

Durham



the **Oddfellows** SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

events & news

Cleveland and Durham District

Summer 2018

Hartlepool Headland



Ladies Charity Luncheon Day - Thursday 12 July

Dear Reader

Welcome to the Summer 2018 edition of your newsletter, we have a number of upcoming events for your attention

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue and has taken their time to write and send in their articles, without you there would be no Newsletter.

As well as articles if anybody has any iconic images of the Cleveland or Durham area they would like to be

considered for the cover photo please send them to me at nicholas.hubbard@oddfellows.com.

Last issues response to the Eagle Eyed Quiz has been our best yet, get involved for the chance to win a £25 gift voucher, the answers are within this newsletter. The winner was drawn by Alan Walker of the British Heart Foundation at our recent coffee morning. Congratulations to Margaret Wells!

Nick Hubbard, Editor

A bit about us...

The Oddfellows is a friendly society with Branches across the UK. Through friendship and social events, we help our members get more enjoyment out of life, and offer care, advice and support in times of need. We welcome everyone of all ages. To find out more visit www.oddfellows.co.uk or call 0800 028 1810.

The Oddfellows is the trading name of The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society Limited, incorporated and registered in England and Wales No. 223F. Registered Office: Oddfellows House, 184-186 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3WB.

Contact Details

For more details about any of the events listed, membership and the wide range of benefits available, please call:

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Luncheon Club Organisers

Cleveland: Sue Davies
Telephone: 01429 268760

Durham: Pat and Neville Hind
Telephone: 01388 417035

Provincial Grand Master 2018 (District Chairman)

Michael Neary



Newsletter Editor

Nick Hubbard
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nicholas.hubbard@oddfellows.co.uk

Sunday Strollers

July: 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

August: 5, 12, 19 and 26

September: 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30

Why not join us for a Sunday Stroll. We can vary the distances depending on the fitness of the strollers. It is more of a social, friendly outing than the number of miles we cover. We always include a coffee shop stop. If you are interested, please contact Margaret on 01429 599323 on the Saturday night prior to the walk.



Food with Friends Lunches

We meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 12 noon in The Marine Hotel, Seaton Carew for a two course carvery or an a la carte choice - both of which are good value for money.

Good food, good company and pleasant surrounding - what more could you wish for! Members and friends are welcome and even if you come alone, you won't be lonely for long. We are a very mixed, extremely friendly group and even if you know no one, you will soon feel at home.

It is imperative that you let Sue Davies know if you are joining us because of catering arrangements although you only order food on arrival.

Please note and put in your diary:

Tuesday 3 July

Tuesday 7 August

Tuesday 4 September

The three course Christmas carvery lunch is already booked for Tuesday 4 December.



For contact details for social events and Branch staff see page 3.

July 2018

Tuesday 24 - Secrets of the Attic by Tony Nicholson, 7pm

Tony Nicholson will be continuing the saga of unrequited love in the second talk about 'Secrets of the Attic'. Part one had everyone enthralled and eager for more! Hopefully he will bring along his recently published book for us to buy. **Address:** Owton Manor Community Centre, Wynyard Road, Hartlepool TS25 3LQ. Members and friends are warmly welcomed. Please contact Sue Davies on 01429 268760 to confirm attendance.



Wednesday 25 – Food with Friends, 12 noon

Why not join us for lunch? We meet at 12 noon at The Avenue, High Shincliffe, Durham DH12PT. Looking forward to seeing you there! Further details from Pat and Neville Hind on 01388 417035.

August

Thursday 2 – WW1 Battlefield Tour – THIS HOLIDAY IS NOW FULLY BOOKED

The coach holiday with Cairngorm Travel is to the battlefields and museums in Northern France and Belgium and also some free time in Lille. This will be on Thursday 2 August and last six days and five nights via Euro tunnel, staying at the Novotel, Lille Centre.

Another Visit to Leeds

Tuesday 21 August

Coach will leave Hartlepool Historic car park at 8.30am, Blackfords Garden Centre 8.50am and Swan Hotel Billingham 9am

By special request join us again for a day out in Leeds where you can enjoy a wide range of museums and shops including Europe's largest indoor market. Afternoon tea, including a glass of prosecco, will be served in the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in their 13th floor Sky Lounge offering stunning panoramic views of the surrounding city.

Cost: £25.50 per person, to book please contact Margaret on 01429 599323 or Phyl on 01429 598596.



Wednesday 22 – Food with Friends, 12 noon

Why not join us for lunch? We meet at 12 noon at The Avenue, High Shincliffe, Durham DH12PT. Looking forward to seeing you there! Further details from Pat and Neville Hind on 01388 417035.

Tuesday 28 – Quiz Night, 7pm

A Quiz Night where members and friends can pit their wits and scratch their heads to compete against one another in a varied set of quizzes with prizes. **Address:** Owton Manor Community Centre, Wynyard Road, Hartlepool TS25 3LQ. Members and friends are warmly welcomed. Please contact Sue on 01429 268760 to confirm attendance.

End of World War I Commemoration Dinner

Friday 31 August, 6.30pm for 7pm

Durham Masonic Hall, Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HN

This is an invitation from our friend Michael Donne who is Branch Chairman of S.S.A.F.A. in County Durham. Reception Drink. Starter of Pork and Liver Pate,



Crispbread and Cumberland sauce. Main: Poached Chicken with Tarragon and White Wine Sauce. New Potatoes, Asparagus with Parma Ham and Carrots. For dessert: White Chocolate and Raspberry Cheesecake with Pouring Cream. Dress Code: Lounge Suits (Medals Optional). Raffle plus Entertainment. **Cost:** Tickets £15. Please contact the Social Secretaries Margaret or Phyllis if you would like to go and we will arrange the tickets.

September - Friendship Month

Monday 3 - Ten Pin Bowling, 1.30pm

Join in the fun afternoon at Hollywood Bowl, Teesside Park, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 7BU. For further information or if attending please contact Neville or Pat on 01388 417035.

Saturday 8 - Wine and Cheese Evening, 7pm

We are having a wine and cheese evening in Hart Village Hall. You are invited to bring a friend. There is no charge for this event but booking is essential.

Address: Hart Village Hall, Front Street, Hart, Hartlepool TS273AW. Please contact Margaret on 01429 599323 or Phyl on 01429 598596.

Monday 10 - Branch Meeting, 12.30pm

The Good Intent Branch meeting discusses future social events and will start at 12.30pm. This is followed by The District business meeting commencing 1.30pm. Both of these meetings will be held in Hart Village Hall, Front Street, Hart, Hartlepool TS27 3AW. All members are invited to attend.

Tuesday 25 - Barbara Beveridge, 7pm

Farmer's wife Barbara Beveridge is returning by popular request to tempt us with samples of her homemade preserves (and to sell them as well) and to amuse us with stories about life on the farm. Members and friends are warmly welcomed.

Address: Owton Manor Community Centre, Wynyard Road, Hartlepool TS25 3LQ.

Cost: Ticket £2. Please contact Sue on 01429 268760 or to confirm attendance.

Wednesday 26 – Food with Friends, 12 noon

Why not join us for lunch? We meet at 12 noon at The Avenue, High Shincliffe, Durham, and DH12PT. Looking forward to seeing you there! Further details from Pat and Neville Hind on 01388 417035.

October

Monday 1 – Ten Pin Bowling, 1.30pm

Join in the fun afternoon at Hollywood Bowl, Teesside Park, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 7BU. For further information or if attending please contact Neville or Pat on 01388 417035

Monday 8 – Branch Meeting

The Good Intent Branch meeting discusses future social events and will start at 12.30pm. This is followed by The District business meeting commencing 1.30pm. Both of these meetings will be held at Bowburn Community Centre, Durham Road, Bowburn DH65AT.

Last Night of the Proms Charity Concert **Saturday 13 October, 2pm**

Parish Church of St Hilda, Abbess of Hartlepool, Church Close, Hartlepool TS24 0PW

We are pleased to announce that we will be holding a Last Night of The Proms Charity Concert with Oddfellows Brass and pupils of English Martyrs 6th Form College in the Parish Church of St Hilda, Abbess of Hartlepool, Church Close, Hartlepool, TS24 0PW where our honoured guest will be HM Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, Sue Snowdon. Wine and soft drinks will be served at the interval. **Cost:** Tickets £9. Contact Margaret or Phyl for tickets and to book.



Saturday 27 – Halloween Evening, 7pm

By popular request we are donning our scariest outfits for an evening of fun for Halloween. **Address:** Hart Village Hall, Front Street, Hart, Hartlepool TS27 3AW. **Cost:** Tickets £8 and includes spooky supper (vegetarian option available if booked in advance). Tickets from Margaret or Phyl.

Thursford Christmas Spectacular

Only 11
places left!!

Tuesday 6 November

For a number of years we have been requested to take members and friends to this awesome show. Three days and two nights by coach, staying at Le Strange Arms Hotel, Hunstanton departing Tuesday 6 November on a dinner/bed and breakfast basis.



Cost for a twin or double room £239 per person, single room £249 per person – Price includes entry to the show. Early booking is strongly advised – deposit cheque of £50 pp made payable to Cairngorm Travel via Margaret or Phyl.



Kingussie

Friday 14 to Tuesday 18 December

Our annual five day four night holiday with Cairngorm Travel to the Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie is here again! This holiday is always popular and has sold out very quickly in the past.

The cost is £119 per member sharing a twin or double room, £125 per person for non members. (single supplement applies) price includes bed, breakfast and evening meal.

Bookings secured with a deposit cheque of £50 per person made payable to Cairngorm Travel. Once the holiday is fully booked a reserve list will be in place. Names to Margaret or Phyl.

Cleveland and Durham District

To request contact from a Welfare Visitor and for local help and information about Branch benefits and benevolence contact.

Care and Welfare Officers



Margaret Wells

Telephone:
01429 599323



Phyl Hubbard

Telephone:
01429 598596

Care and Welfare Volunteers



Audrey Newton



John Hubbard

Oddfellows Advice Line

Call 0800 0149 821*

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Email: oddfellows@manchestercab.org



Run by Citizens Advice for Oddfellows members, you can access free, confidential, independent advice on welfare benefits, money and debt issues, consumer problems, housing, fuel bills, employment issues and many other issues.

*The Oddfellows cannot provide legal advice and accepts no liability whatsoever for advice provided by Citizens Advice, which is an independent advice agency. If you have any queries about the advice you have received or wish to make a complaint then you should contact Citizens Advice directly. Citizens Advice operate a formal complaints process.

Care and Welfare Helpline

Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday to Thursday, 9am - 5pm, Friday, 9am - 4pm

Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

Run by the Oddfellows Care and Welfare Department, you can access information and guidance on issues such as accessing health and care services, supported housing, support for carers, and planning for later life. The helpline will try and identify any Oddfellows benefits or services in the community which may be of help to you.

British Heart Foundation Coffee Morning



Members enjoying refreshments and a chat - picture courtesy of M Hubbard.

It doesn't seem like a year since the last time we all gathered at Hart Village the Annual British Heart Foundation coffee morning. The day started early with our volunteers arriving in force to set out the hall in anticipation of the visitors. Tables were laid, teapots warmed and cake sliced at the ready.



Some of the members who helped make the day a success with Alan Walker.

As the doors opened our members were greeted with a heart shaped chocolate and entry into the prize draw for a bottle of champagne. They were invited to enjoy their choice of tea and cake as well as the chance to win on the tombola or raffle. There was even an opportunity to indulge in a bit of retail therapy with cupcakes to take away or stunning handmade jewellery courtesy of Pat Millson.

Alan Walker from the British Heart Foundation gave us a short speech to say thank you and was kind enough to draw the winner for the newsletter quiz as well as the many raffle prizes on offer.

A fantastic day, well attended with £388.90 for such a worthy cause.

Many thanks to everyone who helped and made this all possible and also those who attended.



David Ison manning the cake stall - picture courtesy of M Hubbard.



A visit to Leeds

We all travelled to Leeds for a great day out on Tuesday 20 March.

It was an early morning start and everyone was there, ready to leave at 8.15am.

It was a pleasant and uneventful journey on a warm and comfortable coach where the atmosphere was very friendly.

The first stop was a visit to the Marks and Spencer's exhibition 'The Marks in Time Exhibition'. It was very interesting, if a little long as we were all looking forward to the next part of our day.

Following the exhibition we had free time in Leeds to do some shopping. We can safely say, judging from all the full shopping bags brought back to the coach, and the exhibits on show, a very successful time it was too.

We then went on to have afternoon tea at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel. The food was delicious and beautifully served by attentive staff. A complimentary glass of prosecco was graciously received, and as much tea and coffee as you would like. All of this was enjoyed whilst looking at a beautiful panoramic view of the city from the 13th floor Sky Lounge.

As new members of the Oddfellows, it was our first experience of spending the day away with fellow members.

We arrived back in Hartlepool after a very enjoyable day; we made some new friends and are looking forward to the next time we go away together.

Mary Carter and Honor Niland

Leeds image by Lad2011 and is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

Local Artist and Illustrator

In May, we were entertained in Bowburn Community Centre by Keith Robson local artist and illustrator.

He took us back to our childhood days by telling us of his work as an artist for DC Thomson in Scotland. He was an artist on comics such as The Dandy

and Beano and also an illustrator for numerous Television Programmes.

His drawings and sketches were fantastic as was his engaging talk. Everyone had an enjoyable evening and would like to see him again.

John Hubbard

Trip to Ireland

Sunday 13 to Thursday 17 May

Its Sunday and 40 Oddfellows and friends are boarding Cairngorms coach with our driver Steve. We are pleased to welcome fellow Oddfellows from Humber Wold Branch, Jennie and Richard Wright and Bridgett Stevenson.

Our first stop is Gretna Green, not to go to a wedding but for coffee and cake. Onwards to board the Ferry at Cairnryan Scotland. After a long day but pleasant journey we arrived at the wonderful Glenavon Hotel at Cookstown.

Monday was a fairly early start to visit the Titanic Exhibition in Belfast which is on the exact spot where Titanic was built all those years ago. An amazing experience, there was something for everyone. There was some very sad stories as you would expect but also some high technological information for those interested. I think we all enjoyed the short electronic ride that took us round a sort of sight and sound experience. We also visited the original tender ship SS Nomadic that has been recently renovated by Harland and Wolf. It transferred the luggage and passengers from the dockside to Titanic.

Tuesday was our visit into the Eurozone, Dublin in Southern Ireland. Dublin is a very busy city, some people enjoyed walking round and found a place providing the local liquid refreshment and visited the Molly Malone statue.



An exciting new, modern building that houses the exhibition – Photo by Fred Smith.

There was no shortage of shops in which you could browse and spend your euros. Some people took the two hour sightseeing journey on an open topped bus which gave a commentary on the history and famous Dubliners, Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett to name but a few.

We were so lucky with the weather, it was sunny and lovely especially enjoyable for our visit to the Giants Causeway on the Wednesday. Of course, as in all of our visits there was a souvenir and coffee shop. From the reception centre





Left to right: Ron and Joyce Golightly, Jean and Sid Craggs, Margaret Wells and Edith Neary. Photos by Edith Neary.

down to the causeway it was a good walk with wonderful views. For those people who didn't want to walk, there was a minibus that only took a few minutes and deposited you right at the steps. You were given an electronic guide to explain the story. Very very interesting.

On our way back to the hotel we stopped at a seaside town, Portrush for the inevitable coffee and ice cream, some of us had both. The town was getting ready for a motorbike road race starting on the



Photo by Fred Smith.

Thursday morning. It is similar to the TT races in the I.O.M.

All too soon it was Thursday and we were heading for home. Steve had us at the Belfast Ferry Terminal ready to board in plenty of time. After we had boarded and had coffees etc. and wondered what time we were sailing the Captain made the announcement that there was a problem with the engines and the engineers were working on it. Later he announced that he had permission to sail with only one engine and we needed a tug to get us on our way. The journey would take much longer than anticipated. Half way through the journey the Captain told us we were going to stop so the engineers could restart the engines and hooray we were on our way at a proper speed. Steve did a good job to try to make up some time once we were back in the UK.

What a lovely time we all had. The hotel staff were so helpful and friendly. Nothing was too much trouble for them. The visits were varied and suitable for everyone.

Thank you to Margaret for the gift and the many visits round the coach with chocolates, also thank you to Sid Craggs who did a magnificent job helping everyone on and off the coach, and of course our friendly coach driver Steve. These little touches make a huge difference to the enjoyment of the holiday.

Pat and Fred Smith

Reverend Peter Ellis

On Tuesday 27 March, the Reverend Peter Ellis came to Owton Manor Community Centre to give a talk about his work for The Mission to Seamen in Seal Sands Road, Hartlepool. He told us about his work here in England and abroad, a fascinating insight into this very worthwhile cause.



Reverend Peter Ellis and members after an enjoyable evening.

Members Remembered

Glynis Tucker
Tuesday 17 April

Pamela Swift

Our thoughts are with their families at this difficult time.

A visit to the MV Corona



Sister Wells and Brother Hubbard paid a visit to the Motor Vessel Corona, which is currently moored near to the historic quay.

This small boat was involved in the Dunkirk rescue in World War Two and is desperately in need of renovation. Coffee and cake was supplied free of charge and donation in lieu were much appreciated.

If there is sufficient interest Sister Wells will arrange a visit. There will be no charge but donations towards the renovations would be gratefully accepted.

Please register your interest with Phyl or Margaret so a visit can be arranged.

New Members

Welcome to our newest members:

Norman Smith

Dora Smith

John Grant

Margaret Grant

Social reports from Wynyard Road Community Centre, Hartlepool

Sue Davies

Unfortunately the year began badly with two cancellations – January because of my broken hip and February because of deep snow.

However, we are back on an even keel and in March we had a fascinating talk by Reverend Peter Ellis who has worked for The Mission to Seafarers all his life, in Britain, Singapore and Hong Kong. He gave us an insight into the valuable role the Mission plays for seafarers of all faiths and nationalities as well as telling us about the local Mission on the Seal Sands.

The speaker for April cancelled at short notice so the static treasure hunt originally

planned for January was resurrected and much fun and laughter ensued with everyone going home with a prize of some sort.

Social evenings are held on the last Tuesday of every month in Wynyard Road Community Centre at 7pm. Admission £2 includes a free raffle ticket and light refreshments. Members and friends are warmly welcomed.

Please call Sue on 01429 268760 if you are attending. It makes seating arrangements and catering so much easier.

Summer 18 Quiz

Who drew the winner of the raffle at the British Heart Foundation Coffee Morning?

For which comics was Keith Robson an artist?

Which Irish town was getting ready for a road race?

Which Mission is Peter Ellis associated with?

Which Leeds Hotel did members enjoy panoramic views in whilst dining?

Which Seaton hotel do members meet in for 'Food with Friends'?

Which village hosts a spectacular annual Christmas event?

Who will be an honoured guest at the Last Night of the Proms Charity Concert?

Which vessel currently moored at the historic quay took part in the Dunkirk evacuations of WW2?

Who will be returning to tempt us with samples and to give a talk in September?

Spring Questions Answer

1. Thursford
2. Richard McCarthy
3. West Hartlepool Rugby Football Club
4. Who benefited from the raffle at the Bingo Night/Fish and Chip Supper?
5. Where is the ten pin bowling usually held?
6. How many Santa Fun Runs has Alice House now organised?
7. How Many years has Blair Castle been in the Atholl family?
8. Christine Hutchinson

Branch Meetings

The Good Intent Branch Meeting discusses future social events and will start at 12.30pm. This is followed by the District Business Meeting which commences at 1.30pm. All members are invited to attend.

Monday 9 July – District Branch Meeting, 1.30pm

Will be held at Hart Village Hall, Front Street, Hart Village, Hartlepool TS27 3AW.

Monday 13 August – No Meetings (Summer Break)

Monday 10 September – Half Yearly Summoned Meeting, 1.30pm

Will be held at Hart Village Hall, Front Street, Hart Village, Hartlepool TS27 3AW.

Monday 8 October – District Branch Meeting, 1.30pm

Will be held at Bowburn Community Centre, Durham Road, Bowburn DH6 5AT.

Share the love

Help your friends get more out of life...

Why not invite them to become an Oddfellow? The more you refer that join, the greater rewards you'll receive – starting with a £10 Love2shop voucher.*

To refer a friend, call Membership on **0800 028 1810**, visit our Members' Area at www.oddfellows.co.uk or fill in a Refer a Friend form available from your Branch Secretary.

Terms and conditions apply*

The Refer a Friend offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other membership offer. For full terms and conditions, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/offers.



2018 to provide greater **choice to members**

Oddfellows membership has been refreshed for 2018 to provide greater choice for members.

What's changed?

You are now able to choose between two fantastic adult membership options and decide which benefit package is best suited for you:

Standard Membership – includes all the benefits and support our members value in times of need for only £25!

Membership with extra benefits – includes all the standard membership benefits listed, plus £30 Dental Benefit* every membership year and £30 Optical Benefit* every second membership year, all for just £35 a year. All other benefits will remain the same apart from the Funeral Benefit which has now ceased.

As of 1 January 2018, members can now choose which level of benefit they want when their membership comes up for renewal so watch out for details in your renewal letter. If you want more information about the new membership options, call 0800 028 1810 or visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/join

Standard Benefits

- Social events
- Active Travel Club
- Branch care & welfare support*
- Care & Welfare Helpline
- Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line
- Emergency Financial Aid (Household)*
- Money saving partner offers*
- 24/7 historical archive access*
- District event diaries and newsletters
- Monthly email newsletter

*Terms and conditions apply to all financial benefits. All Oddfellows benefits are non-contractual and may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Please visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/join for full list of Oddfellows member benefit terms and conditions or call 0800 028 1810 for more information. For benefits provided by a third-party, please check their individual T&Cs.



Unity Mutual

From March 2018 all of our insurance business will be rebranded under, 'Unity Mutual', to better represent the Oddfellows' values in the financial services sector, and to offer simple savings, investments and protection products to help families plan for the future.

The comprehensive rebrand will see Unity Mutual replace the current Schoolteachers Friendly Society and Druids Sheffield Friendly Society brand names, which the Oddfellows currently administers, and will include a new logo, positioning, and website. Following the launch there will be no changes to policy terms and conditions.

After successfully acquiring other friendly societies the Oddfellows has grown its Long Term Insurance Business over the last 10 years to accumulate assets of over £254m, with over 260,000 policyholders*.



*Source: 2017 Oddfellows Accounts

Unity Mutual, 30 Mather Avenue, Liverpool L18 5HT. Tel: 0151 724 1930 Fax: 0151 724 1971
Email: info@unitymutual.co.uk Web: www.unitymutual.co.uk

Unity Mutual is a trading name of The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society Limited, Incorporated and registered in England and Wales No. 223F. Registered Office Oddfellows House, 184-186 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3WB. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, registration No. 109995.

In addition to this, it has launched a number of new products and now offers a Junior ISA, Flexible ISA, Guaranteed Investment Bond, Tax-exempt Savings Plan and Sickness Income Plan.

“Following extensive research, we firmly believe that re-branding will help us to continue to better serve our policyholders and customers, enabling them to make more informed choices about saving, investment and insurance opportunities,” Steve Code, Oddfellows Insurance Director.

The new rebrand will further enable the Oddfellows to stand out within the competitive and expansive financial sector. Policyholders and customers will enjoy a different, not-for-profit approach that puts the customer first with superior customer service, and a dedicated website.

If you would like more details about our products and services, Unity Mutual or would like to get in touch call 0161 214 4650 or visit: www.unitymutual.co.uk.



De-stress your life – a brief introduction to Mindfulness

With modern life so fast and stressful, it isn't always easy to find a bit of peace and quiet. Whilst we cannot avoid the stresses of modern life, there are things we can do to help us de-stress. One way is through a technique called 'mindfulness'.

Mindfulness is about paying attention to the present moment, including our thoughts and feelings, and the world around us – by doing more of this we can improve our mental wellbeing. This awareness can help us enjoy life more, understand ourselves better and be more prepared for handling life's challenges. You will also be able to manage stress better, sleep more soundly and manage various physical health problems, such as chronic pain.

Although mindfulness originates from Buddhism, you don't need to be spiritual or have any particular beliefs to try it. Being 'mindful' is a skill that anyone can learn and is used by the NHS as a treatment for anxiety and depression.

For more information about health and wellbeing visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/health

Counted Breath Meditation

This simple meditation is one way of introducing mindfulness into your daily life, and can help you to 'switch off' and get to sleep at night. Here are the steps to follow:

- Move away from distractions such as mobile phones, television or computers
- Sit comfortably in a chair with your hands held loosely in your lap and both your feet on the floor
- Close your eyes and let your breathing settle into an even rhythm
- Start to breathe in and out more deeply and begin counting on each 'out' breath eg breathe in, breathe out – one, breathe in, breathe out – two
- If thoughts come into your mind and distract you, try not to engage with them, instead, restart your breath count from the beginning
- Try to get to ten breaths - if you make it, well done! If not, don't worry, just use this meditation technique regularly and your ability to focus on your breath should increase



Royale Surprise with **Active Travel Club**

The Active Travel Club (ATC) is available to every member and is a great way for you to travel places in good company. Through our partners, we offer members great discounts, upgrades and other money saving deals on a wide range of holidays and trips.

Oddfellows member Pat Brunner used ATC to book herself a great birthday break to Alvaston Hall in Cheshire and here she shares her experience with us...

What inspired you to go on this break?

I was looking for somewhere that I could go with my husband at short notice to celebrate my birthday. I had previously been on a brilliant weekend break to Nidd Hall with Brighouse Branch and Huddersfield Social Organiser Andrew Porter had said that he would arrange for me to receive the Warner Leisure late deal emails. The weather forecast was poor, so organised entertainment which we could take part in was perfect.

What was Alvaston Hall like?

I booked through Active Travel Club who found the nearest and best deal was for Alvaston Hall. I phoned the hotel and was offered a free upgrade to a Royale Suite - we booked it immediately. We also added a drinks package which gave us 10% off wine at dinner. Our suite was very spacious

- definitely five star! We also had allocated parking. The meals were cafeteria-style so hardly any queueing. We thoroughly enjoyed every meal. Lunch was not included, but snacks and light meals were available. The main entertainment was in the restaurant area and was very good, as was the alternative entertainment in one of the bars.

What were the highlights of the break?

During our stay we went to some of the quizzes, enjoyed a drink or a coffee in the bar and relaxed in our room. We particularly enjoyed an evening listening to a guitar duo singing in the bar. We also enjoyed a little retail therapy in the shop.

Do you have any tips for future Oddfellows travellers?

The grounds will be very attractive and in better weather there would be outdoor activities. If anyone is thinking of booking remember to mention Oddfellows Travel Club. The first offer we received was the rate on the Warner's website, which was slightly higher!

Active Travel Club Holidays and Breaks for 2018

For a full list of ATC holidays please visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/travel or call Mike Hall on 0161 832 9361 extension 2224 or email active@oddfellows.co.uk.