



From the Chairman

As many of you reading this newsletter will already know that 2017 did not end in a happy way for FISH. Fortunately no one was seriously injured or killed in the car incident. The whole event could have been much worse.

Dr Hemphill and his wife slept through the night only partially hearing what they thought was an explosion. They are both well and getting over the shock.

My thanks to everyone who spoke with us offering help and in particular my thanks to all the fantastic volunteers who, working as a team, were able to keep the Charity's work going despite the problems. We are now very settled in at the Christ the King church in Sedgefield Road and again our appreciation of the help given to us.

Hooray for IT systems as many people have said!! Thanks to our adoption of an IT based booking system last year we were able to maintain our car and minibus services remotely with no interruption so it was very much a case of BUSINESS AS USUAL.

Our thanks to the Sonning Common Health Centre for displaying, during the last few weeks, information about FISH and all our activities. The idea was well thought out and created much interest.

I hope you find the articles in this latest Newsletter interesting particularly the ones that express the great satisfaction and enjoyment that being a FISH volunteer can bring.

Talking of volunteers we continue to need your help to enable us to carry on being as successful as we are. In particular we are looking for somebody with marketing skills and would be pleased to hear from you. For more details of how you can assist generally please visit our website www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk

My best wishes.

Clive Mills
Chairman



Memoirs of a FISH Volunteer Driver

It was approximately 2 years ago when I was singing in an impromptu Choir at a FISH monthly party that I was approached by our unflappable Chairman, Clive Mills. He was our piano accompanist at the 'gig' and from the depths of his piano stool he gave me an intensive interview – 'psst, how would you like to come and drive for FISH?' Having said 'Yes,' I was quickly introduced to the fragrant Mary Norris and other members of the Office staff. With administrative procedures completed seemingly in an instant, I was a fully badged FISH Volunteer Driver- simple!

Little did I realise in accepting the role that a whole new, previously unknown, world would open up to me. Whilst I constantly feel satisfaction in helping others often less fortunate than myself, the responsibility brings me immense personal pleasure and with it, a host of new friends and acquaintances.

Whether it is Oxford John Radcliffe on a Tuesday morning or Reading Berkshire Hospital on a Wednesday night or Sonning Common Health Centre on a Thursday lunch time, every experience is different but delightful. No job too small, no challenge too great.

Above all, do not believe that it is just a driving job. I have been called in to meet a Consultant when a patient was struggling a little after Surgery. I have had to talk to concerned Nurses when a very old patient has difficulty in

communicating, and in driving patients home have had to use both mouth and hands and facial expressions to ensure my passenger understands their appointments for the future. I have even sat in the car for over an hour talking to an anxious passenger about her future well-being when her loved one has been taken into care.

However, I need to confess that I once fell asleep on the job! I dropped off a lady who was visiting a local Nursing Home. I was invited in to have a cup of tea by a Nurse and shown to a large lounge complete with a few sleeping inmates and a roaring fire. In this warm atmosphere I dozed off only to be awoken 30 minutes later by my client with 'shall we go now?' My response – 'it's easy to become institutionalised isn't it?' Ah well.

Yes, being a FISH Volunteer Driver is different! You certainly need to be a good, careful driver in all weathers and terrain but there is definitely more to the job. Above all one must realise that your client comes first, second and third, and that a little care rewards both the giver and the receiver. Above all, a smile from your heart can light up another person's day.

Then, when you arrive at your own home, sit down in a chair with a relaxing drink and feel the pleasure seep through your body with the thought that you have lived the last two hours for A N Other and not for yourself.

I cannot wait for my next appointment. Go on – join FISH and find a life enhancing experience.

Barry Wood

FISH Volunteer Car Driver



Are you a good listener?

Do you enjoy a good one to one chat? If so I would love to hear from you. At the FISH Volunteer Centre we set up FISH Home Visitors almost two years ago and it has been very successful. Many local elderly people who do not see friends or family very often are benefiting from the relationships they have made with their Home Visitors who spend a regular hour or so every week or fortnight with their clients.

Some really strong friendships have been made which are valuable to the people visited and their visitors. I now need more people willing to be visitors. There is no age limit and you don't even need to be able to drive as I will try to match you with someone within walking distance of your own home. So if you would be interested in having a chat about this form of volunteering get in touch with me via the FISH Volunteer Centre 0118 972 3986 or email fishvolunteercentre.org.uk.



Sue Nickson
FISH Home Visiting Coordinator

Being a Good Listener

In the autumn of 2016 I was looking at the options available to people wanting to offer a few hours of their time, each week, on a voluntary basis. Fortunately, I spotted a FISH notice which was asking for volunteer home visitors. Perfect!! The rest, as they say, is history!!

After due process, in January 2017, I was invited to meet a delightful lady who had requested a visitor. Jane was a widow and her daughters and grandchildren did not live locally. She had frequent telephone conversations but limited face to face contact and was lonely.

I visited Jane once a week and we became good friends. She and her husband had emigrated to Australia as '£10 Poms' and she had some amazing stories of the hardships and joys of life there. We both enjoyed her reminiscences, including the many photos.

We had planned some short trips for when the weather improved but, sadly, she spent the last 7 weeks of her life in hospital and never came home!

When I met Jane's daughters, at her funeral, they told me how much their Mum enjoyed my visits and that she had really been looking forward to our planned 'jaunts'.

I now visit an elderly couple, Grace and James, who live with their daughter. They are both quite frail but enjoy chatting about world events and current affairs. They have enjoyed full and interesting lives and I always look forward to my time with them each week.

People have different reasons for requesting home visits, but all are willing to welcome a complete stranger into their home. As a home visitor I feel that I am in a very privileged position and that I am very lucky to be given the opportunity to develop new friendships and to discover, 'from the horse's mouth', the interesting lives led by others.

If you have an hour or so to spare each week, are a good listener and have a sense of humour I can certainly recommend becoming a FISH home visitor.

(All names in this article have been changed to preserve anonymity)

Anne Davies
FISH Volunteer Home Visitor

Minibus Trips to Watermill Theatre

I first went to the Watermill Theatre quite a few years back around Christmas time when there was a production of an excellent 'Old Time Music Hall' to which this charming little theatre lends itself.

The Watermill Theatre is a professional repertory theatre with charitable status established in 1967. It is a converted watermill mentioned in the Domesday Book beside the River Lambourn which meanders through the grounds with many varieties of wildfowl. It seats 113 people and is one of the smallest and most beautiful theatres I have visited. The grounds and outside of the building are equally as good as the inside.



Gradually FISH has extended its visits due to the quality of the productions and the outstanding mouthwatering lunches composed of an excellent buffet salad bar, four or five hot meals finished off with a choice of gorgeous sweets. Payment is taken at your word as to what you consumed which is a rarity these days. I tend to book musicals or fairly light hearted plays rather than those on the more serious side but am open to suggestions. The standards of performance are second to none. The actors appear so dedicated to their craft with superb effort, moving from venue to venue, out of a suitcase mostly without ever achieving fame. Many of the actors are also very talented musicians, some playing several instruments.

We nearly had a disappointment last June as when the driver discovered a puncture when they went to pick up the bus so had to go to Henley for repair. Lunch ended up at Flemings in the village and we flew there arriving five minutes before curtain-up. What a performance, 'House & Garden' by Alan Ayckbourn which turned out to be two separate plays acted out simultaneously. 'House' in the Theatre for us, and 'Garden' in the grounds in a marquee. Unbeknown to us at the start, it was the same cast interacting between House and Garden with quick changes but how they remembered their part, where to be and their lines was incredible. They worked so hard, but that is the dedication and standard at The Watermill.

Sheila Maughan

FISH Leisure Trips Coordinator

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT?

As the FISH Volunteer Centre moves forward we are looking for a volunteer to develop and produce our literature and the use of social media together with assisting in liaising with other charitable organisations.

*For more information please contact me on
0118 972 4154 Clive Mills, Chairman*

FISH TEA PARTIES

Held in the village hall on the second Monday of each month (first Monday in December) for residents in the local area.
Transport can be provided.

Do come along for a sandwich and a home-made cake from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. on any of the following dates for 2018:

April 9 th	May 14 th	June 11 th
July 9 th	Aug 13 th	Sept 10 th
Oct 8 ^t	Nov 12 th	Dec 3 rd

Entry is free but donations to FISH are most welcome. There is always some form of entertainment and a raffle.

Charity Gift Aid Declaration – multiple donation

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Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK tax payer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:

Name of Charity: **FISH VOLUNTEER CENTRE – Charity Number 286318**

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

Title: _____ First name or initial(s): _____ Surname: _____

Full Home Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Date: _____

Please notify the FISH Volunteer Centre if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.



New Standing Order Instruction

Please complete your bank name and sections 1 and 3 of this form in **BLOCK CAPITALS** and in black ink and leave section 2 blank.

To: _____ Bank / Building Society

Please set up the following Standing Order and debit my/our account accordingly

1. Account details

Account name Account number
 Account holding branch Sort Code

2. Payee details

Name of person or organisation you are paying
 Payment reference – please enter donor’s name
 this will appear on the bank statement of the FISH Volunteer Centre
 Sort Code - the bank code of the person or organisation you are paying
 Account number - the account of the person or the organisation you wish to pay

3. About the payment

How often are the payments to be made (please tick one box) Weekly Two weekly Four weekly Monthly
 Quarterly Half yearly Yearly

Amount details
 Date and amount of first payment £
 (please allow 3 working days for receipt)

Date and amount of ongoing payments £
 (if different from the first payment)

Choose one of the following two options

- Date and amount of final payment £
- Until further notice (please tick) (payments will be made until you cancel this instruction)

4. Confirmation

Customer signature(s): _____ Date: _____
 _____ Date: _____

A Passion for Things Historical

Michael Macleod is a previous Chairman of FISH (more about that later) and has for the last five decades been able to maintain his love for history and things historical.

Michael grew up in Surrey with his family and on finishing his A levels decided that he wanted to join the VSO organisation. He joined the Merchant Navy and worked his passage to Singapore and then onward to Borneo. At this time Margaret his wife was also doing VSO work in Fiji. A chance meeting at a party back in the UK in 1963 was the start of the romance. They married in 1968 and will shortly celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Michael started his working life teaching History and after five years won a place at Oxford University as a mature student studying the very same subject. Initially living in Sonning Common he became Head of Humanities at Highdown School as well as Head of History.

In 1982 he and Margaret moved to Peppard and have been impressed with the community spirit in the area which has grown over the last 20 years including the Green Gym, Peppard Revels, and the Sonning Common Theatre club to mention just a few.

In 1997 he joined FISH having been invited by Ann Barber to become its Chairman. During his five years as Chairman he made many friends including two ladies who were the office coordinators, Barbara Butler and Jilt Vallis. Michael has continued to be a volunteer driver until very recently.

Michael and Margaret have a son and daughter and enjoy their two grandchildren Thomas and William, 15 and 6 respectively

Michael is a keen author and has self-published three books. The first book was the ***History of Shaw House School*** where he was Head teacher. The proceeds going to the Save the Children Fund. The second book was about the history of Peppard entitled ***The Land of the Rother Beast***. This was published in 2000 and the proceeds went to helping the VSO work in Nepal. His third book was about the ***Quakers in Henley***.

Currently Michael is working on a new book entitled ***Senses at War***. The five senses and how they influenced writing, cooking etc. in the period during the English Civil War 1642 - 1649. Added to all this Michael is the Chairman of the South Chiltern London Explorers Group organising trips to historical places in the Capital, A very popular group which now has a waiting list top join.

An altogether busy and caring person.

Clive Mills

FISH Chairman

