



Success After Stroke News Bulletin No. 17 Friday 17th July 2020



Hello Everyone,

I hope you are all keeping well. Thanks to Dave Lawrence (Pam's husband) for writing a piece about researching family history. I can relate to his comments about being led astray by similar names and dates. I researched my family history on my father's side and came to a very intriguing full-stop which I couldn't work out, nearly giving up. It took the patience and expertise of an amateur researcher who I was introduced to for the mystery to be solved. She also came up with one or two other interesting facts that I would never have found out and it was nice to eventually trace my roots back to Needham Market.

Jan

Researching Your Family History

Have you ever thought about who your ancestors were, where they lived and what their occupations were? Did they spend time in the workhouse? Do you have any skeletons in the cupboard?

I was made redundant at Christmas 1999 and although I searched for work, because I was 57 no one was really interested. Also, I had been a travel agent for over 40 years and I often knew more about the industry than most of the people interviewing me! This led to me being out of work for more than three months, during which time my friend, Ken, asked me to help him to research his family tree. This started me on a twenty-year (and still counting) search for my ancestors and so far I have managed to trace some of them back to the 15th century.

We started by using the online programmes Ancestry.com and Findmypast.co.uk. They both had, and still have, a lot of information especially for the London area. This suited me as my family came from West Ham and were there in the 16th century.

However, Ken and his family came from Barking-side, Ilford but were only there for 2 generations, prior to which his family came from Norfolk. For Norfolk history records we had to go to Norwich

to search, although during the 20 years since we started searching a lot more records have been made available on the internet.

When I started, I knew nothing about my father's family. I knew his eldest brother as my father worked with him, but as to his other 9 siblings I had no idea. We never saw my grandparents as there had been a family argument when I was a baby after which we never met any of my father's family again. But by using Ancestry.com I found a cousin and aunt living in Birmingham. I made contact and went to see my aunt, coming away with a lot of information and some old photos. This meeting with my aunt put me on the right track for tracing my father's family and by meeting her, I found out that we were East Enders through and through. Since then I have discovered many cousins and even met some of them and exchanged stories and photos. I feel I know my father's family at last.

I knew my grandfather's name and his mother's Christian name, and so I found him on Ancestry.com which enabled me to trace his family to Huntingdonshire (as it was known then). But eventually after going back as far as 15th century, I found I had the wrong person! It turned out that two streets away from where my grandfather was born there was a man with the same name and similar date of birth and it was him who came from Huntingdonshire, not my grandfather. So, in researching you have to be prepared at times to go off on the wrong track of information!

Another thing is to be prepared for what comes up from the searches, an example being when Ken asked me to look into his grandmother's family. I did this and found that she was illegitimate, as were her mother and her grandmother. Ken was shocked by this as he was a bit straight-laced! I was able to explain that in earlier times many farmers made their future wife pregnant before marriage because they needed to know they were going to have a son and heir to carry on the farm.

Apart from searching online, particularly when we were both younger and fitter, Ken and I spent many an enjoyable trip out to villages in Suffolk

and Norfolk, always taking the time to walk around graveyards and see if we could find any familiar surnames. This was always followed by taking the opportunity to sample the local brew! Most of the villages that we went to had not changed in hundreds of years and the local pub is still the same.

If anyone is interested, then you need to go onto either www.Ancestry.com or www.Findmypast.co.uk.

Both sites charge to join but every so often they have free weekends when anyone can use them. If you do decide to join then be prepared for a joining fee of £14 for one month and £70 for six months for Ancestry and £10 for a month and £70 for six months for Find My Past. These rates are as of today, 14th June 2020.

If anyone wants to start tracing their family and would like some advice, then I would be only too pleased to help get you started. Send a message to me via Pam (SAS Well-being therapist) and I will contact you.

Dave Lawrence

News and Views ...

August break:

After many discussions, it has been decided that the therapists could do with a well-earned break from their Zoom groups during August and a chance to relax. As far as the News Bulletin is concerned, I will produce one during mid-August to enable you to keep in touch (so do send in anything you would like me to include). We will continue as usual up to and including Friday July 31st and normal service will be resumed in September.

Please note that we are all still available, so please call or email if you need anything or would just like a chat. Most of the volunteers have indicated that they will continue to phone members during August but will let you know if they are unable to do so.

From John Crookenden:

John sent in a link to English Heritage where they have a quiz and anagrams of various historic sites in England, you might want to have a go.

https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/members-area/kids/quizzes-and-games/amazing-anagrams/?utm_source=English%20Heritage%20Mem-bers&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11647009_Members%27%20E-Newsletter%20%7C%205%20July&utm_content=Anagrams

From Clare Keohane:

Clare very kindly sent in the following recipe for rhubarb and ginger cake which sounds delicious and I will certainly be using the rhubarb growing in my garden to make it ...

Rhubarb and Ginger Cake

300g rhubarb
Juice of ½ lemon
165g self-raising flour
175g unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
175g caster sugar
3 large free-range eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract

For the topping

25g unsalted butter
2 tbsp self-raising flour
1 tbsp caster sugar
2 tsp ground ginger
1 tbsp icing sugar, to dust
4 tbsp crème fraîche, to serve
2 tbsp clear honey, to serve

Method

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4. Grease a 23cm square cake tin and line with baking parchment.
- Trim the rhubarb and chop into 3cm pieces.
- Place in a bowl with the lemon juice.
- In a separate bowl, beat together the flour, butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla extract.
- Fold in half the rhubarb and spoon the mixture into the bottom of the tin, spreading it out with a spatula.
- Scatter over the remaining rhubarb.

For the topping

- Rub the butter into the flour.
- Stir in the sugar and ginger.
- Sprinkle over the cake mixture and bake for 40-50 minutes.
- Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then remove from the tin.
- Dust with icing sugar, then slice into squares.
- Serve warm or cold with crème fraîche, drizzled with honey.

Stroke Association News:

As you know, Success After Stroke is affiliated to The Stroke Association. When we are meeting normally we have copies of the Stroke Association News Magazine available for you, but it is also available online. For those of you with internet

access who wish to read the magazine please use the following Stroke Association link www.stroke.org.uk/strokenews.

Conversation Group

Following on from Pam's interesting article about the benefits of music in the last news bulletin, the groups on Friday discussed some of the types of music we like and what we miss, now that many theatres and music venues are closed. Members recalled enjoyable visits to many of the local theatres including those in Norwich (Gill, Diana and Ann recalled an SAS trip there), the Apex in Bury St. Edmunds and the Mercury in Colchester. Anita recalled the Arts theatre in Haverhill and Ray and Diane had many trips to the Cliffs Pavilion at Southend. Alf and Diane noted that Halstead also has a small theatre, the Empire, which is very active. Many of us also recalled open air concerts at Melford Hall, Kentwell Hall and Ickworth Park. We were aware that open air music and plays are likely to be more common over the next few months and I noted in the local press there are various bands playing in Lavenham in a 'drive through' format where you stay in or near your car.

When identifying the types of music we liked, many different genres were mentioned: with Peter being a fan of Led Zeppelin; Diane likes Abba; Gill, Take That; Stella, Elton John; Antonia and Geoff prefer anything classical and Anita, rock and roll - to name but a few. Diane is a big fan of musicals and also anything from the 1960s. Largely everyone was in agreement the 1960s was the most memorable decade for music. The Rolling Stones and the Beatles were obviously big favourites at the time and Ray recalled seeing the Stones live in East Ham. Jim saw the Beatles performing live in London too. Ray also has a claim to fame in that he performed with the Searchers whilst on holiday one year – playing the drums!

As the conversation went on, members recalled artists who made a few hearts race! These included Brenda Lee (who Stella has seen live), Dolly Parton, Dusty Springfield, Helen Shapiro, Sandy Shaw, Adam Faith, Elvis, Cliff Richard and Billy Fury. I also learned about Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass Band who many members recall performing locally and who featured regularly on Jukebox Jury! I have since googled him and realise he had many a hit and was still performing in the 1990's. I live and learn!

The groups agreed that we all enjoyed a wide

range of music depending on our mood – the only genre no one particularly related to was folk music – despite the annual Cambridge Folk Festival taking place not too far away each year! Maybe some of you can convert us!!

The ability of music to evoke memories of certain times in our lives was recognised by us all and even when we don't recall the names of songs or artists we can often sing along to the words when we hear it. It seems that even when we have trouble recalling day to day information, much loved song lyrics can be recalled instantly when we hear the tune! Psychologists note that this may be due to the fact we have probably played and sung these songs repeatedly, hence so easily recalled, The power of rhythm and patterns cannot be underestimated – both of which are used by music therapists, which some of you have experienced at SAS. Interestingly, many aphasic members may have difficulty finding words at times but can sing along to familiar songs instantly – music is certainly a very powerful tool!

We hope our discussions have brought back memories for you too! Thanks for everyone's input to the Friday conversation groups.

Clare Keohane
Speech and Language Therapist

A note from Pam, Well-being Therapist

This week my focus is on mindfulness, one definition of which is the process of quietening the mind in order to spend time in thought for relaxation or religious/spiritual purposes. Maybe this definition conjures up the image of Buddhist monks sitting cross-legged for hours on end on a mountain top! But thankfully, it isn't necessary to become a monk or sit cross-legged to reap the benefits of mindful meditation!

To recap on the article I wrote two weeks ago (NB 15), there are many benefits to practising mindful meditation; quietening an over-active mind, relieving stress, and generally feeling calmer and better able to cope with the challenges that life throws at us which is useful during this time of Covid-19.

The following is a meditation called "The Tea Drinking Meditation" and it is based on the work of a world-renowned Buddhist master and teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh. It is not necessary to be a Buddhist to practise this type of meditation and you can have any type of faith or religion, or indeed none at all, to benefit from it.

Here are the steps and they are done while being fully aware of what you are doing; that is, being fully present in each moment. Undoubtedly you will find your mind wandering away as you focus on each step, that is normal and something everyone does. However, with practise your mind will wander less. As soon as you notice your thoughts have wandered, quite simply bring them back to the task in hand – making and drinking a cup of tea!

Here are the steps which you will all know so well but which I have listed to make you more aware of thinking about each one!

- ◆ Set the teapot, cup(s) or mug(s), milk and sugar on the counter.
- ◆ Fill and boil the kettle – here you just stand or sit and contemplate the water boiling, listening to the sound. I know they say “a watched pot never boils” but it will!
- ◆ Make the tea either in the teapot or cup, whichever is your preference.
- ◆ If you have made it in a teapot, when it is ready, pour it into the cup/mug.
- ◆ Add milk and sugar – or not – to your taste.
- ◆ Take the cup of tea and sit down.
- ◆ Drink the tea, without background distractions (TV, radio or the newspaper or even talking) and savour the taste, really appreciating all that it has taken to get to this point.

Of course, you don't need to practice this mindful meditation every time you have a cup of tea, but if you can do it once a day I believe you will notice how much calmer and more relaxed you feel afterwards.

You can apply this simple ‘tea-making task’ idea to any routine that you do on a daily basis and one of the places to be ‘in the moment’ is in the garden, if you have one and enjoy gardening! However, most of us, if not all, enjoy drinking a cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate during the day but ideally it will be something you make and drink routinely, often without actually thinking about the task itself.

Do please let me know how you get on and whether you found this mindful meditation easy or difficult. I would love to hear from you.

Stay well and safe.

Pam x

NB 16 Quiz Answers

Famous Dogs

1	Nana	2	Nipper
3	Santa's Little Helper	4	Bulls-eye
5	Old Shep	6	Toto
7	Snoopy	8	Buster
9	Chase	10	Timmy
11	Pickles	12	Snowy
13	Petra	14	Gnasher
15	Argos	16	Montmorency
17	Pilot	18	Laika
19	Boot	20	Blondi
21	Brian (Griffin)	22	Scamper
23	Fang	24	Cerebus
25	Dougal		

NB 16 Riddle Answer

Two (sheep have hooves and dogs have paws, only the human has feet).

NB 17 Quiz

What event, represented by the initials, happened in each year listed?

1	E the S was C (1902)
2	SFE (1906, America)
3	A became PM (1908)
4	AFF assassinated (1914)
5	GS (1926)
6	AF discovered P (1928)
7	W St. C (1929)
8	E the E A (1936)
9	PE joined ATS (1945)
10	BR created (1948)
11	BBFC introduced the 'X' R (1951)
12	The RAF retired the LB (1956)
13	CS first aired (1960)
14	AM launched (1966)
15	R in the J (1974)

NB 17 Riddle

The day before yesterday I was 21 and next year, I will be 24. When is my birthday?

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Take care, stay safe and well.