



## How you can help NALC

### By Joining Us:

Do you have some experience and skills in fundraising? We will be setting up a committee to develop activities to raise funds to replace the cuts in our grant from Macmillan, phased over the next two years. We would welcome the involvement of members of our wider community who could add their expertise. As is usual for our committee members, travel expenses will be paid for attendance at meetings.

Please contact Vivien Reed at the NALC office if you are interested and willing to help us in this way. Contact details are on the front of this Newsletter.

### By Donating:

Please consider supporting NALC in one of the following ways:

USE THE FORM ON PAGE 1 to:

- Send a donation to our office
- Make a donation via a card payment

### By Visiting the Website:

[www.laryngectomy.org.uk](http://www.laryngectomy.org.uk)

There is a facility on our website to make a donation using a debit card or credit card. Please also submit the details that allow us to claim Gift Aid.

### By Organising a Fundraising Event:

Could you or your club organise a coffee morning or similar event? We can advertise such events on the website and in *CLAN*, to help maximise your success!

### By Sponsoring Events:

Could you or a friend or family member take part in a local or national sponsored activity to benefit NALC? We will help by appealing on our website, and elsewhere, for sponsors to support you. Again, that would help with your efforts.

Whichever way you could help us, it would be most appreciated, and of enormous benefit in helping us to continue – and expand – the vital work we do at NALC in helping to support the laryngectomy community, and improve services, across the UK.

We look forward to hearing from you.

*Malcolm Babb, NALC President*

## What a Crush...

At the Wedding Reception, the Best Man said: "Would all married men please stand next to the one person who has made your life worth living?" The barman was almost crushed to death, but is expected to survive...

*(from Still Talking, NSW Newsletter)*

## Research Update

The March edition of *CLAN* contained a request from Lizz Summers, a Speech and Language Therapist from Cambridge, for help with a research study. I am delighted to report that the study has fully met its recruitment target and Lizz sends her thanks to NALC members. We intend to report on the results in a future edition of *CLAN*.

Already this year NALC has been asked to provide formal support for several research projects. Professor Martin Birchall, an NALC Patron and Adviser, wanted our support for a study aiming to develop a tissue engineered trachea. Other studies include the use of a Patient Concerns Inventory with head and neck cancer patients and another looking at the reduction of fibrosis following radiotherapy.

## 20:20 Voice

Phil J reports: "Well folks, I can tell you one thing boys 'n girls, Rock 'n Roll has definitely not died! Sunday night (8 March) at the Fox & Tiger proved that conclusively, as the place was packed out with those who knew dancin' when dancin' was dancin'!"



In April they held the 'Great Western' bike ride. They teamed up with the Steamy Billy Brewery Co. Ltd who also sponsored the event – and they put up a £50 prize for the top team sponsorship raisers and a £25 prize for the individual who raised the most sponsorship.



## Andy Gage



It was with great sadness we learnt in early May that one of our Vice-Presidents, Andy Gage, had passed away. He shared news of his illness last December and he showed a lot of spirit and determination to achieve a favourable outcome, which sadly was not to be.

His background made him the ideal webmaster for the new NALC website when it was launched in late 2012. His experience in copywriting made him a great asset not just to NALC but to other groups such as Macmillan. Andy became an NALC Vice-President in May 2013. He was prepared to help with anything and embraced the challenge of making NALC self-sufficient as Macmillan funding was being phased out. I will greatly miss his friendship and support; he was a very valuable member of our team.

He played a large part in the revival of Central London Laryngectomy Group and enthusiastically supported a stem-cell research project. He wrote an account of his life in *CLAN* September 2013, which is still available on our website.

*Malcolm Babb, NALC President.*

## Be a Smartie

Some time ago we floated the "be a smartie investor" idea whereby you buy a tube of smarties, enjoy the contents at your leisure and then simply fill the tube up with 20p pieces! It's a simple way of saving your 20p's and a great way of raising funds for the "20-20 Voice" Cancer Charity. I am delighted to say that our first '20-20 tube' was handed in on Wednesday night and we are hoping that this will catch on nationwide as we grow and grow. So there you go folks, it's dead simple to be a 'smartie investor'.



## Free Prescriptions?

Jean Fraser has highlighted to CLAN this BBC article ([www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-31537381](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-31537381)) which tells how patients with life-long conditions are being fined up to £100 for collecting their free prescriptions. They say they were not told of a rule change that meant their exemption certificates had to be updated. Charities and pharmacists said patients were being labelled 'fraudsters' and being 'unfairly' punished. The NHS said it was the "patient's own responsibility to check their entitlement".

Radio presenter Sybil Ruscoe told BBC Radio Oxford: "I have been fined for having free insulin. Hundreds of us have had fines in the post. Basically we're being criminalised for having a chronic illness. It's bad enough having type 1 diabetes – you have to prick yourself with needles seven or eight times a day – and now I'm being criminalised for doing something I wasn't told was wrong."

### Not informed

She had type 1 diabetes diagnosed in 1999 and was told that she was entitled to free prescriptions for life. The system changed in 2002 and a new medical exemption certificate that needed renewing every five years was introduced. But those issued the old exemptions were not informed of the change. They have started facing fines since the NHS Business Services Authority took over responsibility for checking people's eligibility last September. The body started issuing fines of up to £100 plus the cost of the prescription. Government ministers have openly championed getting tough on prescriptions.

### Unacceptable

The charity Diabetes UK says "large

numbers" of people are affected, although there is no clear overall total. Its chief executive, Barbara Young, told the BBC: "This is a policy designed to tackle fraud, but because of the poor way it has been implemented it has resulted in the unfair fining of people with a lifelong health condition. It is unacceptable and needs to change." She said that people should have been warned first, rather than just fined.

Neal Patel, of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, shared that sentiment: "No-one should be labelled a fraudster just because they have forgotten to renew their medical exemption certificate. The effect of this fine is to punish people with long-term conditions for their illness. We'd like to see a far more constructive approach which supports and informs patients rather than make them bear the bureaucratic burden of an unfair system."

An NHS Business Services Authority spokeswoman said: "It remains the patient's own responsibility to check their entitlement before claiming free prescriptions. To be clear, it is written in regulation that it is the exemption certificate that entitles a patient to free prescriptions, not the medical condition alone."

## Speaking Valves

Ali Al-lami, an ENT doctor (Registrar) at the East Kent Hospitals' University Foundation Trust, has written to CLAN. He says: "I am currently carrying out a project regarding the problems that laryngectomy patients encounter in using speaking valves. I have designed a paper questionnaire which was filled in by some of our patients in the local laryngectomy club and I have designed a survey version that I was hoping CLAN readers might complete."

So please do complete and return to him if you would like to help. Here are the questions. You can email Dr Ali at: [aklami@doctors.org.uk](mailto:aklami@doctors.org.uk)

### Laryngectomy Speaking Valve Questionnaire

1. Name (optional):
2. Date of birth (optional):
3. Approximately how many years have you had a speaking valve?
4. What type of valve do you have (e.g. Blom-Singer or Provox)?
5. How long do your valves last before they need changing?
6. Please rate any problems you may have had with the valve over the last 12 months:

None	Mild	Moderate
Severe	Very Severe	

Swelling/growth of extra tissue around/next to the valve

Valve leakage

Cough on eating/drinking

Increased speaking effort

7. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the worst, 5 being the best) how would you rate your voice quality?
8. How many chest infections that have required antibiotics have you had in the last 12 months?
9. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the worst, 5 being the best), how would you rate your quality of life since you have been using a valve?
10. Any other comments?

## White Chocolate & Raspberry Pudding

### Ingredients

3 eggs  
½ tsp vanilla extract  
500ml crème fraiche  
1 lb brioche loaf cut into chunks  
6oz white chocolate broken into small bits  
12oz raspberries  
2oz caster sugar  
1 tbsp self raising flour

### Method

Pre heat the oven 200 C or gas mark 6. In an oven-proof dish, layer half the brioche followed by half the chocolate and then half the raspberries. Repeat with the remaining brioche, white chocolate and raspberries. In a jug, mix the caster sugar, flour, eggs, vanilla and crème fraiche. Bake in the oven for 25 to 30 minutes until golden.

Ian & Rose Browse



Taken from 'Soups & Puddings' produced by THANCS Group. Minimum donation (from non-laryngectomees) of £2.00 per copy. THANCS group: Hawthorn Suite, Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1DD.

The University of Florida  
has an emergency plan  
in case of a sudden  
Zombie attack!

## Me and my Lary

It has been two years now since my laryngectomy and have I think finally come to terms with it. I have however had some strange reactions from people that I come across during my every day business. I thought others might find interesting.

- **The Take No Notice:** These people ignore the problem and take no notice. They tend to be very polite and if they don't understand anything they will say pardon so I will repeat myself. If they still do not understand I will write it down. So generally they are no problem.
- **The Take No Notice But Stare:** Like the above type but do not know how to respond. They are polite people and can't help looking at the stoma button while you are talking. They usually say pardon or mostly sorry, it is usually a good idea to write your request down at this point because they are fascinated and will not listen.
- **The Sympathetic People:** This type treat you like someone with a brain impediment. They generally are over helpful. They finish every sentence for you, generally getting it wrong because they are not really listening, they are too busy trying to be helpful, or because your "Brain does not work properly" you are not really saying anything important. I have found it best to walk away and get my wife and we go back together and she does the communicating.
- **Those Who Do Not Know How To React:** These I find have never met anyone like me before. As a result ignore me or if my wife is with me ask her how I am as if I am not there. For example: My wife and I were waiting in the ENT for a routine check, one of my wife's cousins and his wife came in. While they were talking they said "How is he then?" "Is he coping O.K.?" I was sitting beside her and quite capable of telling them myself.

### Annoying...

I will now try to describe the second category. This may prove difficult as these people annoy me immensely and I get terribly frustrated with them and myself. It seems that I cannot bring myself to realise it is not my fault but I will learn.

- **The Anti Anything:** That Is Not Normal These people do not want to even try to listen because you are different from

## Memories of the Popinjay Club

*Andrew Staines is an old friend of CLAN – he used to draw cartoons in the early days. He has sent us a copy of the Rules of one of the oldest clubs, The Popinjay Club at Charing Cross Hospital. He has also sent detailed notes for organising their Christmas party. Here are just a few extracts to give you a feel of how things were done back in the late 1970s.*

One thing the Chairman needs to watch is that his helpers do not spend too much out of their own pockets and then "not like to mention it" and so not be reimbursed.

### Fosberry Punch

Ted Fosberry makes an excellent punch which is now very much a Popinjay tradition. It is most important that the table on which he stands his bowl should be well covered with a plastic sheet and table cloths as any spillage has a devastating effect on the polish. As High Priest of the Punch Bowl, Ted usually finds himself dispensing wines and spirits as well.

In 1978 we forgot to lay on any 'mixers' which was a bad oversight as Mr Smith had mentioned at one of the preparatory meetings. Soda, tonic water etc.

Entertainment should be firmly arranged as early as possible. So far we have always had a person come along with a guitar and a good singing voice. Usually they have done it as a favour and have been given a bunch of flowers or a bottle of whisky. There are disadvantages to this arrangement. Somebody doing it for nothing may take their time about making a firm arrangement or may change their mind. They are not under any obligation to

the norm. I am convinced that in ancient times they would hold up the sign of the cross in front of you.

- **Those That Need An Artificial Aid:** People generally use their ears to listen but I think they use their eyes as well to lip read. Some are too vain to admit they have a problem or when you write it down they have left their glasses at home. There is no hope trying to communicate with these people so I just walk away. I usually go back with my wife to talk for me.
- **You Cannot Be Normal:** Because you do not speak like everyone else you must have a brain problem or have learning difficulties at the very least. "Should you be out on your own?" "Is your wife or carer with you?" These people are best ignored, I can be just as ignorant and rude as them. I find that getting annoyed causes me to get flustered and my breathing becomes faster and usually ends up with my

offer an adequate substitute. It is probably better to pay a fee and have a professional entertainer. We did this in 1978 and found it much more satisfactory.

Like many voluntary organizations, Popinjay operates on anarchistic principles a good deal of the time... but (this) seems to work reasonably well... (though) it sometimes leads to gaps in arrangements as, for example, the year our patron (Sir Richard Attenborough) turned up, stayed at the party for a while and then left without having been formally greeted by any officer of the club and without his presence having been announced...



*Andrew Staines and the Editor on Gibbett Hill in 2010*

plate blowing and this just adds to the problem.

- **Those not in any category Children are great** they ask lots of questions "Why do you talk funny and you sound like a Dalek, are you one?. Is an example, I answer as truthfully as I can by telling them about my cancer and they are fine with it. The parents on the other hand are a different matter. They fit all the above categories. Don't talk to that strange man, I'm sorry he/she bothered you.

Finally there is also the totally uneducated who do nothing but ridicule, I think they do so because for once they think they have found someone who is more ridiculous than they are.

I find now two years on I have at last become more understanding to people's reactions after all I am in the minority and I find people's reactions interesting and amusing now.

*William John Pickup*

## NALC AGM 2015

The NALC AGM took place on Monday 18 May 2015 at St Peter's Church. Members were invited to have lunch prior to the meeting.

Seventeen member clubs attended from Lanarkshire, South Shields, Reading and Crawley to name a few. Many gave apologies and felt they wanted to save the Association money so they would not attend.

Our President Malcolm Babb welcomed everyone and asked for a minute's silence for departed friends. Thinking especially of our Vice President Andy Gage who has recently passed away and whose funeral was taking place on the day of the AGM. He then went on to give his report on NALC's work over the last twelve months. Our Association Secretary Vivien Reed gave her report on NALC's move to smaller premises and the continued work of the Association. Our Treasurer Alex McGuiggan presented the accounts to the meeting, he is pleased with the donations we have received to date but for NALC to survive a lot more is needed. It was then the turn of the Vice Presidents to give their account on the last year in office, with visits to hospitals, universities and patient days.

Development of NALC talked about a meeting with all the other Head & Neck Cancer Associations in the UK which would take place this summer.

### Our election of Officers:

Malcolm Babb was re-elected President.

Alex McGuiggan was re-elected Treasurer.

Tony Smith and Ivor Smith were re-elected Vice President.

It was decided to co-opt Tony Hudson from the Amersham Club on to the Executive Committee.

Due to our funding position, it has been decided not to hold an Annual Lunch this year.

Several clubs gave a report of social days out and they were very encouraging with the ongoing work that they do to promote themselves and NALC.

The meetings closed at 3.15 pm.

*Vivien Reed, Association Secretary*



## Patient Day

Friday 19 June  
1pm – 5pm  
Dunkenhalgh Hotel  
Blackburn Road  
Blackburn BB5 5JP

If you would like to attend please call or email head office on 020 7730 8585 or [info@laryngectomy.org.uk](mailto:info@laryngectomy.org.uk) by Friday 12 June



## 20:20 Survey

The 20:20 website says: "We already know that GPs are reluctant (due to costs) to send their patients to their local hospital ENT departments in order that they can be properly checked out for any cancerous tissue that may be lurking in those deep and unseen places. Against that we have to consider the fact that throat cancers have rocketed by 600% in the past decade... so something has to be done about the situation where, sadly, throat cancer sufferers are not being diagnosed early enough to be treatable. Our survey has been compiled by those directly involved in treating throat cancer patients and your anonymity is assured. We would very much appreciate all larynx completing this short but detailed survey as the results will determine what is sent to all health authorities nationwide. The survey is at: [www.2020cancerappeal.org/laryngectomy-awareness-survey/](http://www.2020cancerappeal.org/laryngectomy-awareness-survey/)

## Mañana

Spanish singer Julio Iglesias was on television with British TV host Anne Diamond when he used the word 'mañana' (pronounced 'manyana'). Diamond asked him to explain what it meant. He said that the term means "Maybe the job will be done tomorrow, maybe the next day, maybe the day after that. Or perhaps next week, next month, next year. Who really cares?" The host turned to Albert Yatapingu from the Gumbaingeri Tribe who was also on the show and asked him if there was an equivalent term in his native language. "Er," he replied. "In Australia we don't have a word to describe that degree of urgency."

*(Still Talking NSW Newsletter)*

# GEOFF'S SMOKING STORY



When I was at secondary school in the early sixties, I remember watching those old school movies where we saw old men who could hardly breathe, who had blackened lungs from smoking. We took little notice as we all knew that would never happen to us! My father smoked rollies (rolled tobacco). My mother smoked cigarettes for as long as I

remember, even though she worked in the nursing profession. In fact I remember coming home from secondary school each day and my first chore would be to pop down to the shop in the village and buy her 20 Olivier Tipped. I can't remember how much they were now... but only a shilling so.

I joined the Army as a boy soldier in 1964 and went through two years as a Junior Leader at Blackdown near Camberley. During training or drill sessions we used to get a Smoke Break... whether you smoked or not. I didn't smoke then but enjoyed those welcome breaks nevertheless! I remember that money was scarce in those days and one cigarette would be passed around the barrack room to be puffed on by all those who smoked! 'Twos-up' was a call, and 'Last Drags'. Then come pay day, they all had money in their pockets to buy their own again! Cigarettes had a good trading value for some too. 'You can borrow one but I want three back on pay day!'

## Aden

After passing out from boy's service, my first posting was to Aden (now Yemen). I still didn't smoke. Unless you were married, the social life there was zero. The operational side was quite exciting for a young lad though. I do remember that we were sometimes issued with some circular tins of cigarettes and/or tobacco. These apparently were contraband seized by HM Customs & Excise and offered to the Services for free! Although I didn't smoke, these were good for trading and often paid for my drinks for the week, or whatever!

With the East-of-Suez policy coming into effect we withdrew from Aden in October 1967 and I returned with HQ 24th Infantry Brigade to Plymouth in Devon. I was almost 20 and having been robbed of my teenagehood by the Borstal-like boy's service and the barren rocks of Aden, this was my first real taste of the real adult world of the time... the Sixties and all the excitement that had to offer! So I made up for lost time by hitting the night spots of Plymouth. I worked hard and played hard and loved every minute!

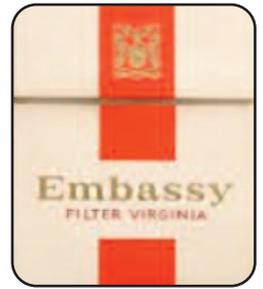
## First Smoke

It was at this time that I started smoking. It fitted with the image of a pint in one hand and a cigarette in the other, with a girl draped around your shoulder. And of course we could even smoke in the dance halls, the night clubs and the pubs. It was cool! We looked cool. We were untouchable. Immortal... invincible!

I was posted to Germany in 1969 where cigarettes, tea, coffee, whisky and gin, and even BP petrol were still on ration, a leftover rule from the dark days of WWII. I think the entitlement was 200 (one carton) per man which was no difficulty for smokers as they could always get the non-smokers to buy their rations and then

buy from them! This was when I started smoking heavily. Cigarettes were still very cheap for the services abroad and it seemed a shame not to take advantage of this! I smoked Embassy for years!

Most of my 24-year Army career was spent outside of the UK which meant I was able to afford to smoke for most of the time. Many of these postings were very stressful and a ciggie was certainly a great relief at times. And so I continued to smoke more and more.



## Post Army

When I left the Army, I then took up a post with British Aerospace (now Bae Systems) in Dhahran, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and spent 14 or so years there. Things were fine apart from Saddam upsetting the apple cart and invading Kuwait! But for all that, this was a very enjoyable time, both workwise and socially. And all the time I was smoking more and more.

When I did eventually return to the high prices of the UK I did some unpaid charity work for a while until I became bored. Then I took up a post with Aegis Defence Systems and helped to set up a private security company in Baghdad under contract of the US Embassy. If ever there was a place that anyone needed a cigarette... that was it!

Once again I returned to the UK and tried to settle down as a retiree. Not easy for one who had led a full and active life!

## Squeaky Clean

During the latter part of my stay in Dhahran I was admitted to hospital where I was told I had COPD. But I was discharged from hospital after a week or so with no recommendation. I also became ill in Baghdad where the American Medic advised me to take a very hot shower and inhale as much of the steam as I could. My voice began to deteriorate in Baghdad to such an extent that at times I couldn't talk without squeaking. I collapsed on the flight back to UK from Baghdad, via Germany and I woke up in first class with my head in the lap of a very beautiful flight stewardess! They certainly look after you in first class!

When I returned to Plymouth, my voice continued to deteriorate and my throat now had a pins and razor-blade feel to it. When this happened in the Middle East, I put it down to the dry atmosphere and sandy, dusty conditions. I was having a pint in my local pub when an ex Royal Navy medic friend of mine advised me to see the doctor.

I took his advice just before Christmas 2008. My local GP took one look inside my throat and referred me immediately to an ENT consultant in Derriford Hospital. At that initial consultation I remember the consultant saying "You know what this is don't you?" I nodded knowingly that I had cancer. It turned out to be Grade 4. I had a laryngectomy in January 2009 together with a partial thyroid removal and the lymph nodes in my neck and throat.

## 37 Courses

All was well until a few months later when I had to undergo a massive 37 courses of radiotherapy accompanied with weekly

## Margaret and Barbara

Two life-long members of the Ashford Club, Nursing Sisters Margaret Spurgeon, Ward Manager and Chair of the Club and Barbara Wagstaff have retired. They both left William Harvey Hospital some five years ago but were induced to return on a part-time basis. Margaret spent 50 years nursing us laryngectomees and Barbara about 40 years after service with the Hong Kong police. So between



them, these two ladies have given about 90 years service and laid the foundations for the ENT Rotary Ward to be a very close second in the "Best Run Ward" competition in the three main and three smaller hospitals in East Kent. Not only that but the present Ward Manager, Nursing Sister Caroline Mackenzie, won first prize, Best Employee, among 7000 employees of all the hospitals. She is our present Chair and all the staff are so well trained in dealing with we neck-breathers. The two ladies were well-loved by all and I framed this poem for each of them.

Their hands were strong to comfort  
Their hearts were quick to heed  
They knew the signs of sadness  
They knew the voice of need.

There was no living creature,  
however meek or small  
that they did not know its trouble  
and hearken to its call.

Their lifetime spent in duty  
Serving others without pause  
Those very special ladies  
So deserve our fond applause.

Len Hynds

chemotherapy sessions. All was well again for a while until it was realised that those sessions had caused irreversible damage to my throat by scarring the tissue inside. Over the following four years things began to deteriorate to such an extent that I could no longer eat, drink or talk. Fortunately, I had been fitted with a PEG Feeding Tube in 2009.

Various options were tried to overcome the restriction and narrowing in my throat but all without success. And at one stage they even thought the cancer had returned. Thankfully this was not to be... even though I heard discussions relating to palliative care!

Eventually I was referred to the Royal Sunderland Hospital in August 2015 where I had a major operation to take tissue from the pectoral muscle in my chest and to place that in my throat. This was a brilliant success and enabled me to eat, drink and talk after a fashion. There are side-effects but this beats the alternative.

Did I mention that I no longer smoke?

I am eternally thankful to the medical professionals for saving my life. I feel

very silly and not a little guilty for smoking and for causing



so much trouble and expense to the NHS. I bitterly regret doing what I did but I was once invincible remember? Never once have I been reproached by anyone in the NHS for smoking. Which is a blessing in itself!

I will suffer pain and discomfort for the rest of my life. I will try to dissuade youngsters from smoking just to be cool, as I did. But I don't intend to be one of those holier-than-thou merchants who glare at smokers and treat them as lepers.

The Royal Parade in Plymouth City Centre is choc-a-bloc with buses churning out black diesel smoke at all hours of the day and yet the passengers are not allowed to smoke in the bus shelters!

It's a funny old world but I think times are a-changing for the better.

I sincerely hope so anyway!

Geoffrey N. Read

## ShowTime again!

A couple of years ago the NSW Association lent a Servox speech aid (and charger and accessories) to Con Nats, a playwright who had written a short play called 'Haircuts'. It is about a young man who regularly visits a certain barber, an older Greek man. The barber is missing for a while and when he returns he is now a laryngectomee. His coping and outlook on life impresses and affects the young man. It is based on Con's own experiences.

The play was entered in the 'Short & Sweet' festival that year, won its section and went into the finals, just missing out on the top prize. Since then it's been staged in London with a British cast, and there are plans afoot for a short film of it.

Still Talking *NSW Newsletter*



## 'Do You Remember?'

*Still Talking*, NSW Newsletter, have this quiz to see just how old you are (or what you can remember at least!) We'd be interested in your ideas on what else might be included...

One point per memory :

1. Sweet cigarettes
2. Coffee shops with juke boxes
3. Home milk delivery in glass bottles
4. Shared Party lines on the telephone
5. Newsreels before a film at the cinema
6. TV test cards that came on at night after the last show and were there until TV shows started again in the morning
7. Peashooters
8. 33 rpm records
9. 45 rpm records
10. Hi-fi
11. Metal ice trays with levers
12. Blue flashbulbs
13. Cork popguns
14. Washtub wringers

If you remembered 0-3:

**You're still young**

If you remembered 3-6:

**You're getting older**

If you remembered 7-10:

**Don't tell your age**

If you remembered 11-14:

**You're positively ancient!**

# News from the Clubs

## PLC (Plymouth)

Busy as ever, they have had a Talk & Presentation by Laura Ridout of Smokefree South West, ably assisted by her colleague Kate Barrett. There's also: a visit to The Royal Citadel; another Boat Trip up the River Tamar; a talk from a District Nurse; a talk from the Devon & Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service; a visit to the Plymouth Merchant's House; a trip on the South Devon Railway; a trip on the Tamar Valley Line & Christmas Luncheon at Boringdon Park Golf Club.

## "Stop Smoking" Visits Plymouth

This article was published by the *Plymouth Herald* on Thursday, 5 March 2015:

A Stop Smoking campaign visited a group battling throat cancer to help raise

awareness of the dangers of smoking and encourage the wider public to quit. Smokefree South West visited Plymouth Laryngectomy Club (PLC) to speak to sufferers about their campaign. Kate Barrett and Laura Ridout spoke about their work to raise awareness of the harms of tobacco and encouraging smokers to change their behaviour.

Geoffrey Read from PLC said: "Not all cancers of the throat and larynx are caused by smoking and not all laryngectomees have smoked in their lives. One of our club members, 90-year-old Percy Furneaux, has never smoked a cigarette in his life but he did work on steam engines on the railways after he left the forces. He subsequently developed cancer of the throat from those toxic fumes." But all the club members were very impressed for the reasons why

Smokefree South West are running their anti-smoking campaign, and the huge success rate they've achieved in the region. Geoffrey added: "The PLC members had a good discussion about how it was the accepted norm in the good old days for everyone to smoke. Indeed, the smokers outnumbered the non-smokers then."



*Kate & Laura from Smokefree SW, with PLC members and friends.*

## Chesterfield Club (HNChelp)

They organised a 'Lavender Coffee Morning' in May, to raise funds for both NALC and our group. A stunning location was found, the thirteenth century Eyre Chapel in Chesterfield, with its grounds providing panoramic views of the Derbyshire hills. A lavender theme was chosen, following on from their sale of lavender ribbons last autumn. As well as providing refreshments, there was a large raffle and table top sales, including lavender coloured and flavoured cakes and similar coloured knitted products.

There was a good turnout of members to share the work but special mention must go to Marjorie Thorne for her baking and craftwork. Despite a stormy start to the day we had many visitors and made a profit of over £280 on the day. This was their first effort at organising such an event but given its success it will be a regular fixture on their calendar.



## East Midlands

In March, Malcolm Babb and Ray Mountain represented NALC at an event for laryngectomees in Lincolnshire. It was organised by Donna Marris and Sandy Whiles of the Lincoln County Hospital. Keeping a club going is quite a challenge in Lincolnshire and members often have large distances to travel. The aim of the meeting was to bring together as many laryngectomees as possible, especially new patients and, as the photograph shows, there was a very good turnout.

More recently the Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham held its annual Head and Neck Cancer Patient Day and Malcolm was invited to talk about the work of NALC. There is no longer a laryngectomee group in Nottingham but Ray attends the event every year to provide support and information to laryngectomees who attend the meeting.



## Speak Easy Club, Cornwall

Speak Easy and the Recovery Club held a joint Garden Party in the clinic on Tuesday 26 May. Their much-respected consultant surgeon, Mr Adam Wilde, agreed to open it in the clinic. This was an attempt to spread the word about the groups to patients currently undergoing treatment.

## Blackpool Club

Due to illness, there were no meetings in February or April but May was the AGM. There was a trip to Liverpool in June for the River Mersey Festival – last year's went brilliantly so they hoped for a repeat this year. 14 June was the Cancer Laryngectomy Lunch at the Imperial Hotel.

**The wedding ring goes on the left ring finger. Because it is the only finger with a vein that connects to a heart!**

**It is estimated that millions of trees in the world are accidentally planted by squirrels who bury nuts and then forget where they hid them.**