



# Solihull Heart Support Group

## Heart Line News

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Reg Charity No 1171677

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### Autumn Meetings 2019

7.15 to 9.00 pm, at the Marie Curie Hospice, Marsh Lane, Solihull, B91 2PQ . Third Wednesday in the month.

Sept 18<sup>th</sup> Canal History – Roger Butler, canal historian  
Oct 16<sup>th</sup> Optometry and Ophthalmology – Owen Clark  
Specsavers

Nov 20<sup>th</sup> Cardiac Physiology – Emily Wills, Cardiac  
Physiologist, Solihull Hospital

### Notices

#### AGM – 15.05.2019

The AGM was fast tracked before our usual speaker meeting. The chairman's report, minutes of the previous AGM and the SHSG Financial report were distributed to members present (and are available by email or post to anyone who requires copies). The committee members who opted to stand for another year were unanimously re-elected. The Chair gave sincere thanks to Mike Parsons who had retired from his post as acting secretary after serving for many years on the committee in a number of roles. We now have vacancies for a Secretary – mainly responsible for taking the minutes at the committee meetings and a public relations officer. Unfortunately our committee is now very small and some of us had to cover 2 roles each so we urgently need help. We will give newcomers as much support as possible.

### Meeting Reports

#### Hearing Dogs with David Hare – 17.04.2019

We were pleased to welcome David & Anne Hare and the beautifully behaved Minnie. David has been profoundly deaf for 60 years – since the age of 5 – but has not let that stop him achieving most of his ambitions. He had always wanted to be a teacher and worked hard to get his qualifications but could not pass the medical for teaching in state schools so eventually got to work in an independent school, working his way up eventually to being headmaster of 3 successive schools. After 35 years he took early retirement as a result of developing eye problems which caused difficulty lip reading and working on the computer. David advised us to face anyone who is deaf and speak in short sentences without long words – rephrase if necessary. Hearing dogs is a charity for which David and Anne are volunteers, it breeds its own dogs – mainly Labradors, Cockapoos and West Highland Terriers. They go through training with puppy walkers, dog socialisers and dog foster carers, starting at 6 weeks old until 18 months. The whole training costs £25,000 per dog. A matching process can take up to 3 years and dogs will work until they are 10/11 years before being retired. The whole working life of a dog can cost approx. £40,000 and their health and safety is closely monitored throughout with physical check-ups weekly and awards available for the dogs and their owners. This was an excellent presentation, we made a donation to Hearing Dogs for the Deaf.

#### Meeting 15.05.2019

Unfortunately our scheduled speaker had to cancel at very short notice due to a family crisis so Tricia brought forward her talk from June. The theme was Healthy Eating and particularly how to use more affordable foods to get your 5-a-day plus an introduction to some of the more recent popular diets. (Notes available on request). It is a myth that tinned and frozen vegetables do not contain as many nutrients as fresh – often they are preserved within hours of picking whereas fresh fruit and vegetables may be several days old before appearing in the shops. Of particular use are tinned tomatoes for soups and sauces, tinned and frozen fruits, tinned and frozen sweetcorn and a whole range of frozen vegetables. Pulses such as lentils, chick peas and beans are protein rich and can be used whole or pureed in a range of dishes, using canned is far quicker and the heat process used in canning kills off the toxic enzymes. The best advice I can give is to eat seasonally and, if possible, eat locally produced to reduce the food miles. Fruit and vegetables in this country and eaten in their due season have much more flavour and nutrients. If cooking them look for the “Wonky” or “Ugly” ranges sold in some supermarkets which are just misshaped fruit and vegetables sold at a reduced rate. Tricia also looked at some of the new books on the market including “Ten a Day the Easy Way” by James Wong, “The Fast 800” by Dr. Michael Mosely and a “Pinch of Nom” by Kate Allinson & Kay Featherstone.

#### Shirley Thompson – 19.06.2019

Shirley replaced our scheduled speaker at short notice. She is a local writer/author who has published a number of books including biographies on local well-known personalities, novels, magazine articles, poetry and currently a musical entitled “65 Brunswick Road” based on the history of her own family. It was this latest book and musical that Shirley talked about tonight. She had been a teacher for 25 years teaching English and the Performing Arts before taking early retirement 22 years ago to concentrate on her lifelong ambition of writing. She also plays the guitar and sings and has regularly performed in concerts, musicals and plays. It was this interest that encouraged her to use her newly written family history spanning 3 centuries as the basis of a musical. To give us a taste of this Shirley showed slides illustrating the main area of the Midlands covered, important family members, played relevant music and sang some of the songs she

has composed for the musical. Shirley's enthusiasm and passion for her subject was very obvious and some of her local references struck a note with some of our members. It was an enjoyable evening which was a bit different from our usual speakers.

### **Healthier Heart,**

Include these 12 things in your diet and your heart will thank you.

**Wholegrains** - Think brown rice and whole wheat pasta and bread. Anything high in fibre can boost your heart by helping lower cholesterol and promoting the most diverse gut microbiome, responsible for helping to maintain a healthy weight. Fruit and veg are also great for fibre, so be sure to take that 'eat a rainbow' advice to heart.

**Apples** – There may be truth in the old adage. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Fruit is a crucial part of a healthy diet and it seems apples are great for your heart too. Studies show that apples can reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. Too much of these non-high-density lipoproteins can cause blood vessels to become blocked and stiff, leading to a heart attack or stroke. Apples are high in heart-boosting fibre and pectin, believed to help weight control by making you feel fuller for longer.

**Oily fish** – Aim for a portion a week (140g of cooked fish) to make the most of the heart-healthy, omega-3 fatty acids. They can help prevent heart disease and lower blood pressure. But you're advised not to eat too much, as oily fish can contain low levels of pollutants, which can build up in the body. Try salmon, sardines, trout, mackerel, pilchards, herring and sprats.

**Water** – Drink lots of water and use it to dilute fruit juice, which can be high in sugar. And, if you really want to help your heart cut back on booze. Drinking over the recommended maximum of 14 units a week damages the heart, can cause abnormal heart rhythms and high blood pressure. Have at least two alcohol-free days a week and don't binge drink. It can cause your blood pressure to rise very quickly.

**Walnuts** – They're high in heart-protecting omega-3s and mono-unsaturated fats (other good sources are avocados and olive oil), which in small amounts provide essential fatty acids and fat soluble vitamins. All nuts are good for heart health, but not more than a handful a day as they're high in calories and being overweight increases your risk of heart disease and high blood pressure.

### **Beetroot**

Beetroot (including juice and processed beets) is full of dietary nitrate, which research suggests can widen arteries improving blood flow and reducing your risk of high blood pressure. Left untreated high blood pressure increases your risk of heart attack and stroke. Around 7 million of us have it without knowing. It tends to rise as we get older and often there are no symptoms, so it is important to get tested regularly and take steps to keep it at a healthy level.

### **Chocolate**

Yes really! But stick to at least 70% chocolate solids. The darker it is, the better it is for you. Studies, including the most recent from California's Loma Linda University, shows dark chocolate boosts the cardiovascular system, by increasing blood flow and reducing inflammation. Cacao is rich in flavanols – antioxidants found in fruit and veg – which help fight inflammation that causes heart disease and other conditions.

### **More fruit and veg**

At least five a day is crucial to health in general and your heart specifically. It's not just the amount, but the variety – the more variety, the greater the benefits. Try to 'eat the rainbow' Include CITRUS FRUITS contain antioxidants and flavones to boost circulation. TOMATOES Can lower the risk of stroke by up to 20%. BLUEBERRIES Research by Florida State University found a daily handful lowered blood pressure in middle aged women by 6%.

ONIONS AND GARLIC They're packed with polyphenols and blood-thinning compounds triggered when chopped, crushed or grated. Garlic is thought to help lower blood pressure.

### **Herbs and Spices**

They're a great way to add flavour in place of salt. Too much salt raises blood pressure and therefore the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke. Your daily limit is one teaspoon (6g) but most of us have more. Much of the salt we eat is hidden in processed foods, like ready meals, crisps, biscuits and processed meats. Cut back on these and explore herbs and spices for cooking.

### **Beans**

Beans and legumes are great meat free protein sources and their fibre may help reduce the risk of heart attack. They're cholesterol free, low in fat and rich in iron, zinc and folate. Choose lower salt canned beans and wash well to reduce salt intake.

### **Oats**

Full of beta-glucan, a soluble fibre, which studies show reduce cholesterol. Oats are a wholegrain which have also been shown to protect your heart by lowering blood pressure.

### **White fish**

Like oily fish, aim for one portion a week. White fish is one of the healthier, low-fat alternatives to red or processed meat, which tends to be higher in saturated fat, levels of which you should reduce to help protect your heart. Steam, bake or grill fish – do not fry, as this can increase the fat content. Try Cod, Haddock, Plaice, Pollock, Seabass, Seabream or Halibut.

### **Summer dessert – Blackberry Eton Mess**

Ingredients 300g fresh or frozen (defrosted) blackberries  
4 tbsp lemon juice  
4 x 175g pot fat free vanilla or lemon yogurts  
4 meringue nests, crumbled  
Fresh mint sprigs to decorate

Method – Put half the blackberries in a bowl, crush them with a fork and stir in the lemon juice. Layer the crushed blackberries, yogurt, whole blackberries and crumbled meringue into 4 sundae glasses.

Decorate with a mint sprig to serve. Feel free to swap the blackberries for your favourite fresh fruits or whatever is in season.

### **Things they say**

Sorrow can be alleviated by a good sleep, a bath and a glass of wine. *Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)*

Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions. *Dalai Lama*

A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. *Winston Churchill (1874-1965)*