfulness session by Derbyshire Voluntary Action, in conjunction with COMMuniTY Chesterfield, (who funded the session), led by Dr William Van Gordon, Associate Professor of Contemplative Psychology, University of Derby. Prior to joining academia, Dr Van Gordon was a Buddhist monk for ten years.

◇ **Leave** a notebook on your bedside table in case you wake up during the night and remember something that has to be done.

◇ **Write** about the problem in a Journal to release it from your mind

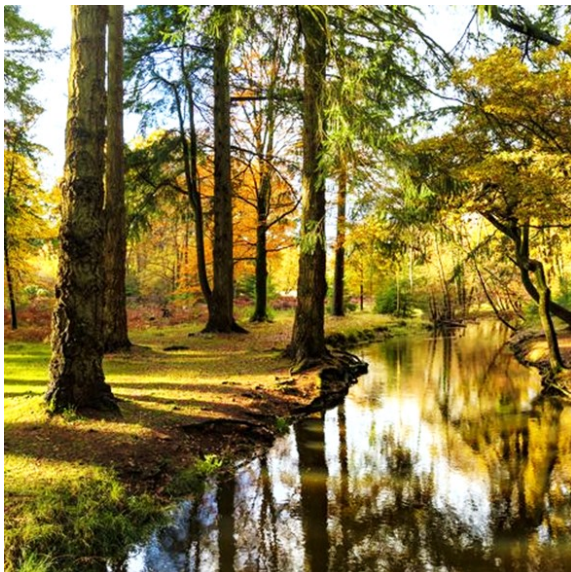


◇ **Take** some time out to sit and meditate, using this two-step **kshepana mudra** (hand gesture), to point your worries up and away from you.



1. Interlock your fingers, then release your index fingers so they are joined and pointing upward. Place your hands in front of your heart or above your head with your arms straight.
2. Close your eyes or focus on a fixed point ahead of you and hold the mudra for 3-5 minutes while breathing deeply into your belly.

◇ **Connect with Nature** – Studies have shown that getting out into nature, ideally somewhere green or near water and trees, helps to restore the balance of the hormones - serotonin, oxytocin and melatonin that are vital for your mood, wellbeing and sleep.



[Extracts from The Little Book of Sleep by Dr Nerina Ramlakhan]

- Crops can be affected by heat
- More diseases – due to climate change
- From 2012 plants have had coffee rust, causing a huge impact on lost produce over the last 9 years
- Less fertile land in which to grow their crops
- Increased disasters – two hurricanes hit Central America at the end of 2020 which destroyed farms particularly in Honduras.
- Climate change threatens the future of some of the goods we have every day.

Here are the words of farmers

As part of Fairtrade Fortnight – Farmers were asked – if they had to choose a world they want to see, what would they want

“If I had to choose the world I want to see, it would be a world where every individual would be conscious of the fact that if we continue harming nature, we will always have these atmospheric events that occur as a result of climate change.”

“When we have periods of rain it also affects us because the fruit does not have excellent quality so we cannot export it.” (In order to recover he needs to replant but he doesn't have the money to do so.)

Some farmers have to give up the plot or the business entirely. So they choose to invest their Fairtrade premium on Climate Recovery to rebuild and recover. Where there have been floods, tree planting is undertaken along the banks of the river to protect against the floods and also trees help against climate change. There will always be challenges as weather conditions and atmospheric events have a huge impact on crops .

Finally, Stefan said that Britain is one of the biggest importers of Fairtrade goods. Followed by Germany and the Netherlands; he also mentioned France and America. It is really heartening to



know that our country is one of the biggest importers of Fairtrade goods.

Look out for Fairtrade goods in our supermarkets. Co-op was mentioned as offering a wide range of Fairtrade Projects. Look out for

the Fairtrade Logo.

YOUR THOUGHTS, STORIES AND IDEAS

Hopefully this talk can be the start of stories, your thoughts and ideas towards a better, environmentally safe, future. I think the past year has given us all the opportunity to view life from a different perspective. Any small act we can do to help our world will be worthwhile. I think a lot can be learned from the lives we lived 50/60 years ago, in terms of caring for the planet – the produce we grew, upcycling/recycling, making and mending and lots more (a period I remember well). We would love to hear from you.

Please send us your stories.

PLANET EARTH by Denise Healy

Denise says:

“I am passionate about trying to save Planet Earth, ensuring a safer and healthier environment for future generations and also focussing on what we can do to help the climate emergency. My aim is to live lightly on the earth, not creating so much waste and reusing items rather than replacing.”

- **Create a sanctuary in your bedroom** – your bedroom should be an oasis of calm and tranquillity which means paying close attention to sights, sounds and smells. To turn your bedroom into a sanctuary:-
 - ◇ **Choose** soft, relaxing colours for your bed linen
 - ◇ **Consider** getting a new mattress if your current one is more than seven years old
 - ◇ **Place** objects that are special to you on your bedside table
 - ◇ **Sprinkle** relaxing essential oils, such as lavender, ylang-ylang and chamomile, directly onto your bedding before you go to bed
 - ◇ **Use** a fan or white noise machine to lull you to sleep
 - ◇ **Keep** your bedroom cool and well-ventilated. Ideally, your brain should be a fraction of a degree cooler than your body to promote good sleep
- **Get physical** – Physical movement can help us produce the chemical adenosine, which promotes sleepiness and enables melatonin to work more effectively. You don't have to do huge amounts of intense activity – just getting up and moving every hour or so throughout the day is beneficial. Joanne's booklet – ***Move it or Lose it*** – is enclosed and will give you lots of gentle exercises that are beneficial for everyone.
- **Let go!** – Sleep will come more easily if you can let go of the day before you get into bed. Here are some ways to help you:
 - ◇ **Write** a list before you go to bed (if you go to work, write a list and leave it for the next day). Don't carry it in your head all night because this is what will awaken you in a state of panic and worry at 2am.

- **Drink plenty of water** – the human body is made up of 70-80% water and we need to be well hydrated in order for our sleep biochemistry to function in the best way. Ideally you should drink 1.5 to 2 litres of water per day. This includes herbal teas, diluted squash and fruit juice but not alcohol or caffeinated drinks which are diuretics (as these make you lose more fluid than you actually retain)



- **Get an early night** – it is said that the few hours before midnight are the best to erase the stress of the day. Start to wind down between 9 and 9.30pm. You don't necessarily have to be in bed and fast asleep but don't use technology and watching the news; instead read something relaxing and uplifting; avoid stressful conversations.
- **Stop measuring** – it's completely normal to wake during the night. What isn't helpful, however, is to obsess about the time you wake up or calculate how much sleep you may or may not get. Don't check what time it is as this may increase your anxiety
- **Take breaks from technology** – withdraw from technology an hour before you get into bed. Don't keep your phone in your bedroom or watch TV in bed. If you wake up during the night (remember this is normal) don't check your phone. It is also helpful during the daytime to allow yourself a break of a few minutes every 90 minutes or so from technology to allow your nervous system moments to settle and be still and enables the brain to engage in vital mental processing which will help you to sleep more deeply at night.

Denise continues:

I will inform you of the things that I have done and invite you to consider suggestions that might help. It is apparent that many tiny insects have already disappeared; the need is urgent – no longer any splatters on the windscreens of cars – no flying insects.

Consider a snowflake; it weighs nothing at all and yet if enough snowflakes settle on a tree branch, their collective weight could break it from the tree. If lots of people make small changes, collectively, it will make a difference.



Long before the Council started to collect food waste in our green bins, I had purchased a Green Cone and dug a mighty hole in the front garden to accommodate the basket. The hole took a lot of time and great commitment to get to the right size for the basket. I uncovered lots of rubbish - empty bags, huge lumps of concrete,

lots of roots etc.

The Green Cone was a Food Waste Digester and dealt with household cooked kitchen waste, bones plus animal excrement, within the confines of a garden.



[Image source: Internet]

Suggestions of what we could do to improve the environment.

AT HOME

- ◇ Every time we tear off a piece of cling film it releases microscopic plastic fibres into our homes – suggest using beeswax wraps* instead of cling film to wrap our food.

Our Mothers did not have cling film so it must be possible to live without it. I use the beeswax wraps and find they are brilliant at keeping food fresh.

** Available from the ECO stall – Steph’s Sustainable Stuff (Chesterfield Market and online) and from Lakeland Ltd.*

◇ Suggest using an eco-friendly alternative to washing detergents for cleaning our clothes; 100% natural, chemical free and environmentally friendly, Soap Nuts*. –
I have successfully washed clothes clean with these soap seeds for decades now. I have no need of washing liquids or powders, (save use of Ariel powder for soaking clothes and cleaning the washing machine), or fabric softeners.

Microplastics – one of the biggest environmental problems of our time.

In September 2019, a report, ‘Reducing Household Contributions to Marine Plastic Pollution’ by a Research Group ‘Eunomia’ commissioned by ‘Friends of the Earth’, alerted us to the dangers of plastic even in our clothes! Technically clever, man-made fibres like polyester, acrylic, nylon and polyamide can unfortunately contribute to the issue.

https://cdn.friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/reducing-household-plastics_0.pdf

In fact, most new fabrics are made of plastic – up to 64% of them.

The thing is, every time we wash these materials, they shed millions of plastic microfibres that can escape into the ocean and potentially enter the food chain. The threads are so small they can drain out of our washing machines and pass straight through wastewater treatment plants into the sea. The fibres have been detected in reservoirs, the deepest oceans, and locked up in the ice in the Arctic. It is a blow to realise that our clothes are part of this worrying problem.

The autonomic nervous system is divided into two branches – the “fight or flight” or sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system – which allows us to rest, to repair, to heal and to sleep. If we feel anxious and fearful (our emotional response to tinnitus) or distrusting of life (the pandemic has affected us all in this way), we will tend to live in our “fight or flight” mode. But if we feel safe, peaceful and happy, then we are living in that which allows us restful and healing sleep.

In other words, it is impossible to sleep well if we are running in survival mode (fight/flight mode). This is something we have inherited from our ancestors (the cavemen).

We know that tinnitus can have an effect on our sleep and so it is about trying to create a comforting and safe environment (together with any sound we may need to lull us off to sleep) in order to ensure a good night’s restorative sleep.

Breath Awareness:

- Place your left hand on your chest just above your heart and your right hand just above your belly button. Notice how your hands move as you breathe. Just simply become aware of it.

Tried and Tested Tips:

- **Eat within 30 minutes of rising** – this stops your body from moving into survival mode and switches it into “safety” mode
- **Reduce your caffeine intake** – caffeine mimics the effect of adrenaline. It keeps you wired up and stuck in survival mode which switches off that part of the brain that allows us to rest, repair, heal and sleep. It’s best to avoid caffeine after about noon-time (but latest about 3pm)

West Yorkshire once produced almost all of the world's forced rhubarb. From 1877, it was grown in an area around Leeds, Wakefield and Bradford that eventually became known as the 'Rhubarb Triangle'. A combination of ideal growing conditions, cheap fuel from local coal mines to heat the forcing sheds and good transport links, meant the industry flourished, with a special express train to London's Covent Garden leaving every weekday night from Christmas to Easter. Sadly, rhubarb fell out of fashion, partly due to the rationing of sugar during the Second World War and the import of more exotic fruits and now there are only around 12 growers in the area. However, since being given Protected Designation of Origin status by the EU, joining the likes of Melton Mowbray pork pies and Swaledale cheese, its reputation has rightly been restored."

A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

BY AUDREY

The history of insomnia probably goes back to the time of our earliest ancestors. They lived in a world that was so unsafe that it might have been dangerous to retire to a cave and simply pass out for seven or eight hours. When talking to people about their tinnitus, we always relate to our ancestors, the caveman, and so, even the fact that many people suffer from insomnia, or sleepless nights from time to time, is something that brings us back to our ancestors again.

Our nervous system is intelligently designed for both survival and safety. Depending on what is happening in our external world, it will help us to survive and fight threat if we need to or to thrive and live life joyfully and restfully.

Once in the ocean, the microfibres can absorb chemicals and may be eaten by sea creatures potentially entering the food chain. Studies have found the microfibres in seafood such as mussels.

The good thing is, as soon as these problems are recognised, innovative people and companies are beginning to offer solutions to help. One such potential solution is a Guppyfriend washing bag made by Langbrett which could be used to place the plastic containing garments into, prior to washing and the bag would capture the fibres, we are told.

<https://www.lakeland.co.uk/53201/Guppyfriend-Washing-Bag-to-Reduce-Microplastic-Pollution>

Langbrett says: "The Guppyfriend Washing Bag is only a first step towards a holistic solution to microfibre pollution. New materials, manufacturing techniques, clean washing machines and more effective sewage treatment plants need to be developed. This might take a while. Until then the Guppyfriend Washing Bag is a practical and effective way to reduce plastic pollution in our rivers and oceans." 50 x 74cm.

www.guppyfriend.com
www.stopmicrowaste.com

I use the Guppyfriend washing bag in the washing machine without any problems.

- ♦ I use e-cloths to clean the home, just using water and not using any chemicals.
- ♦ We are trying to limit the amount of electricity we use daily.
- ♦ We have switched our energy supplier to one that is sustainable; using wind, solar and biomass to create its energy.

Personal use:

- ♦ I use a pleasant deodorant crystal stick, which comes without packaging of any sort, from the ECO stall. It does the job and lasts for ages (years).
- ♦ I take my own plastic bottle to be refilled with a pleasant Grapefruit and Orange shampoo from the ECO stall, to avoid producing waste empty bottles.

We need to talk about food

A recent report in the Medical Journal '*Lancet*' suggests we need to talk – and act – on food. The findings of the report were both challenging and hopeful.

The report asked a question: "how could we feed a predicted global population of 10 billion people without destroying the planet?"

The answer was: It **is** possible, but **only** if we change our diets radically, particularly cutting global red meat consumption by a whopping 50%.

The amount of land needed to farm the livestock would be unsustainable for a projected global population of 10 billion people eating the same amount of red meat.

Our agriculture causes around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions, half of that from livestock, we cannot avoid this challenge.

To read more please visit:

<https://arocha.org.uk/we-need-to-talk-about-food/>

In our gardens

- ♦ Suggest stopping using sprays to control bugs in the garden and use organic gardening to cope with problems instead.

For example, planting umbellifer flowers (open dishes of tiny flowers arranged as if presented on a plate – for example: Fennel, Spiraea) around the roses will attract the tiny parasitoid predatory wasps that in turn attack the aphid menace on the roses. *This works in my garden.*

As a garden plant it needs very little maintenance and comes back year after year with no fuss.

And I can highly recommend rhubarb and ginger gin to warm you up on a winter evening!

Thank you, Sarah, reading your story about Rhubarb has not only made me feel hungry for a rhubarb crumble but also reminded me of my childhood too. My Dad had a huge rhubarb patch which grew back year after year and every year at that time I had loads more friends as the children from the village would pass our house as they went to play on the cricket field. The leaves were so big they could be seen over the hedge so they would beg a stick and Mum would make a cone of sugar for them to dip in the rhubarb.

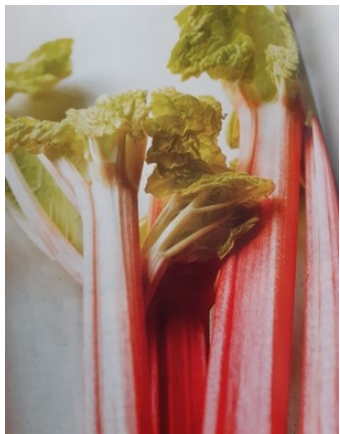
THE HISTORY OF RHUBARB (Audrey)

I didn't set out to discover if Rhubarb had a history but, by chance, I picked up a March 2012 edition of my Country Living (I keep all the copies in 'seasonal' order so I can read them again each year and this is what I found).

Forced Rhubarb

"Forced rhubarb is a faintly mysterious ingredient. Cultivated in dark, low-ceiling sheds, the stems creak and pop as they grow desperately searching for light. Hand-harvested by candlelight (strong light stops growth) the result of these unusual growing conditions is pink, sweet, tender stems highly prized by cooks.

The plant was originally imported for the root's medicinal properties during the Middle Ages, but the practise of eating the stems only took off once sugar was cheaper and more plentiful in the 18th century. Botanically classed as a vegetable, rhubarb is naturally sour and needs added sweetness to bring out the subtle, delicate flavours. When the process of forcing was accidentally discovered in the Chelsea Physic Garden in the early 19th century, rhubarb was established as desirable winter produce.



This takes me back to my childhood - who wasn't given a stick of rhubarb and a bag of sugar when they were young? The tartness of the fruit is made up for in being allowed to eat some sugar like it was sherbet.

I cook my rhubarb in two different ways. My "signature dish" as they say on television these days is a rhubarb crumble. I have been told by my very picky youngest daughter that my crumble makes up for all

the atrocities that I have dished up onto her plate over the years. Especially when it is served with tinned custard. Here's my recipe: Take 3-4 decent sized sticks of rhubarb and chop them into chunks. Place them in a saucepan with a squeeze of orange juice and a heavy sprinkling of brown sugar. Simmer for 5 minutes. When it is cooked, place the rhubarb and juices in the bottom of a pyrex dish.

Then add your crumble mix. I use equal amounts of the main ingredients - usually 2 ounces, but this can be increased if you have a lot of rhubarb to cover. I mix together butter, brown sugar, plain flour and porridge oats. I also add a dash of sea salt and ginger powder. When it is all well combined then spread over the top of the fruit in the pyrex dish.

Bake in a medium oven for about 20 minutes, until the rhubarb is bubbling up through the crumble.

If you can't be bothered with a crumble, why not just roast the rhubarb and serve it warm with ice cream melting over the top. Place your cleaned sticks of fruit into a roasting tin, add the zest of an orange and trickle over some runny honey. Cover with foil and roast for 15 - 20 minutes.

As well as the feelgood factor of eating something you have grown yourself, rhubarb is a good source of fibre. It also contains calcium, magnesium and vitamin C.



Marjoram

◇ Suggest planting a herb called Marjoram – its flowers are irresistible for a whole range of bees, butterflies and other insects. Marjoram usually flowers in July and can continue through to October. *This works in my garden. It is a lovely thing to observe the wildlife that come and to hear the contented hum of the bees.*

- ◇ Suggest we do our best to provide different flowers in our gardens from early in the season until late in the season to provide pollen for our pollinators for as long as possible, whilst enjoying the flowers' lovely display.
- ◇ Suggest saving all of our waste water for watering the plants in our gardens.
- ◇ Trees are good for people and the environment.

We may be aware that trees bring benefits to urban areas but increasingly these benefits are being better understood.

Through a process called photosynthesis, leaves pull in carbon dioxide and water and use the energy of the sun to convert this into chemical compounds such as sugars that feed the tree. But as a by-product of that chemical reaction oxygen is produced and released by the tree.

One tree produces nearly 118 kg of oxygen each year. One acre of trees removes up to 2.6 tons of carbon dioxide each year.

The UN has published a summary of research which highlights the fact that trees in urban areas can:

- cool the air by up to 8°C
- filter air pollutants
- regulate water flow and improve water quality

- while absorbing up to 150kg of carbon dioxide per year
- sequestering carbon and mitigating climate change



The National Forest, which is transforming 200 square miles of central England, includes all the towns and villages, streets and parks, within its 200 square miles, not just the woodlands, fields and farmland. The National Forest Company has worked with partners to deliver a programme of urban tree planting for the last 25 years.

Information regarding the National Forest may be found on www.nationalforest.org

Even dead trees, made safe by removing top branches leaving a shorter standing tree, can be useful. Wood on the ground soaks up moisture creating a wet, decaying habitat useful for insects, invertebrates and mammals while the dead tree trunk becomes dry and is a different type of habitat for different species and can be a valuable site for bats and kestrels, also mice, lichen and fungi.

By Spring 2021, I will have planted 5 trees. One in our back garden; a Magnolia tree, 1 at High-field Hall Primary School, 2 in a new forest being created near Stoke-on-Trent (this was my best Christmas present which involved all my family) and I have paid to have an Olive tree planted in the Palestinian Authorities in the Spring 2021.

Magnolia tree – a Soulangiana



The ball is 3m in diameter, constructed with a steel and concrete core bonded with 200 handmade bricks. So, not likely to



move despite the perception of it teetering. I believe the ball was created to commemorate the opening of the park in 1995, which had formerly been an opencast site.

[colinrose.co.uk – sculpture colin rose-ART]

During the pandemic, many of my friends have said that they have explored paths near their home which they never bothered to follow before. So, based on that let's take the opportunity to learn more about the place(s) where we live. ***As Joanne says we would love to hear your story about a piece of artwork or historical building or statue (with photos please).***

RAVISHING RHUBARB BY SARAH WALTERS

Snowdrops are generally acknowledged to be the first sign of spring in the garden, but in my little plot the rhubarb always beats them to it. And while snowdrops are beautifully delicate and demure, rhubarb is brash, bright and bold. As early as the new year you can see livid pink knuckles poking up through the soil. By February, these have been topped by crinkly acid green leaves. I generally help mine along at this point by sticking an old metal fire bucket over the top - the darkness forces the rhubarb and rewards me a few weeks later with my first produce from the garden.

I always like to have my first taste of rhubarb for the year in its raw form, dipped in sugar.

JOHN WESLEY'S RULE

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can,

[John Wesley 1703 – 1791]

Sent to us by Sylvia White (Macclesfield)

Thank you Sylvia for the thought-provoking words of John Wesley.



TREASURES ON MY DAILY EXERCISE BY JOANNE

During the pandemic, to get out for our daily exercise has been so important, so too have the green spaces around us. I am lucky enough to live near Holmebrook Valley Park. Lucky because it is so beautiful; for such a small park with one lake, it is teeming with wildlife – ducks, heron, moorhens, cormorant.

However, I am unlucky in that it is also busy. With travel restrictions in place, it is popular. So I tend to go out either as early as possible or later in the evening and this does have its advantages. Arriving as the mist is still over the water, or as the sun goes down at night, it's almost magical. .

I have also been fascinated by a brick ball. Fascinated because bricks aren't spherical yet this is. It is almost tucked away too. Not on the most obvious route from either carpark at Holmebrook Valley Park and looks as if it may roll away down the hill. It is a creation by Sculptor, Colin Rose .

Thank you, Denise; what an interesting story and with some great ideas. I already do quite a lot of things to help our environment having been born in an era where it was second-nature to do so, but you have mentioned such a lot of good ideas that I am sure we will all find useful and a great encouragement for us all to make even more changes.

Please send in your stories and ideas to share with others; we would love to hear them.

FLY TIPPING IMAGES BY SARAH RICHARDS

Sarah has taken some beautiful photographs on her travels both at home and abroad, but these photos show how fly tipping is worldwide. Sarah has narrated her photos as follows:



This monitor was seen at the water's edge along the coast of Cyprus just outside Limassol. Nearby is the historical site of Amathus, a UNESCO world heritage site.

Visitors to the site which dates back to 1100BC are advised that there is a strict no litter policy yet someone has dumped the monitor in the sea close by rather than disposing of it safely.

The pristine islands of the Maldives are having to address erosion and flooding caused by rising sea levels. The country has about a thousand Small islands, and tourism is their main source of income.



This image was taken in Vilamendhoo island in 2013. Sand-bags filled with imported sand are used to try to halt the rapid erosion of the beaches.



In Madagascar I spotted this mound of earth which was covered in rubbish. Two children were scrabbling around on the top of it to see what they could find .

Madagascar has one of the highest poverty rates in the world. In one of the townships a child plays with a toy made from wood. A far cry from the throwaway plastic toys that children in the UK



We would like your poem to show your appreciation of nature by using at least 2 senses.

Entry to the competition is for anyone - you don't have to be a member of our group so do pass this information to any creative members of your family or friends.

The closing date is **Friday 25th June**. There will be a prize which is likely to be a postal “foody treat” for our favourite poem.

The cost to enter is £2.50 per poem. The best way to get your poem(s) to us is to send a cheque with your entry, payable to Chesterfield Tinnitus Support Group.

The poems will be judged anonymously, so please don't put your name on your poem when you send it in. Instead, write your name, address, phone number and email address on a separate sheet and attach it with a paper clip or staple. The person opening the mail with this information will not be involved with the judging.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ◇ Write a list of everything you can think of connected with nature
- ◇ Take a walk – could be round your garden and notice the birds, bees, trees, new growth
- ◇ What did you see, hear, feel, touch and smell?
- ◇ Take a few photos to inspire your poem.

Good luck! We look forward to receiving your poems.





THANK YOU to everyone who has subscribed to our group for the year 2021/22. We hope you will continue to enjoy being part of our group, albeit very different over the past year, but hope too that you have enjoyed receiving and reading the newsletters.

THANK YOU ALSO for your kind donations, for which we are very grateful and which will help in supporting the work of our group.

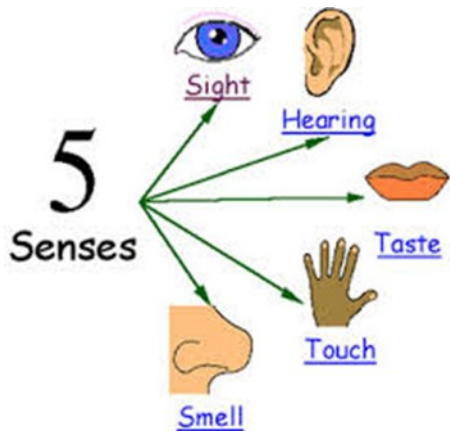
POETRY COMPETITION

MESSAGE FROM JOANNE

Following the success of last year's poetry competition, we thought we would launch another competition this year.

I have chosen "**NATURE**" as the theme of the competition which is a lovely broad theme for you.

We would like to see poems of any style or length on your interpretation of anything connected with nature. We know that being in nature has positive benefits for our health and well-being.



However, connecting with nature by using our five senses and engaging with the beauty of nature in poetry is cathartic and can provide inspiration to help you get started.

are given.



Plastic is dangerous to wildlife who can get caught up in it or swallow it. This collection was found on the beach in Scarborough. The gloves may have been used by fishermen, the balls thrown for dogs to retrieve. And the plastic

glass— left on the beach rather than being disposed of in the bins provided.



With global warming comes the retreat of the icefield in Alaska and elsewhere. This is the Mendenhall glacier near Juneau. According to an Article in the *Journal Frontiers in Earth Science*, published in May 2020, in the last two decades the glacier receded more than a kilometre. The resulting water causes flooding in the valley below.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/feart.2020.00137>



Many parts of Spitsbergen are uninhabited yet despite this there is plastic and rubbish strewn along the beaches. This image was taken in Sarstangen where there is a large population of walruses.



We collected several bags of rubbish that had washed up on the shores including a couple of plastic fishing floats from boats, one of which was kept as a “trophy” by a member of the crew who decorated it.

In 1945 the Ladybower reservoir in Derwent was opened. It had been built to supplement the Howden and Derwent reservoirs supplying water to the East Midlands and South Yorkshire. In 2018 following a very hot summer water levels around the country were very low and the eerie remains of sunken villages of Derwent and Ashopton were exposed.

Thank you Sarah for highlighting the devastation to beautiful landscapes that fly tipping is causing. And also, with the Ladybower reservoir, the effects of global warming.



Before starting our next story, please do send in your stories, whether they are for “**I Remember**” – “**Environmental**” – “**Artistic**” – “**Gardening**” – “**Wildlife**” – “**Nostalgia**” - “**Pets**” – “**Baking**” – “**Poetry**” – “**Painting/Drawing**” and, of course, “**Feel Free**” which can be about absolutely anything you wish. If you are unable to email your stories, please do contact us as I will be able to contact you and have a chat, whilst you talk about your story, then I would type it up and send to you to ensure it is what you would wish to be printed.



[This photo was taken at Portmeirion in 1964 (left-right) Sandra’s Mum, brother Brian and sister (Susan) with Sandra on the right]

Thank you very much Sandra for sharing with us your lovely family story of your childhood spent in Hartford. I am sure too that Carole

will be thrilled when she reads how her story sparked your childhood memories.

Also, Carole sent me a message saying that Judy Tomlinson’s story of her time spent in Jersey sparked a memory for her too as they visited Jersey in 1966 and she recalls how they visited Jersey Pottery.

It personally gives me great pleasure in reading people’s stories and I think they enrich the newsletter. It’s by sharing these stories that we find how so many people have trodden a similar path

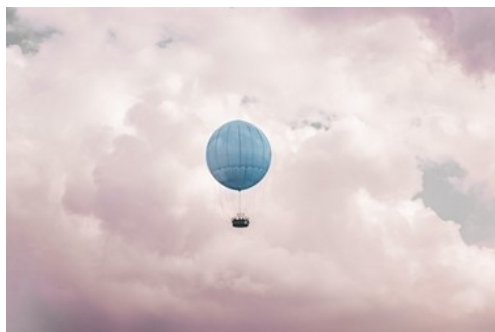
which I find truly fascinating and by engaging in this way we are extending our friendship to all our members. For me too, it has opened up such a lot of happy memories over the years that tend to be stored in the little “boxes” (as I call them), in our brain. So please open up your little boxes to share more stories with us.



(Image Unsplash)

I have a vague memory of going to the hospital to have it X-rayed and a plaster cast put on. I had to wear a sling that I got quite attached to and didn't want to take it off.

When we went to bed my dad used to do magic tricks and make sweets appear inside it. He also used to read us bedtime stories. One that has always remained with me is why the clouds



(Photo Unsplash)

are pink at sunrise and sunset. It was because one of the pixies, who were responsible for painting the clouds, picked up the wrong colour paint pot! Whenever I see a beautiful red sky I am reminded of my father and this story.

On sunny days mum used to put my brother outside in his pram in the fresh air, which is what they used to do way back then. He had blonde very curly hair which my mum loved and resisted having it cut until it was quite long. I can remember seeing a photo of him taken sitting in his pram showing his curls to fine effect. As we grew up, I was quite envious of his curls as I had dull boring straight dark brown hair. I also wished I'd got lovely auburn hair like my sister. In our teens Brian spent hours trying to straighten his curls and I would spend my time trying to get my hair to curl!

Sadly, I don't remember the names of the other children we played with. I wonder how many are still living in the area?"

Sandra concludes by saying: "Thank-you Carole for taking me on a trip down memory lane".

I REMEMBER

BY SANDRA JOHNSON

Sandra is a relatively new member of our group; in fact, she joined during the early part of 2020 and then we had lockdown, so I am really happy that she is sharing her childhood memories with us. Sandra's memories were ignited when she read Carole Harwood's story in our February/March newsletter.

Sandra says "I joined the support group last year and was only able to attend one group before our lives were impacted by the pandemic which sadly meant I haven't been able to get to know members." Sandra continues that she enjoys reading the newsletters and the mix of articles, for which she is grateful. Sandra then goes on to say that the article by Carole Harwood was of particular interest to her as Carole had mentioned living in Hartford. This is where Sandra lived 60 years ago when she was a child and she shares her childhood memories of her life in Hartford.

"Carole Harwood's reminiscence piece in the February/March edition of the newsletter brought back memories for me because I also at one point in my life lived in Hartford.



[Sandra's family home in Hartford]

As I recall I think we moved to Hartford in about 1957 when my father, Alan, first joined the police force. I was two years old and my sister, Susan, was four. My brother, Brian was born in 1958, not long after we moved there. We lived in Hartford until I was about 6 or 7 when we moved to Cheadle where we lived in the police house that adjoined the police station.

I remember we lived in Marshall Lane which was off Greenbank Lane and the railway was at the bottom of the garden. It was the last house in the row. There were fields by the house, and a triangular large patch of grass opposite the houses. The River Weaver was nearby. There was no such thing as central heating in most houses in the 1950's and 60's and like Carole I can recall waking up on winter mornings to frost on the inside of our bedroom windows. We used to hang our clothes over the fire guard to warm them in front of the living room fire before we got dressed. Mum didn't work and juggled her time looking after three small children and doing the housework around my father's shift pattern. Mum used to ride a push bike with a child's seat at the back which we were sometimes popped into when she needed to go out and had one of us to look after.

I don't remember much about the place itself although I do recall walking to school which was an old stone-built building and to church for Sunday school. The school rooms all seemed big with shiny, well-polished wooden parquet floors which smelt of wax crayons and plasticine. My sister remembers a press cutting showing her and another girl carrying easels when the school was closed and pupils moved to a building nearby. I can remember going on the bus to Northwich across a bridge over the river. We also used to go by train to visit family who lived in Chester and Bretton, a small village just over the border from Chester in Wales.

The Harrop's lived next door and I think they had three boys. I can't recall all their names but I seem to think one was called Terry and another Philip. They used to come and play in our house and we'd have 'Watch with Mother' on the TV. I can remember one occasion when they had a fight with my teddy and his head got pulled off. Mum (Joyce) soon sewed it back on for me.



(Image Unsplash)

For years afterwards he wore a knitted scarf to cover up the fact that his head had been sewn back on.

The Harrop's had a dog called Pip that had puppies, one of which died. Mr Harrop said he'd wrapped it in newspaper and put it in the dustbin! I'm not sure how true that was.



My dad loved cats so we had a tabby called Tibbs. One day my mum discovered him asleep on the bottom of Brian's cot so he had to go! Dad took him to live with his parents in Bretton.

[Sandra's Dad relaxing at his parent's home]

One day a colleague of my dad's brought his police dog to meet us. We weren't allowed to make a fuss of it in case we were too rough.

In those days it wasn't unusual for children to spend most of their time outside – no technology or after school activities to distract us. I can recall spending hours out and about in the fields surrounding our house as well as playing games in the street. We'd spend quite a lot of our time on the playground near our house. On one occasion I was pushed too hard on the swings by one of the older children, I fell off and broke my arm.