

THROB NEWS

The Heart Rehabilitation Organisation of Berkshire



Clockmaking in Retirement

An horologist is a maker of clocks or watches, and we have one in our midst. THROB member John Feeley may have decided later in life to commence this particular hobby but I'm sure you'll agree he makes a fine job of it. I am often in awe of people who have the skill, patience and dexterity to pursue such an intricate pastime, a bit like artists who chose to paint miniatures, but thank goodness we are all different and can share the diversity of our minds and our skills with others.

John explains how he became an horologist. "It was President's Day at Cirencester Golf Club on 25th May 1997 when I had my heart "event" at the age of sixty-three.

After a week in Cheltenham General, I was allowed home and consider myself very fortunate that within two days of returning to Windsor my follow up from the Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurse not only helped me get my head straight but introduced me to THROB and exercise classes at the old Red Cross building in the grounds of Heatherwood Hospital.

Soon after, my wife and I decided that I should take early retirement so I joined the local Bowls Club and a local walking club

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truth of the saying "there is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing".

In addition I'd had, for some twenty years, a garden workshop with a lathe and vertical milling machine etc and now I had the time to use them, but to do what?

Clocks had always fascinated me and I set about my first project which was completed in 2000 and I'm now about to complete my seventh!

I have also built a number of machines and accessories to assist the clockmaking and can thoroughly recommend it as not only a rewarding pastime but a very real way of keeping the ageing brain active and as I have no formal training in machine shop work it does show that it is within the grasp of anyone.

By the time you read this I will have celebrated my eighty-fifth birthday and apart from the aches and pains of the years I am wearing well and the eighth and ninth clocks, which are both to my own design, are well advanced."

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I rather think that John is endearingly modest when he says that it is within the grasp of everyone, but it does show that when there is a pre-existing fascination the “work” involved becomes part of the pleasure.

So, have we other THROB members with a passion they wish to share? As usual, send your contributions to me via email or even on paper delivered by carrier pigeon if you are a pigeon fancier!

Lesley Richards



Editorial



Easter is a moveable feast and Easter 2019 was late in April which meant it had the potential to wreak havoc on our printing and distribution deadlines. Normally I'd send the publication to the printer around the 22nd of April but the printer also wanted his Easter holidays just like the rest of us. In addition I was invited to Norway to visit my family in Trondheim at the end of the month and it wasn't a trip I was likely to turn down. That meant a tighter schedule for distribution, but everything was sorted out in the end. My apologies if you experienced any delay compared to normal.

As usual I make my pleas for contributions to THROB NEWS – we love hearing your stories and about your hobbies. Please note that my email address has changed. I am unsure how long my previous email address will stay active so unless you contact me on the new address below there is the possibility that your valuable contribution will be lost in cyberspace - a tragedy indeed.

So where is THROB's new Social Secretary lurking? He/she is out there somewhere, someone who is retired perhaps but whose whole working life was a display of their organisational skills. You know you want to do it! Give in to that feeling and get in touch with any committee member.

I am hoping to do a membership drive soon so if you are a member of an existing cardiac exercise class but you think that many of your exercise companions are unaware of THROB then let me know where the class is and when it is held and I'll come along and talk briefly about THROB and give out some free copies of the magazine and some membership forms.

Lesley Richards leseveric@gmail.com

N.B. The editorial board reserves the right to decide the magazine's content and to amend articles as necessary



THROB needs a new Social Secretary. If you enjoy planning grand days out, you're the perfect candidate. Contact any committee member to find out more.

Almost Not A Happy New Year



Every Christmas my wife Jenny and I go to visit family in Sydney, Australia. Our daughter lives there with her family and it's nice to see them and get out of the English winter. This Christmas was particularly special because our son and his family came to Sydney from America so we had a big family reunion to celebrate my son's fiftieth birthday on New Year's Day.

Whilst seeking for a good spot for the extended family to watch the New Year's Eve fireworks I was climbing up a sloping road and started to get angina pains. I was familiar with the pain having previously had a coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) in the year 2000 and a stent in my right coronary artery in 2005.

I was obviously disappointed to have this discomfort because it meant that I would almost certainly need to have some treatment. I was pondering whether it could wait until I flew home when I started to get mild discomfort at rest. Angina pains with exercise are bad enough but when you get them whilst resting it

indicates that it must be dealt with immediately.

I went to my daughter's GP who told me in no uncertain terms to get myself down to A & E! On arrival, it was decided to do an angiogram first thing next morning as they thought my previous cardiac surgery was probably deteriorating

In order to see my previous cardiac work they inserted the catheter via the femoral artery in the groin and found my old cardiac plumbing in good condition but a pretty severe blockage in the left circumflex artery. The specialist told me that if it had closed completely it would probably have been fatal.

I am well repaired now. I've played some rounds of golf and a couple of sets of tennis since I've been back. However the worry is why did it happen? Since my bypass I have religiously taken my statins. My yearly blood checks show very low levels of both types of cholesterol, so how come I'm clogging up again? This was one of my questions to my cardiac specialist on my six week follow-up check. He told me that, unfortunately, coronary heart disease is a progressive condition. But they now have machines that can do angiograms without an invasive technique and he is going to ensure I have an annual check. Thank heavens for medical science.

Paul Moore

Statin Controversy Continues

THROB NEWS has often contained articles about both the wonders and drawbacks of statins. Statins are the most common medication given to heart patients and diabetics in the hope of reducing their level of "bad cholesterol".

The latest study, published in the journal **Heart**, studied 165,411 patients prescribed statins to cut their risk of developing heart disease. It found that half those patients had not benefited from the drug because their cholesterol had not been lowered sufficiently.

Researcher Dr Stephen Weng, from

Nottingham University, said: "Our research has shown that in almost half of patients prescribed statins, they are very effective and offer significant protection against cardiovascular disease. However, for the other half - whether it's due to your genetic make-up, having side effects, sticking to the treatment or other medications - we don't see that intended benefit. There is a substantial body of research showing that statins are effective drugs for most people - but controversy remains around their widespread use and their potential side-effects."

It is recommended that no patient ceases to take their statin tablets without first discussing the situation with their doctor.

Lesley Richards

Throb Member Has Success With Low-Carb Diet

In the August 2018 edition of *THROB NEWS* I reported results of a self-experiment with a “ketogenic” low-carbohydrate, high-fat diet. Results were encouraging and one year later I remain on a slightly modified version of the diet having raised my carbs from an ultra low 20 grams per day to around 50-80 grams, which is still very low by normal standards. I’m happy to continue for the benefits gained.

Low-carb diets have been shown to be effective in reversing Type 2 diabetes and/or in assisting weight loss. A shining example is Tom Watson MP, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, who recently gave evidence on the benefits of the diet to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Diabetes. However, non-diabetics of normal weight, like myself, have also found that a low-carbohydrate diet can assist with common problems such as digestive irritability, arthritis, muscle pains, polycystic ovary syndrome, skin problems, foggy thinking/forgetfulness, and anxiety and depression.

Having read the article, THROB member Ken Butler, who had been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in March 2017, decided to try the diet to see if it could improve his diabetes. At diagnosis in 2017 Ken’s HbA1c blood glucose test had been 52 mmol/L - well above the 42 mmol/L or under for non-diabetics. So Ken was definitely diabetic and was prescribed a daily dose of Metformin and given the standard dietary advice used for the last forty years.

Over the next few months Ken’s glucose reduced slightly but hovered mostly around 45 mmol/L. He then began his low-carb diet experiment in summer 2018 and his wife, Marian, decided to join him in the hope of losing a few stubborn, extra pounds. They cut out, bread and flour-based products, cereal grains including rice, sweetened snacks like biscuits and cakes, plus potatoes and ‘sweet’ root vegetables like parsnips. To support their efforts they consulted online resources such as www.dietdoctor.com and www.diabetes.co.uk, and Ken read “The Pioppi Diet”. See next page

Ken’s visit to his GP in early autumn 2018



Ken and his wife Marian benefited from the low-carb diet.

showed that his weight had dropped and so had his HbA1c glucose number. His GP was impressed and asked about his change in diet, so Ken gave her a copy of *THROB NEWS*! At this point Ken was keen to stop his Metformin but his glucose needed to be lower still. He continued with the diet and on 20th October 2018, with all his blood tests improved, his GP agreed to stop the Metformin.

Naturally Ken was a little apprehensive about his next blood glucose test on 12th February this year but the HbA1c had reduced again and was at a normal level of 39. Something to celebrate indeed - Ken’s Type 2 diabetes was in remission. This cannot be called a “cure” because with increased intake of glucose from starchy foods no doubt Ken’s numbers would rise again, but if he remains at a non-diabetic level without medication Ken will avoid the nasty complications that can occur with diabetes over time. A further interesting aspect of the diet, considering it raises dietary fat, both saturated and unsaturated, quite substantially, was its effect on Ken’s cholesterol which was also tested in February. Figures shown with his permission. *Next page*

So even Ken’s cardiac risk had improved. He is currently experimenting with adding a little more carbohydrate to his diet to find the level where he can eat some potatoes or rice and still remain in diabetes remission. We wish him continued success and look forward to a further update. As a final note, it’s worth mentioning that Marian was thrilled with the weight-loss she achieved using a low-carb diet.

Lesley Richards

	October 20th 2018	January 25th 2019	Comment
HDL (beneficial)	1.44 mmol/L	1.99 mmol/L	Improved
LDL (not beneficial)	1.30 mmol/L	1.14 mmol/L	Improved
Triglycerides (need to be low)	1.00 mmol/L	0.53 mmol/L	Improved
Total Chol/HDL Ratio	1.9	1.7	Improved

Ken Butler's blood stats improved after going low-carb in the summer of 2018.

Book Review

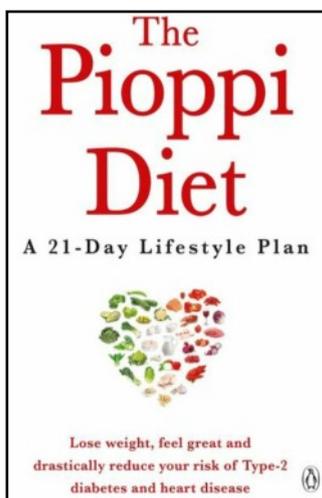
Lesley Richards

The Pioppi Diet by Aseem Malhotra and Donal O'Neill was published in 2017 following a documentary made when the authors visited the Italian village of Pioppi to try to discover the secret of the health and longevity of the villagers. People in Pioppi commonly lead unusually long and healthy lives and reaching 100 + years is no rarity despite the fact that the inhabitants have periodically suffered great hardship and poverty.

Dr Malhotra is a consultant cardiologist who, several years ago, became very interested in nutrition as both a cause and a cure for heart disease. He has since become a vocal campaigner with regard to obesity, diabetes, and chronic diseases which he believes are caused by a high carbohydrate diet of over-processed food. He writes for many national newspapers and appears on television regularly to promote his views on diet. Dr Malhotra is the cardiologist adviser to the UK's National Obesity Forum.

O'Neill is an Irish born documentary maker, a former track and field athlete with a passion for health and human performance. He joined forces with Dr Malhotra in 2015 to make the film The Big Fat Fix.

This book has a lot of information in well planned short chapters. Part One takes up about half the book and starts with the a description of Pioppi and its inhabitants, outlining details of their way of eating, moving and working. The book is eminently readable and does not get too technical having been written for the lay person. The chapters have tantalising titles such as Why Pick on Sugar?;



Cholesterol - Friend or Foe?; The Root Cause of Heart Disease is Insulin Resistance and Inflammation. One can tell straight away that the information may not always coincide with the messages we have been getting for the last few decades, but the authors present compelling evidence nevertheless. The book is well referenced at the end so that those who wish to explore further can look at the evidence for themselves. Each chapter ends with a helpful bullet-

point summary of the contents to assist the reader in remembering the important points. Donal O'Neill's chapters provide good up-to-date information on how much exercise, and what type, can be helpful for mobility and longevity. All this content is constantly referred back to the lives of the inhabitants of Pioppi.

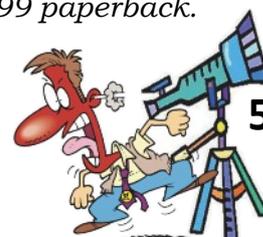
Part Two consists of a helpful 21-day plan to get started on the recommended diet and exercise programme that is intended to copy the Pioppi way of life and is basically a traditional Mediterranean diet.

Part Three has recipes for all the different meals of the day. The book is not suited well to recipes as there are only a few pictures and, like most paperbacks, it does not sit easily on the kitchen work-top. Perhaps a proper Pioppi Cookbook will appear in due course.

I definitely enjoyed this book. I found it informative with good science references to back up the claims made. It is not a panacea for all the ills of modern society, but it makes a good start and it's refreshing to know there is a cardiologist out there who is fighting on behalf of healthy, natural food and less reliance on drugs.

Published by Penguin - £8.99 paperback.

What did the grumpy star say to the astronomer?



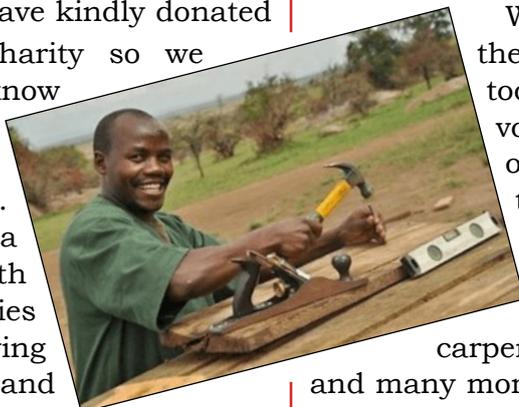
Tools With A Mission

Some THROB members have kindly donated unwanted tools to this charity so we thought you might want to know a little more about them. The following is information provided by the organisation.

Tools With A Mission is a charity working with underprivileged communities to enable them to earn a living and support themselves and their families.

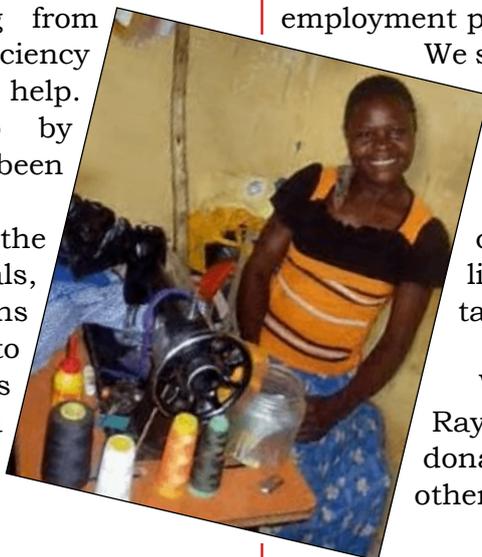
In many developing countries people have few skills, little education and no means of earning a living. Switching from dependency on aid to self-sufficiency is often impossible without help. TWAM supplies this help by providing tools which have been collected in the UK.

In Africa and other parts of the developing world individuals, communities or organisations come up with an idea on how to help themselves, such as training classes, starting a community workshop, business enterprise or other ways of earning a living.



Our volunteer Country Coordinators carry out due diligence checks to ensure those receiving tools are who they say they are, and then we offer the tools they have requested.

We are able to supply these due to the generous donation of unwanted tools in the UK. Our local volunteers collect tools from all over the country and they are then passed to a refurbishment centre to be cleaned, sharpened, serviced and sorted into trade tool kits for builders, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, mechanics, and many more. We also supply computers for people to learn office skills, sewing machines for dressmakers and schoolbooks so that children can gain an education to improve their employment prospects.



We ship two containers per month full of these kits to places in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania, and The Democratic Republic of the Congo. Please check our website for a complete list of the tools and equipment we take. www.twam.uk

Why not have a clear out? Contact Ray Simms on 01344 884 738 to donate your unwanted tools or any other equipment to your local TWAM.

Feta, Tomato and Basil Stacks

Serves 2



Simplicity itself. This starter or snack takes minutes to prepare and is packed with nutritious protein, healthy fat, vegetable and herb goodness.

Ingredients

60g Greek feta or goat's cheese, sliced	Fresh basil leaves
2 tomatoes, sliced	Salt & pepper
	Oil & vinegar

Method

1. Cut the feta and tomatoes into ½ cm slices
2. Place 1 slice of feta onto 1 slice of tomato and top with a fresh basil leaf
3. Do this with the remaining slices
4. Season, & drizzle with oil & vinegar to taste

Enjoy!

Recipe: Kate Freeman - Nutritionist, Heart Research Institute, Australia



Before Their Time

A pioneer in body-weight resistance exercise

9. CHARLES ATLAS

Part One



Many of you will, I'm sure, be surprised that Charles Atlas could be regarded as a medical pioneer but you might have to re-think that after reading this article. In the light of our knowledge today I have come

to the conclusion that Atlas was way ahead of his time. It's true he had some bizarre ideas but some very good ones too.

Angelo Siciliano was born in Acri, southern Italy, on October 30th, 1892 and moved to New York, in 1903. He took the name Charles Atlas in 1922 after a friend pointed out that he looked like the statue of Atlas on the top of a Coney Island hotel. He developed his method, which consisted of tough strengthening exercises plus dietary advice, over the next few years and became the most famous proponent of any keep fit method of his time.

I was fortunate to be given an old copy of Atlas' Health and Strength Course of the 1920s-60s by THROB member Arthur Hodgkin who inherited it from his father. I was immediately struck by how relevant Charles Atlas' teachings remain, despite the fact that many of us simply remember him as a bodybuilder who implored young men not to become 'scrawny weaklings'.

The package he sold consisted of a number of Lessons which had to be followed in the correct order to obtain success and motivation was a prominent feature. To quote Lesson 1:

“Regard all your bodily activities as a pleasurable delight. You should look forward to them as a joy to perform. Hold in your mind's eye AT ALL TIMES the Ideal of Physical Perfection”.

Exercises were to be performed each morning and evening and would start with deep breathing to gather “pure air” into the body. Every exercise is explained in great detail (which sadly we have no room here to describe) but included correct posture, much the same as

is taught today, and body-weight exercises where one's own body provides the resistance using minimal equipment - triceps dips supported between two chairs for example.



This is exactly the kind of strengthening exercise which is backed by sports science now, and has been shown to be particularly useful for older people who lose muscle strength at a greater rate than younger people. Atlas emphasised regular practice and effort, which again reflects our modern methods where we encourage repetitions that challenge the muscles to work to exhaustion so that strength builds. Atlas says in capital letters “YOU CANNOT GET ANYWHERE WITHOUT EFFORT”. Without the use of photographs Atlas had to describe each exercise very precisely and I wondered, when reading through, if some of his pupils didn't end up in a complete tangle. In Lesson 1 there are 7 daily physical exercises and ending his first lesson Atlas implores his reader to consider sleep. “Insist on going to bed early, breathing pure outside air and thinking pleasant thoughts.” Again, we see the parallels with today's health advice about the need for good quality sleep and enough of it.

Strength of character was a theme running through the whole Atlas course and appears to be the foundation of his method, with the implication that although anyone can increase their strength and build muscle, success will only follow if will, determination and wholesome living are employed as well.

In our next issue we will have a look at the dietary advice that Charles Atlas gave. Will we once again find some relevance to today's teachings? You'll have to wait and see.

Lesley Richards

The 2019 THROB AGM

It seems that THROB's plea for better attendance at the AGM and its recent reminders by post and email paid off as the attendance was much improved this year. There were around twenty-eight attendees which was a welcome increase on recent years and I hope is the start of renewed membership involvement in the organisation. The committee will, during this coming year, give consideration to the idea that the AGM could be held in an afternoon slot. The vast majority of the membership is retired and many of us dislike driving at night so we must do all we can to make attendance and events 'member friendly'. As usual your views to the committee are encouraged. You will find the business details of the AGM enclosed in this issue.

It was, for me, an interesting and enjoyable evening chatting to members and nibbling on some very fine cheeses and drinking Shloer. Before the main business began we were entertained by Sid Barker who kindly stepped in to fill the empty slot and told us the history of the occupants of his house built circa 1901. For anyone hoping for gory murders or chain-jangling ghosts, sadly there was no such drama – although one occupier, Peter Trower, had felt frightened in the house for some reason. Sid was able to write to Peter a short while before his death and reassure him that the house was now very peaceful. The occupants were many and varied but there were tales of clandestine affairs, divorces when divorce was considered shocking,

debutantes, some minor showbiz links, and a much decorated RAF pilot to name but a few.

During the business part of the evening it was announced that

the THROB membership fee was going to be changed and simplified. There will no longer be separate employed and pensioner categories and since most members are retired there will be a flat fee of £10 per annum for full membership and £5 per annum for associate membership. More details will come later but I'm sure you'll agree that this is a good move and a great bargain!

An appeal was made for urgent replacements for Secretary and Social Secretary posts. Member Amanda Hopper volunteered to be the new Secretary and will gradually take over from Wendy Sivyer who was sincerely thanked by everyone for all the work she has done for THROB over the years. Unfortunately we still have a vacancy for a Social Secretary so if you feel this could be just up your street please contact any member of the committee.

Let's make next year's **Annual Great Meet-up** an event to remember.

Lesley Richards

THROB COMMITTEE

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- Keith Jarvis (Treasurer) 01189 785 838
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- David Grant (Membership) 01628 627 029
heartrehab@gmx.com
- Sarah Hill 07876 586 445
- Kevin Johnson (Trustee) 07966 295 873



Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy is a curable condition caused by severe emotional stress. It mainly affects women and is known as “broken heart syndrome”. The main symptoms are chest pain and shortness of breath.

