

HOPETIMES X

Edition 10



Football might not be coming home, but hopefully it won't be too long before we are

July 2021

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New website:

www.hopestreettrust.com



Please send your stories and photos or leave your feedback on our Facebook page

HOPETIMES

Edition 10

Hello again and welcome to Hope Times.

We hope you're all still keeping well and safe and enjoying the warm summer weeks.

In this edition you'll be able to find the latest information and guidance, plus all that's happening at the Hope Specialist Falls and Respiratory Service and Hope Street Trust charity.

We have all the new coronavirus symptoms, information and advice for the easing of restrictions from 19th July.

Take care and we can't wait to see you all again when it is safe to do so.

As always we have hidden the LET THERE BE HOPE BEE somewhere in the newsletter, so see if you can find it.



NEW FACES

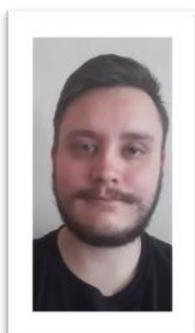
We're very pleased to welcome some new members of staff to the Hope team.

Hopefully it won't be too long before you get to meet them in 3D!



Kayla Frieslaar

Apprentice Rehab Assistant



Jordan Kirk

Admin Assistant



Jeet Toohill

Technical Instructor



Holly Hockaday

Apprentice Rehab Assistant

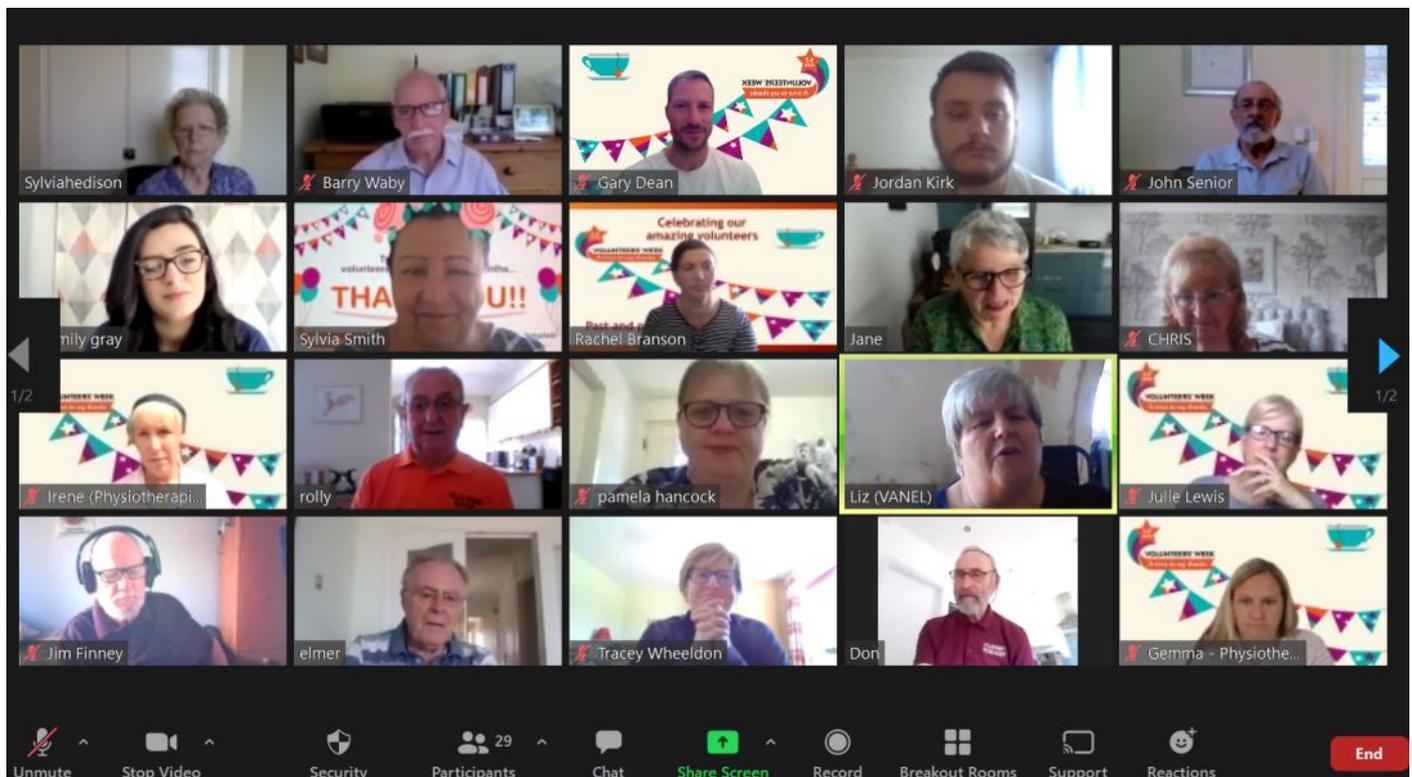
Hope News Round-up



HOPE CELEBRATES VOLUNTEERS WEEK



What a wonderful way to celebrate Volunteers Week. A great turnout, inspiring words from some of our wonderful volunteers, staff and friends of Hope, a rendition of Cheek to Cheek by Irving Berlin, beautifully sung by Don, a Hope history quiz, a video featuring photos of Hope volunteers past and present and a visit from Care Plus Group Chair Colin Childs. Fair to say most of us were a bit emotional by the end!



Thank you so much to all of our volunteers, past and present. Hope would not be the service and the family that it is without you.

Hope News Round-up



VOLUNTEER JOURNEYS

JIM'S STORY



Jim with fellow Buddy Maggie

Jim Finney first came to the Hope Specialist Respiratory Service in July 2008 and joined the Pulmonary Rehabilitation programme a month later. He has now been a volunteer with Hope for more than twelve years.

“After being diagnosed with COPD, I was referred to Hope Street for rehab. After the rehab I was so impressed that I felt that I should give something back to help the organisation. At first, I was not sure about the role of a buddy, so instead I

assisted Claire with the Breathe Easy Lung Foundation. We provided support and social activities for patients and I found this very rewarding.

When Claire gave up her role I took over, but after some time I realised that being affiliated to the BLF restricted what we were able to do, so we opted out and the Hope Social Group was formed to provide a way for patients to socialise after treatment, thus staying in touch with the Hope family.



By this time, I had already become a Pulmonary Rehab Buddy and the whole experience was so worthwhile that I felt that I was able to make a useful contribution. Later, after a mild stroke, Hope again came to my rescue, urging me to take a Falls Rehab course, which helped my recovery enormously.

I became a volunteer to give thanks for what Hope had done for me after being diagnosed with COPD, but in a way, Hope has given me far more than I have given them and I hope that I may continue to support for some time to come, as it gives me a purpose.”



ROLLY'S STORY



Rolly (right), with PR Buddy Jim.

My journey began before many of you were born. It was the summer of 1964, and I shared a stolen cigarette with my older sister.

Little did I know what a path I was starting out on.

By spring of '66, I was working and buying my own, self-sufficient with a supply of the dreaded weed.

Like most around me, the rumours about the "cancer sticks" were just that, rumours.

My journey continued.

When, in the next budget, the chancellor put the price up to 2 shillings (10p), that was it. That lasted about a week.

On and on the journey went and by the Autumn of '75, I was smoking 60 a day.

Think about what you will cost the NHS, people said.

Think about how much I am paying in, I replied. I cut

down, but I did not stop. From 1985 I had to endure "health checks" every year. How intrusive I said.

The cough started, but I ignored it.

My journey continued.

In the Summer of 2005, I was "conned" by my wife into stopping, using patches.

Autumn brought on Pleurisy and Pneumonia. The cough continued, but I ignored it.

My journey continued.

In the Spring of 2010, the works nurse suggested I speak to my GP, as my lung function was greatly reduced.

Ho! How I hated the spirometry.

My journey continued.

I was of course diagnosed with COPD. The cough continued and I started to listen to it.

My journey continued.

After using more than 1 inhaler, I was referred for Pulmonary Rehab.

I came close to laughing at the nurse when she said I needed to go to a gym.

How wrong I was.

My journey continued.

From there to Rehab Plus, and some wise words and guidance from my good lady.

My journey continued.

From Rehab Plus to being a Falls

Rehab Buddy.

My journey continued.

My cough has stopped. The Asthma nurse is happy.

I now start off each day with Trimbo

and Ventolin and, of course,

exercise.

My journey continues.



JOHN'S STORY



I first came as a patient in 2008, believe it or not, with my beloved, but I've only been a volunteer for the last four years. I enjoy the buzz of helping people along. I'm not in a fit state to do the full Pulmonary Rehab course, I just can't keep up, so I've mainly been doing Early Rehab. So, there's people who have just had a really bad do or are at a really low ability level, and to bring people on from a pretty low start gives me a hell of a buzz. It makes me feel worthwhile. I have

some value; I am of some use to somebody.

Although we can measure how someone's grip strength has improved or whether they can do more sit-to-stands, the thing that is less easy to measure but really stands out for me is the increase in people's self-confidence. I remember one patient came to pre-assessment at the Val Waterhouse Centre and she had to go into that great reception area, then down that huge corridor, past that great big gym, full of enormous weight-lifting and jogging machines and cycles to get to the pre-assessment area. This was a little, curled up frightened woman and we got her running up and down the corridor (for the shuttle walk test) and out of breath and then the staff left me with her in the quiet room to do the questionnaires. We had that little ten-minute chat where you can explain to people that of course you're frightened when you can't get your breath. Of course, you're anxious about coming here; it's a weird, strange place and people are telling you to go to the gym and you can barely breathe. By the time she came out ten minutes later, we were almost engaged!

So it's not an easy thing to measure, but I can personally see it and I'm sure everyone has seen it and what a difference that makes when you help someone to climb out of a really low, dark place and now there's a chance that they're going to go on and go further. For me, it's great. I feel of value and I think I help folk.

Buddies are different. We're not staff; we're not trained medical people, but we have some idea of what it's like to be on the floor, gasping. We have an idea of what it's like to be scared that this is the last breath you're going to draw. And I think that's where we can connect in a different way and act as an intermediary between a new patient and the experienced professionals.



CHRIS'S STORY



I work mainly in the craft sessions. It has been the biggest pleasure to make stuff and then sell it to raise money for the Hope Street Trust charity and we've made quite a bit of money. I also really enjoyed painting the stained-glass panels for the windows at the Val Waterhouse Centre. That was wonderful and I look forward to doing some more.

I've worked in the Hope Street Trust's Galley Café and hopefully we made some money in the

café too! It was very hard work, but I thoroughly enjoyed it, working with my friends. It was lovely.

I've also volunteered in local care homes, working with the Collaborative team as part of the Support to Care Homes project, delivering falls prevention training to care home staff, as well as visiting garden centres and other places in the community, to raise awareness of how to prevent falls in community settings.

It's been just lovely, feeling useful and doing something when you've retired. I love everything that goes on at Hope; it's wonderful.



SUE'S STORY



Sue Weavers started volunteering as a Falls Buddy the month before we went into lockdown. Here's her story:

“After attending the Falls Rehab programme at the end of 2019, I was so grateful to everyone connected to the programme that I wanted to do something to say thank you. The results I achieved from attending the Falls Rehab programme were absolutely amazing and becoming a volunteer was my way of saying thank you.

It has made a great difference to me. Originally I volunteered in-house, meeting patients and explaining to them what my experience of being in a falls group meant to me.

I re-joined Falls Rehab when it started again on Zoom. This was so welcome and the difference it made to me, mentally and personally, was amazing.

After my first Zoom meeting my son said to me,

“Mum, what have you done? You sound so positive now and it's like I have got my mum back.”

I had not realised how much lockdown had affected me and again I am so grateful to be a part of this amazing service and for everything I have learned and experienced from being a part of it. No words can ever express



my sincere gratitude to everyone and everything involved with Hope.”

FALLS PREVENTION TRAINING UPDATE

Three months after the Falls Prevention Collaborative launched their Falls Prevention e-learning video as part of the Support to Care Homes project, the number of care home staff who have completed the training has been truly astounding.

An incredible **272 members of staff from across 16 care homes** have achieved a pass mark of 20 or more and received their Falls Prevention certificate.

From the feedback we've received the main factor in uptake is with the online training being available 24/7, which means that new care home staff don't miss out. Previously, if someone new joined a team after the training had been delivered, it would be months before the Collaborative could go back and deliver the training again. Now new members of staff can complete the training as part of their induction, so that they are falls prevention aware almost from day one.

FALLS ARE NOT A SYMPTOM OF OLD AGE; THERE ARE MANY THINGS WE CAN DO TO REDUCE THE RISK



Fear of Falling



•Anxiety and a fear of falling are very common after a resident has experienced a fall.

•An ongoing, lasting fear of falling can cause problems and stop people enjoying life to the full.

•It can create worry and lead to a resident becoming more withdrawn.

•If a person restricts their activities, it can lead to a loss of confidence and feelings of failure. This can result in a vicious cycle, like the one (right), which can make a resident more at risk of falls.





**THE NEXT VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP
WILL BE ON
WEDNESDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

AT

11am - 1pm

Hope to see you there!

If you would like to attend these workshops on Zoom, please email Sylvia
(sylvia.leary@nhs.net).



HOPE PRESENT AT STEM EVENT

On Wednesday 30th June, Hope took part in a STEM event, organised by Franklin College. The event gave both Franklin's students and those from local schools the opportunity to learn about the career paths available to them and the subjects they will need to take to help them achieve their chosen career.

If you don't know, STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, but a far wider range of academic disciplines fall under the description, including aerospace engineering, computer science, statistics and of course physiotherapy and occupational therapy.



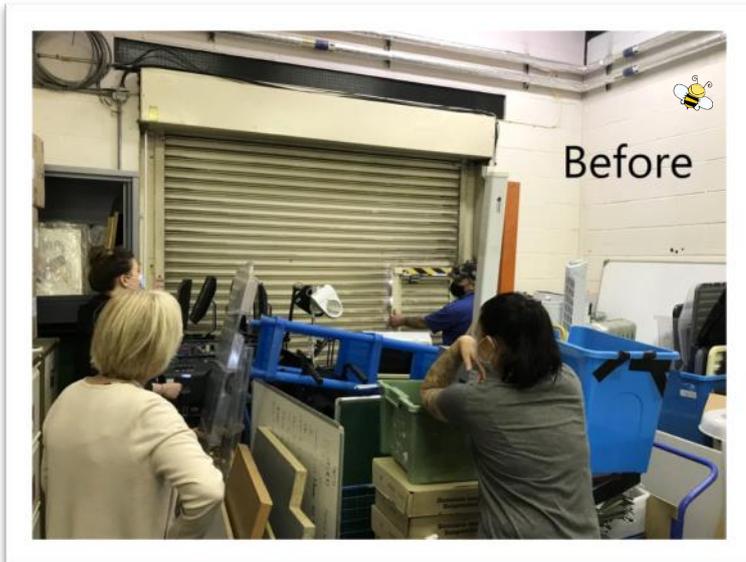
Senior Physio Irene, Falls Buddy Rolly and patient Pete represented Hope virtually via Microsoft Teams. Although in previous years the workshops have been delivered face to face, this was a good way of demonstrating to students how times have changed.

With Hope planning to take a blended approach to our rehab groups and other activities in the future, delivering both face to face and virtually at the same time, it was useful for the students to see how that works and hopefully Irene, Rolly and Pete have helped to inspire a new generation of Allied Health Professionals, who may one day become part of the Hope team.

MOVING OUT, BUT NOT BACK IN (YET)

Unfortunately we still have no fixed date for a return to the Val Waterhouse Centre, but we hope to have news soon. With Boris seemingly set on opening everything up on 19th July change is in the air, although that has to be balanced against the sky high number of COVID cases in North East Lincolnshire at present. It goes without saying that whatever decisions are made, they will be in the best interests of our patients, volunteers and staff.

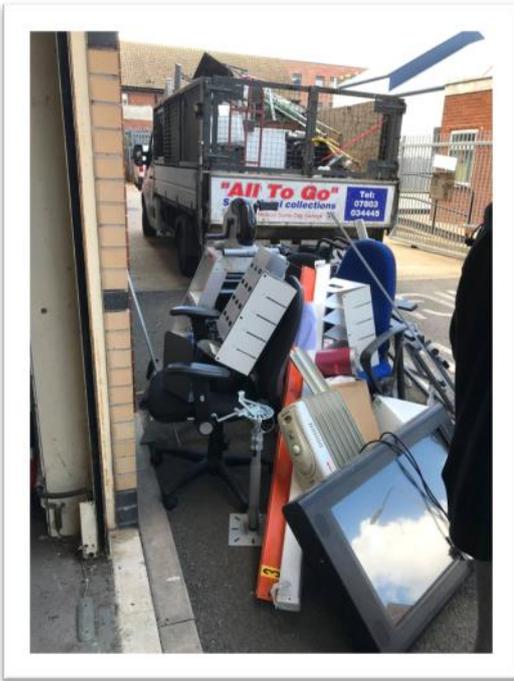
In the meantime, we have made a small in-road back into the main building at Val Waterhouse Centre. Although we've been using the Annexe as a base for some time and storing our Remote Rehab equipment there, our trips to the main building have been largely restricted to the equivalent of smash and grab raids (without the smash), as our equipment was in areas also being used by our tenants, the Community Urgent Care Team.



However, Rach, Gaz and Emily recently went in to do some major decluttering of the Indoor/Outdoor room and store, partly to make room for some exercise equipment that is kindly being donated to Care Plus Group by Orsted from their Hornsea One site, but also because both we and CPG in general have been hoarding a ridiculous amount of junk that we haven't used for years.

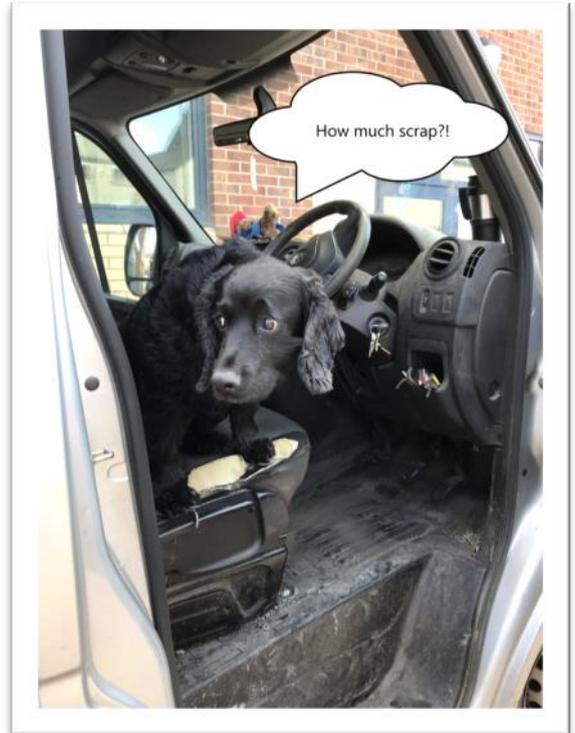
You know how it is. You keep things just in case or because they might be useful for parts and before you know it you're in danger of turning up on Hoarder Homes: No Room To Move. In our defence, when Hope first started out, we had very little money and had to resort to making display boards out of cardboard, so we've always had that make do and mend mentality that makes us look magpie-like at junk and think we could use it for something one day.





Well, after a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing and pulling and pushing and a concerted effort to be ruthless for the first time in 16 years, we ended up with a large pile of stuff that it was high time to get rid of. So, following a visit from Laughtons Removals and the scrap man (who had a very nice dog called Riley and the Steptoe and Son theme tune as his ringtone!), we now have much less junk and a storeroom that is in danger of being almost tidy. It was incredibly

satisfying getting rid of it all and it's one less big job to do when we're given the green light to go back.



We also spoke nicely to our tenants and asked them if they could move their equipment out of the Indoor/Outdoor room and in return we took

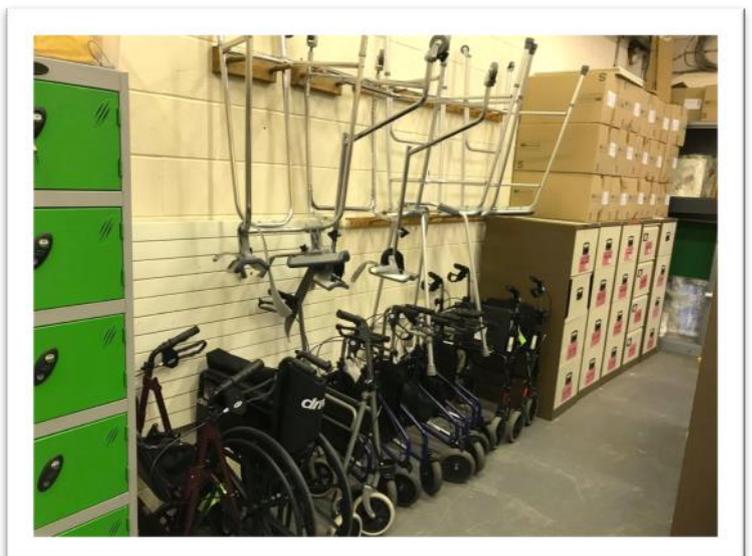


some of our equipment out of the Education Room, which they're using as an equipment store. As a result, the Indoor/Outdoor room now has just our equipment in it and the store is a mix of the stuff we still couldn't bear to part with and mobility aids being temporarily stored for Cambridge Park.

So the map of the Val Waterhouse Centre has just got a bit more burgundy and orange again and now we wait for the go-

ahead to return home. In the meantime, we will be continuing with Remote Rehab via Zoom for our next set of groups and hope to be back in the gym delivering face to face groups in the Autumn.

Fingers crossed!



SUPPORTING THE CLINICALLY VULNERABLE IN NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE



The Hope Street Trust is delighted to have been awarded funding of £4990.82 from North East Lincolnshire Council's Clinically Vulnerable Grant Scheme, which has been provided through the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).

The objective of the Clinically Vulnerable Grant Scheme is to

provide support to those with specific medical conditions which have made them particularly vulnerable to being seriously ill if they contract Covid-19. With lockdown measures easing, North East Lincolnshire Council offered the funding to local voluntary and community groups for projects to help these residents and other vulnerable members of our community with the transition and better equip them if shielding / lockdown is required again at some point in the future.

The three key outcomes of the funding are that vulnerable residents:

1. Feel better able to cope with any future restrictions on movement and socialising.
2. Feel able to start to re-integrate into the community.
3. Have the digital capacity and capability to help them access support and social opportunities for the future.

During the Pandemic, the Hope Specialist Falls and Respiratory Service began delivering its rehabilitation programmes online, whilst the Hope Street Trust ran social and exercise groups via Zoom. Initially a stopgap to give vulnerable and isolated patients and volunteers some access to exercise and activities to prevent deterioration in their mental and physical health and wellbeing, our online provision proved so successful that we plan to continue delivering it alongside our face-to-face activities when they resume.

The funding will be used to purchase laptops, tablets, Facebook Portal and mobile wi-fi devices, as well as arts and crafts supplies, cameras and editing software and subscriptions to family history sites. With all this equipment, we will be able to deliver face to face and online activities simultaneously, so that participants at home can interact with those on site and feel fully engaged. In addition to expanding existing online activities (rehabilitation groups, community exercise classes, Hope Social and arts and crafts), we also wish to develop new activities, such as a local history group, photography club and Long COVID support platform.

Thank you to North East Lincolnshire Council and to Gaynor Rogers for making us aware of the funding.

OUR NEW 'PREPARING FOR SUMMER' LEAFLET

Look out for yourself and others

If you live by yourself and find it hard to get out, arrange for someone to check on you.

If you know someone who lives by themselves and finds it hard to get out, check on them when it gets hot.

If you notice someone who has heat stress/exhaustion symptoms as listed on page 2 of this leaflet, follow these 5 steps:

1. Move them to a cool place.
2. Get them to lie down and raise their feet slightly.
3. Get them to drink plenty of water.
4. Cool their skin – spray or sponge them with cool water, fan them, place cold packs around the armpits or neck.
5. Stay with them until they're better

They should start to cool down and feel better within 30 minutes, if you have your concerns call the doctor or NHS 111 for advice.

Heatstroke can develop if heat exhaustion is left untreated and is a life threatening condition, if someone is presenting signs of confusion, disorientation, seizures and/or loss of consciousness call 999 immediately.

Looking after ourselves in summer is not just about putting on sun cream!



Most of us welcome hot weather, but when it's too hot for too long, there are health risks. According to NHS.UK in England, there are on average 2000 heat related deaths every year. If hot weather hits this summer, make sure you stay safe and keep family and friends safe

Tips for coping in hot weather

Know the signs

Make yourself aware of the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion. These include:

- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Thirst
- Loss of appetite and feeling sick
- Urinating infrequently
- Low concentration
- Dizziness, fainting
- Muscle cramps in arms, legs and stomach
- Excessive sweating
- Pale and clammy skin
- Fast breathing/ pulse
- A temperature of 38°C or higher.



Useful websites:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/staying-cool-in-a-heatwave/

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/hot-weather>

<https://gov.uk/government/Beat-the-Heat-Leaflet-COVID-19-2021.pdf>



Hope Specialist Falls & Respiratory Service

The Val Waterhouse Centre
41-43 Kent Street
Grimsby

Phone: 01472 266999

Visit us online:

www.careplusgroup.org

www.hopestreettrust.com

Follow us on Twitter @HopeStGrimsby
and Facebook - @HopeStreetTrust

Drink lots of water

Hydration is key when our body is trying to regulate its temperature as we tend to lose a lot of our body fluids through sweat.

All drinks help hydration but be aware that alcohol acts as a diuretic (encourages you to pass water). There is some evidence to say caffeinated drinks can also encourage passing water and can irritate the lining of the bladder which can encourage the feeling of needing the toilet.

Avoid the heat when possible

Normally the hottest part of the day is between 11am and 3pm. If you have to go out, try to plan your day around the early morning or evening when the temperature is cooler and the air quality is better.

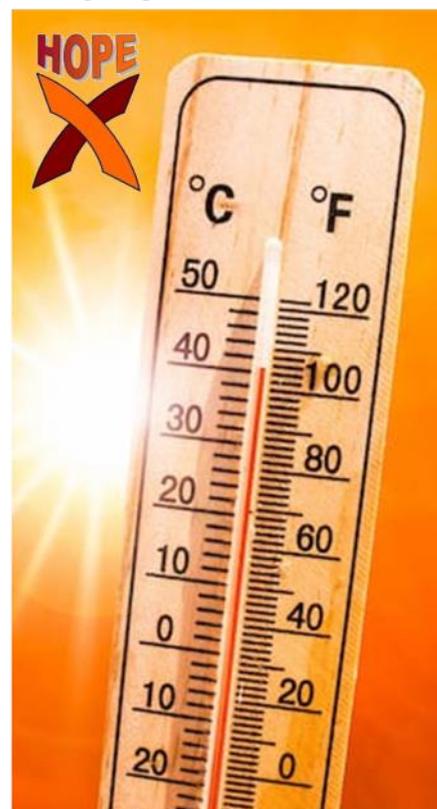
When you're outside, walk in the shade and avoid main roads and busy streets if you can. Take your time, especially if you have to be out in the hottest part of the day. Also, remember to bring a bag of essentials. This could include any medication you need, cold water and a handheld fan.

Slow down when it is hot

Heavy activity can make you prone to heat related illnesses. Avoid extreme physical exertion. If you can't avoid strenuous outdoor activity, such as sport, DIY or gardening, keep it for cooler parts of the day – for example, in the early morning or evening.

BEAT THE HEAT

Staying Cool in the Sun



Preparing for Summer

Keep your house cool

If it is too hot, keep your windows, curtains and blinds closed in the daytime, as this keeps out the heat.

If you suffer from hay fever, avoid opening windows in the early morning or early evening when pollen levels are high and try using a fan instead.

Open your windows when it starts to cool outside and give the hot air a chance to escape.

Eat well

Instead of eating big hot foods try cold foods like salad and fruit which are particularly good because they contain a lot of water.



Along with eating lighter and smaller meals more frequently or healthy snacks.

Dress appropriately

Wear loose, cool clothing and a wide brimmed hat, also choose safe fitting footwear that won't make your feet hot. Wear sunglasses too – try wraparound style ones as they cover the sides of your face. They will protect your skin from the sun and stop pollen getting in your eyes.

Certain medications can make you sensitive to sunlight and you may burn more quickly, always check the information leaflet that came with your medication.

Come along to your local Dementia Café in an informal online group session

Information and advice in a relaxed setting for people affected by dementia in an informal online group session

Your local Dementia Café provides a safe and supportive place for you to:

- discuss your own dementia diagnosis, or someone else's, and think about what it means for the future,
- get answers from health and social care professionals and other voluntary organisations
- meet and learn from other people in similar situations

Where to find us?

Online—from 11th January 2021
Please contact us on
01472 359247 to register your
details so we can send you the
Zoom details to get you online

Our Dementia Café runs

Weekly every Monday: 10.30am-11.30am



**'The people are so
friendly and helpful. It
stopped me bottling
everything up and going
into a downwards spiral.'**

Judith, who has dementia

To find out more
contact us on:

Referrals_NELincs@
alzheimers.org.uk

01472 359247

alzheimers.org.uk



The Carers' Support Service

Working with Carers in Northern Lincolnshire



July Workshops For Carers

Feeling Lonely, even when you're not Alone

**6th July
10.30am to
12.00pm**

Dementia Information Group

**7th July
2.00pm to
3.30pm**

First Aid

**8th July
10.30am to
12.00pm**

**Carer Stress vs
Compassion Fatigue**

**13th July
10.30am to
12.00pm**

**Relationships:
Conflict
Transformation**

**13th July
5.30pm to
7.00pm**

**Anxiety
Management
20th & 21st July
1.30pm to
3.00pm**

If you're in North Lincolnshire call 01652 650585.

For North East Lincolnshire call 01472 242277.

www.carerssupportcentre.com

Registered Charly Number 1070328 Company Limited by Guarantee 3540988

A Network Partner of
CARERS TRUST

**Latest Updates in
North East Lincolnshire
and Other Useful Information**

North East Lincolnshire Council

**COVID-19
Update**



**COVID-19:
Guidance and support in
N.E. Lincolnshire**

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/coronavirus/>



SCAM ALERT

June 2021

Covid digital passport scam

A new email scam about Covid is circulating and we want to advise you what it looks like and what steps you can take.



Your vaccination status is obtained FREE through the NHS App, website or by calling the NHS on 119.

Send suspicious emails to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) at report@phishing.gov.uk.

You may receive an email which looks similar to the one shown. Clicking on the link takes you to a convincing but fake NHS website that asks for personal and payment details. (for an admin fee).

The website has since been taken down, however, as with many scams of this nature, there will be others.

More information can be found on the gov.uk website;
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/demonstrating-your-covid-19-vaccination-status-when-travelling-abroad>

www.ourwatch.org.uk

Neighbourhood Watch Network is a charity registered in England & Wales, CO no: 1172349

For more information please click the link below

[Covid-19 digital passport scam](#)

THE DELTA VARIANT: WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

The symptoms of the Delta variant appear to differ from traditional COVID symptoms. Here's what to look out for:

We've been living in a COVID world for more than 18 months now. At the outset of the pandemic, government agencies and health authorities informed people on how to identify symptoms of the virus.

But as the virus has evolved, it seems the most common symptoms have changed too.

The current top five symptoms of COVID-19

All variants (including current dominant delta variant), UK self-reported symptoms from ZOE COVID study, up to June 23 2021.



1. headache



2. sore throat



3. runny nose



4. fever



5. persistent cough.



THE NEW NORMAL?

COVID restrictions are set to end in England on Monday 19th July from step 4 of the Roadmap after the Prime Minister set out how life will hopefully return close to normal soon.

For more information on the new guidance please visit the websites below:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-sets-out-plan-to-ease-restrictions-at-step-4>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap>

If you are a bit anxious as COVID-19 restrictions ease, the Every Mind website shares tips to help you cope with anxiety about coming out of lockdown:-

<http://nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/tips-to-cope-with-anxiety-lockdown-lifting/>

It's World Mask week on July 12th, although wearing a mask will no longer be legally required in most places after 19th July, WHO recommend the continued use of a properly fitted mask:-

<https://fb.watch/v/1U3QiKpKW/>

Summer Brain Teasers



1. I appear once in summer and twice in Autumn, but never in Winter. What am I?
2. You might love me in the summer but I never like the sun. The hotter the weather the softer I get. What am I?
3. What gets wetter the more it dries?
4. What wears a coat in the winter and pants in the summer?
5. What dresses for summer and sheds for winter?

Answers on Page 32

ENTERTAINMENT

Can you solve this beach equation?

$$\text{hat} + \text{hat} + \text{hat} = 90$$

$$\text{sandals} + \text{hat} = 80$$

$$\text{ball} - \text{sandals} = 20$$

$$\text{ball} = ?$$

Answer on Page 36

Hope Goes Dot Com!

A few weeks ago, I asked our new Admin Assistant Jordan to do a review of Hope's online presence. I'd already predicted what he was going to say, that our website was basically pretty pants. It was horrible to use and didn't do what I wanted it to do and as a result, I tended to ignore it and concentrate on our Facebook page. Unfortunately you get what you pay for and our old website was free.

I also asked Jordan to recommend alternative website platforms, both paid for and free, and he came back with a few choices, with Wix his preferred option, so I had a go at setting up a new website and within a few hours I had a work in progress.



For the website to do what we need it to do, such as accepting online payments, signing up subscribers and just having a name that's easy to remember, we realised that we needed to pay for it and following approval from the Hope Street Trust trustees, we got a good deal and have taken out a three year subscription and acquired a domain name.

The website is still a work in progress, but it's official. We are now:

www.hopestreettrust.com

THE SECRET(ISH) DIARY OF AN 1890s GRIMSBY GARDENER

BY RACHEL BRANSON

Back in 2014, when Sylv and I were part of Friends of Cleethorpes Heritage, the group was given



access to the remarkable archives of Betty Watkinson (pictured left), a botanist of renown and a local historian whose research encompassed all manner of things. I suspect that Betty researched whatever took her fancy, like I tend to do, but unlike me she seems to have been far more organised, with her research neatly filed and no doubt easy to find. If she'd seen my method of filing stuff away, she'd have had a fit. Still it's good to have something to aspire to.

Sadly Betty died in 2015 at the grand old age of 98, but left behind an fascinating legacy for anyone interested in local or natural history. One of the things that caught my attention was a ring binder containing the Edward Abey diaries, which Betty had found in the local archives and then created a typed copy, adding her own comments on Edward's diary entries.

Edward's was not a life of great drama and excitement, nor was he a local celebrity as far as I am aware. Born in 1858 in Thornton Curtis, Edward was a working class man, a fireman and later an engine driver with the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway during the period covered by the diaries, 1888 to 1899.

He was not the luckiest of men and seems to have to have been involved in a fair number of crashes and accidents at work (never his fault!). Perhaps he inherited this trait from his mother, who draws the comment from Betty that she "sounds like a disaster." This may be a bit harsh. True she didn't want to go on the top deck of a tram because she thought it wasn't safe and she took the back door key of Edward's Grimsby home back with her to Thornton, but the exploding paraffin lamp that set fire to the table and hearth rug probably wasn't entirely her fault.

Edward married the love of his life Annie Lusby at the Baptist Tabernacle on 12th June 1889 and they enjoyed a brief honeymoon with family in Sheffield, before moving into their new marital home, 27 Willingham Street, which they were renting for 5s 4d a week. Two days later Edward set to digging over the garden, commenting on the 18th that,

"I have so many things to do, I do not know what to do first!"

Work and jobs around the house kept him busy until mid-July when he started planting up the back garden and sowing parsley, radishes and lettuce, followed just over a week later by Savoy and beet plants that he'd brought from the family farm at Thornton, where he often went to help out.

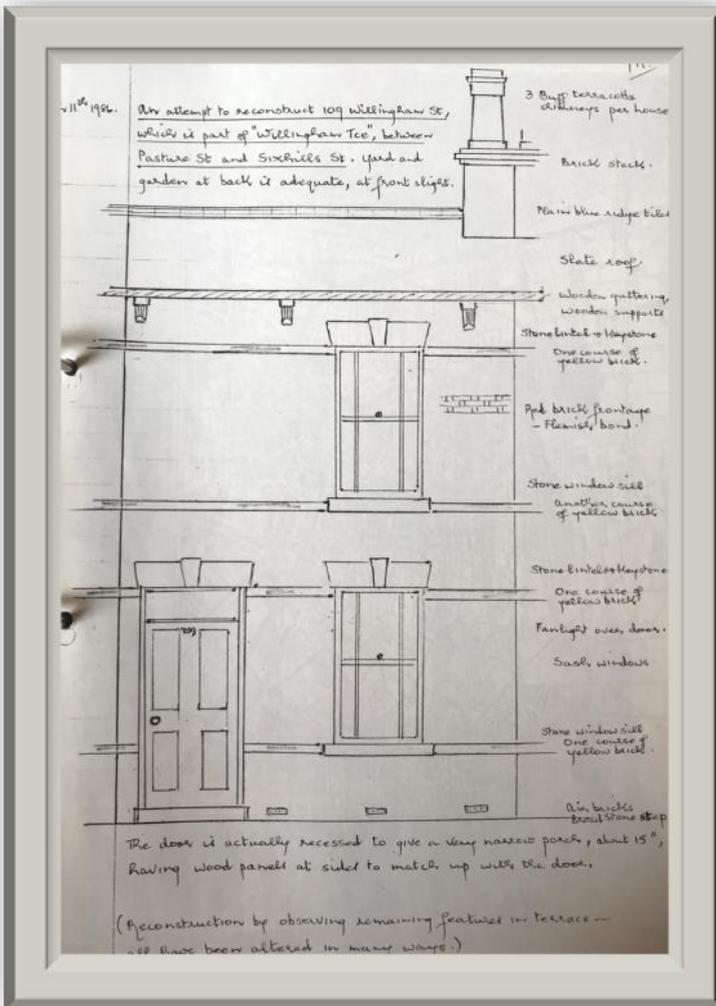
At some point Edward must have planted turnips because in mid-August he lamented the fact that the sparrows had been eating all his turnip tops and he'd had to put some worsted across to stop them. These were not the only pests that threatened to destroy his hard work and by September his

Brussels sprouts were being eaten by caterpillars. Edward took his revenge:

“I have caught a lot and thrown paraffine water on them.”

Like an unwelcome movie sequel, the caterpillars were soon back and Edward was kept busy picking them off his cabbages and cauliflowers in the weeks that followed.

The pesky caterpillars probably weren't a deciding factor, but by January 1890, Edward and Annie had flitted to 109 Willingham Street, which they purchased for £175 and swapped rent money for paying a mortgage. Betty includes a drawing in the folder, which she calls “an attempt to reconstruct 109



Willingham Street” (see left). It's a pretty good attempt. Personally, I'd need a computer program to draw a straight line.

No doubt Edward and Annie hoped to spend a long and happy life together at number 109 and for a few months they did. All seemed well at first when Annie gave birth to son Teddy on 2nd March 1890, although this came as a surprise to Betty because Edward had never once mentioned that Annie was pregnant. She comments that, “Victorian reticence has been carried to its absolute limit!!”

Perhaps Edward didn't want to jinx it by mentioning the pregnancy and for a couple of days it worked. Annie and her son were improving, with the happy new father commenting that “All is as merry as a wedding bell”, but sadly Annie began to deteriorate, the doctor was summoned and a nurse appointed to attend her, but all to no avail. She died, eleven days after bringing Teddy into the world, leaving

Edward to “bewail her loss with sorrow and grief that cannot be altered”. Edward had been married, become a father and been widowed in the space of only nine months and for a long time afterwards would express a desire to be reunited with his wife sooner rather than later.

Once the funeral was over, Edward's sister Polly came from Thornton to keep house for him, whilst he set about keeping himself busy until he returned to work, although he wrote that he was “all hurry and bustle with no set purpose.”. One thing in which he found great solace was gardening. He went to the market and bought 4 rose trees and a Cedar and set them, whilst his mother-in-law's husband Mr Fuller presented him with rhubarb, 3 sage trees, a time (Thyme) root and 2 parsley roots, which he planted in the back garden.

Life went on, with visits to and from his large family, looking after son Teddy, weekly pilgrimages to Annie's grave, church services, prangs at work, home improvements, catching eels and of course gardening. Having stuck to growing veg at his rented property, he now diversified into growing flowers



as well and April saw him planting tulips, crocuses, daffodils, lilies and calcalaries. I was a bit baffled by the last one and not helped by Edward's spelling as he also refers to the plant as Calcalaries and Cancalarias in the diary, but having googled the various spellings I reckon it was probably Calceolairia (Slipperwort). This wasn't the only plant name that Edward spelt randomly. He had a real talent for it.

As well as planting up his garden, he also had soil put on Annie's grave and regularly took plants there, buying some from Colebrook's Nursery, which was in Heneage Street (before it became a road). He laid a large number of rope pattern tiles, the type that can still be seen lining the paths of a few front gardens today and even when he went to see family in Sheffield he was still thinking about the garden, coming back with a hosepipe and sixty celery plants.

I can't imagine gathering flowers in the West Marsh these days, but Edward did just that in June 1890, presumably to take to Annie's grave. He still had problems with pests in his new

garden and had the lime out to see off slugs, but they obviously weren't interested in the celery, which grew sufficiently to be hilled up by late August. Then apart from planting Forget-me-Nots (no doubt with Annie in mind), extending his shed and installing water butts, there is little mention of the garden for the rest of the year.

There was no chance of gardening in December and January thanks to a severe frost, which lasted for eight weeks. On 10th January 1891, Edward wrote that,

"The frost still continues as severe as ever; we have had fully a month, there has not been so long a frost and so much ice available for skat(e)ing since I can remember. Wild birds are dying by dozens and I am afraid there are a great many poor people in great distress and several people have been frozen to death in different parts of the country."

By 24th January the frost was thankfully abating. Edward felt it had been the most severe winter he'd ever known, with as much as "20 degrees of frost" and no doubt it felt like winter in his heart too as he faced life without Annie. But by 3rd February he was digging a new garden, which Betty believes was an allotment, probably on railway company land. By now his brother Willie had also come to live with him and helped him with the new project, including a bit of "gardening by moonlight".

As the anniversary of Annie's death dawned, Edward lamented that,

"I feel certain there can be no worse torment in store for impenitent sinners than I have endured during this past year. I seem to have lost all. I cannot see the divine purpose in it all, but I try to think it

is all for a wise purpose. I wish I could cease to grieve as it can do no good and makes me ill and miserable, but I cannot.”

The next day he returned to the garden and planted some Marquary (Mercury or Good King Henry, a spinach alternative) and forty cabbage plants and got some tubs to make a well in the garden. The day after he sank into grief again on the anniversary of Annie’s funeral, praying,

“Lord help me, for I fear going wrong.”

Like so many people, anniversaries were particularly hard for him, but he was soon back to the mundanities of life, ordering a load of nightsoil for the garden, seeing a man about a wheelbarrow wheel and digging the well with Willie. May saw a spurt of planting as parsnips, lettuce and carrot seeds were sown and potatoes planted, whilst the kindly Mr Fuller gave him more rhubarb, greens and pansy roots. I wish Mr Fuller was still around to give me some rhubarb because mine’s rubbish!

The annual battle with the slugs took place in November, with Edward proudly reporting that he had killed hundreds of them with lime. He harvested parsnips and pried them, dug up rhubarb and took it to his allotment and then another gardening year came to an end.

The years followed a similar pattern of Edward grieving for what he had lost on various anniversaries and asking why he could not join Annie as he had nothing worth living for and yet he carried on. Audrey Hepburn is quoted as saying that “to plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow” and despite Edward’s protestations that he had nothing to live for, he kept planting and nurturing his crops and guarding them against pests, erecting fences and building sheds. He also joined the Primrose League, which wasn’t a horticultural group, but rather an organisation formed to spread Conservative principles and attended meetings and events.



Edward went on living, perhaps envying those around him who prematurely shuffled off this mortal coil. His brother Harry, only 24 years old, caught a cold, which developed into congestion of the lungs and eight days later was dead. Brother Willie, who had helped Edward with the allotment, “got excited and was pushed down or fell down in a fit from which he never recovered consciousness”, at the age of 34. Edward blamed Willie’s wife for his death, saying that “she has been everything that is bad”.

Workmates, friends and relations died and Edward’s engine struck a fatal blow more than once, with a suicidal man called Blades killed at Blundell Park crossing and a donkey at Cleethorpes in the space of three months. Edward often sickened and had numerous teeth pulled, but life had hold of him and wouldn’t let him go.

As the years passed, Edward’s grief softened and his visits to Annie’s grave became less frequent. Three

years after her death, Edward commented that,

“All I do in improving etc, I seem to do it for her sake. And that alone seems the motive power for me.”

Despite his devastating loss, Edward came to believe that his wife would have wanted him to live and bring up their son and as Teddy grew older and father and son were able to do more together, perhaps he saw his wife in his son and this strengthened his resolve to live on for her sake. The anniversary avowals that he had nothing to live for became briefer and sometimes quite random, including a memorable entry on 15th March 1895, the fifth anniversary of Annie’s burial, when Edward wrote, “I digged some parsnips and brought them home, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in shure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection.”

Reading Edward’s diary entries, you notice the differences between life in the 1890s and today, such as fatal diseases that are no longer fatal and railways that took you virtually anywhere in the country until Dr Beeching put a spanner in the rails in the 1960s, but you also notice the parallels.

Whilst we may think that the unpredictability of the weather is a recent thing, in Edward’s time they had 5 inches of snow in mid-April one year and the start of a three month drought the next, described in the diary as “the driest Spring in 50 years.” One year there was excessive heat in Summer and the next excessive rain. Sometimes winters were marked by severe frosts that lasted for weeks, others were memorable for violent storms and disasters at sea. Perhaps the impact of industrial pollution was already being felt back then?

Although most working class people in the 1890s didn’t travel abroad, they enjoyed day trips and went on



holiday. They celebrated births and marriages, suffered with both their own illnesses and injuries and those of the people they loved and mourned deaths. They went to church, voted in elections and attended plays, concerts, parties and big local events. They went shopping and noted the price of what they bought, paid rent, took out mortgages and insurance policies and undertook home improvements and repairs. They worked long hours and experienced ups and downs in their jobs. Outside of work, many sought to educate themselves by attending lectures and reading. Edward went from being a man who barely mentioned a book at the beginning of the diaries to someone who was reading Shakespeare, Longfellow, Burns and the Arabian Nights whilst laid up following an injury at work. In short, our Victorian predecessors were very much like us, just without the technology that has made the world a much smaller place.

As a gardener, what strikes me most is how little the core plants that we grow have changed in 130 years. Roses, daffodils, tulips, crocuses, lilies, foxgloves, forget-me-nots, lobelia, chrysanthemums, lily of the valley, pansies,

wallflowers, London pride, polyanthus, clematis, stocks, asters, dahlias, hollyhocks, phlox, nasturtiums, fuchsias, violas, geraniums, zinnias, sweet peas, snapdragons, scabious and sweet William were all grown by Edward during the years covered by the diaries and they're all plants that I've either got in my garden now or have grown in the past. I naively thought that some of them were more recent introductions to English gardens, but this just proves that I still have a lot to learn about gardening.

Meanwhile, in our vegetable patches and allotments, we are still planting much the same fruit and veg as Edward did and for all of our technological advances, we are still battling birds, caterpillars, slugs, snails and other wee beasties, although you won't catch me resorting to paraffin water and lime to see them off. I'd much rather stick to raising my plants high, making the terrain more challenging and using fleece and netting. Better to lose a few plants to pests than risk poisoning the wildlife.

One difference I am glad of though is that we no longer need to buy nightsoil to fertilise our gardens, as I doubt it had the earthy smell and crumbly texture of well-rotted horse manure that TV gardeners rave about. I can't imagine being able to sit outside and read a good book in a garden that was strewn with sewage, but then the Victorians' noses were probably less sensitive to the smells that we now do our best to neutralise with air fresheners. The nose blindness derided in TV adverts would have been a blessing back then.

Like many of us have done during the pandemic, Edward sought solace in his garden and it helped him through a very difficult period in his life when the future appeared bleak and pointless to him. He also achieved a degree of self-sufficiency in spite of pests and although Betty felt that at one stage Edward was trying to work himself to death whilst creating a horticultural tribute to Annie, he seems to have eventually found his way through the stages of grief to acceptance.

By the time the 19th century and the diaries drew to a close, Edward was still doing much the same as he had done for the previous nine years, but was hopefully allowing himself to enjoy life without feeling guilty for doing so. He had started writing his family history and his own story was one of long service on the railways until he retired and went home to Thornton Curtis, where he lived out the rest of his days before dying in 1936, aged 78. Son Teddy, or Edward Lusby Abey, as he was known as an adult, also had a life of public service. In 1913, he was deemed by the Royal Sanitary Institute to be "competent to discharge the duties of Inspector of Nuisances", which suggests that the smell of night soil on his father's vegetable patch wouldn't have bothered him. He later became the Chief Waterworks Inspector for the local corporation and when he died in 1954, he was buried at Thornton Curtis with his Abey ancestors.

At the beginning of his diary for 1889, Edward describes it as "A Chronicle of Events of Importance to me" and he stayed true to that. In the grand scheme of things, what he wrote is not really of importance to anyone else, but it is nevertheless fascinating in its mundanity because it gives you a real insight into what day to day life was like for a working class man 130 years ago.

To quote the American film director Jim Jarmusch,

"The beauty of life is in small *details*, not in big events."

NOTE: The flower illustrations on pages 28 and 30 are taken from "Our Country's Flowers and how to know them" by W.J. Gordon, published in 1891.

