A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to Everyone
REGIONAL ROUND-UP

For my part Christmas holds many memories and in my twilight years I can look back with great fondness of happy family get-togethers. Although life has changed so much over the past few decades, the traditions of Christmas, continue. Yes, despite all the secularism that now prevails, the true spirit of Christmas is still around and I’m sure that peace and joy will abound. May I wish all our members and friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy and peaceful New Year and may I remind you of that great carol “Love Came Down at Christmas.”

FELLOWSHIP BUSINESS

The Annual Conference / General Meeting held at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown on 19 September was a great success and our Guest Speaker, Mr Howard Hastings, Chairman of the NI Tourist Board, proved to be an excellent choice (see the Report of the event at pages XX). We have a Revised Constitution to reflect our independence and a Revised Handbook for Officers is also now available.

Alas our numbers have dropped a little and we must make every effort to halt this decline. May I once again appeal to every Branch and every individual member to seek out retired health and social care staff and bring them within the fold. The Regional Committee, under our new Chairman, Yvonne Hutton, will be doing all it can to promote and develop the Fellowship throughout the province but it’s at local level that this can be best achieved. Let’s set a target of at least 100 new members in 2013/14.

Best wishes to one and all.

Bertie Thompson
Regional Officer

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR BCH BRANCH MEMBERS

Branch meeting will now be held in the Postgraduate Centre, Belfast City Hospital at 2.15pm as the Ennis Room is no longer available.
Report of the Annual Conference / General Meeting

Held at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown on 19 September 2013

1. PRESIDENT’S OPENING REMARKS AND MINUTE’S SILENCE

The President, Mrs Irene Younge opened the Conference and extended a warm welcome to everyone present. She referred to the untimely death of the Regional Chairman, Mr Wesley McKimm in early May. He had been a great supporter of the Fellowship for many years and he would be sorely missed, especially in the Lisburn Branch. As a mark of respect, not only for Wesley but also all the other members who had passed away in the last year, she asked for a minute’s silence and this was duly observed.

2. ACTING REGIONAL CHAIRMAN MRS YVONNE HUTTON

Yvonne also referred to Wesley’s death and said that it was lovely to have his dear wife, Flo with us. Wesley would be a very hard act to follow but she knew that she could count on the support of the Regional Committee and indeed all the Fellowship members. She then gave a warm welcome to our guest speaker Mr Howard Hastings and said that everyone was looking forward to hearing what he had to say and without further ado; she invited Howard to address the assembly.

3. GUEST SPEAKER - MR HOWARD HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN, NI TOURIST BOARD

Howard began by referring to an article in the Irish Times by Gerry Moriarty (the Northern Editor) – ‘NORTHERN IRELAND’S QUIET EVOLUTION’ and in true fairy tale style opened with the ever familiar words “Once upon a time...” However his story turned out not to be a fairy tale but rather a very true and precise account of how the tourism industry here had been transformed over the last 40+ years. It wasn’t easy to sell Northern Ireland during ‘the Troubles’ and the number of visitors fell from 1 million in 1969 to 400,000 in 1972! Some people thought that the absence of the Troubles would be enough to secure better tourism; indeed 1994-1996 saw a curiosity among visitors seeking a new destination. However this wasn’t enough and a campaign “OUR TIME, OUR PLACE” was put in place to raise tourism here to a much higher level. There were 4 Signature Projects:

a) St Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland,
b) The Giant’s Causeway,
c) The Walled City of Derry/ Londonderry and
d) Titanic Belfast

The Government and the private and public sectors combined to ensure the success of these initiatives and the outcome of all this hard work; Northern Ireland is now very well-known throughout the world as a top tourist attraction. All kinds of events etc. have been, and continue to be, organised which have resulted in record attendances of visitors from all over the globe, and of course from our own population. The biggest attraction would most arguably be TITANIC BELFAST and in year 1 it had 807,000 visitors (the Audit Office had...
feared it would not reach the figure of 290,000!).

Of course Northern Ireland must not rest on its laurels but if the same level of drive and enthusiasm can be maintained, and fully supported by the whole population, hopes are high that by 2020 we can achieve a doubling of Tourism to £1 billion every year and the creation of an extra 10,000 jobs bringing the total to 50,000.

Mr Hastings concluded by saying it had been a great delight to have been invited to the Conference and he wished the Fellowship every success in the future.

4. VOTE OF THANKS

Mr Peter Davey (Knockbracken Branch) proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Howard and said it had been a great idea to invite someone from outside the health and social care field. He knew he could speak for all present in saying how much they had enjoyed Howard's speech. It was nice to know that Northern Ireland was doing very well as a major tourist attraction. Miss Betty McCrea (Armagh and Craigavon Branch) formerly seconded the proposal which was greeted by long and loud applause.

5. REGIONAL OFFICER’S REPORT

(a) Mr Thompson said that Wesley's death had been a great loss to him personally as well as to the Fellowship as a whole. Wesley had always taken a great interest in the Fellowship and he was well-known and respected by all the members.

Bertie went on to remind everyone of his long association with the Fellowship and he continued to enjoy his role very much. However on 19 October 2013 he would be celebrating 60 years at work and maybe it was time to consider his future. The Regional Committee and members would, of course, be kept fully informed of any developments.

(b) Independence

Northern Ireland is now officially independent under our new title “Health and Social Care Fellowship (NI)” but we continue to keep in close touch with our friends and colleagues across the water.

(c) Membership

It stands around the 1500 mark and he was pleased that competition for the Reida Thompson Memorial Cup (presented to the Branch which had the greatest number of new members) had been much keener this year. He made an impassioned appeal (a là King Henry the Fifth during the siege of Harfleur prior to his great victory over the French at Agincourt) for all Branches and individual members to try to recruit many new members in the next 12 months.

(d) The Link Newsletter

The magazine continued to be very popular with members (and friends) but it was costly to produce and distribute and it might be necessary to limit it to two editions per year - say Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter. It would be a matter for the Regional Committee to consider at its next meeting.

(e) Regional Events

Table Quiz - once again it had been thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and once again Knockbracken Branch had won the Capt. Hawthorne Memorial Bowl.

Charity Golf Tournament - there was a good turnout of members and visitors with Ian Montgomery (Armagh and Craigavon Branch) proving a worthy winner of the Ted Gilliland Perpetual Cup. A donation of £263 had been sent to the Friends of the NI Cancer Centre at Belfast City Hospital.

(f) Revised Handbook for Regional Committee and Branch Officers

On the assumption that the Revised Constitution would be approved without little or no amendments, the Handbook had been revised and copies handed out to Branches prior to the AGM for consideration and comments.

(g) Thanks

In conclusion Bertie expressed his sincere thanks to;

(i) Wesley and his lovely widow Flo, members of the Regional Committee especially Hon. Treasurer Randall Reid for all his hard work throughout the year but particularly when it comes to preparing the Annual Accounts.
(ii) All Branches and members for their continuing support, in particular Branch Hon. Secretaries with whom he had most contact.

(iii) - The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety especially Mr Phil McCusker, located in Londonderry
- The 5 Health and Social Care Trusts, their Chief Executives and Directors of Human Resources for their financial and general support.
- The HSC Business Services Organisation (under David Bingham) with special mention of the HSC Pension Service at Waterside House, Londonderry and two dear friends Anna and Heather at HQ in Belfast who are always so helpful when it comes to big photocopying tasks

(iv) Peter Hanlon, Flint Studios for all his help on the IT front and the production of the Newsletter. Lyndsay Woodward for her typing skills and good humour and Louise Young, Admin Assistant for her general help.

(v) Finally the Management and staff of the Glenavon House Hotel for once again looking after us so well.

6. REVISED CONSTITUTION

Subject to a couple of minor amendments the Revised Constitution was passed unanimously.

7. ELECTION OF REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR 2013/14

The membership of the Committee is set out in the Appendix below. When the new Chairman Mrs Yvonne Hutton was elected the President presented her with the Chairman’s Chain of Office bearing the title - “The Wesley McKimm Memorial Chain of Office.” Yvonne said she was very proud to be the first person to wear the chain.

8. PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

There was a good entry for all 3 categories and the Regional Committee had a tough task selecting the winners who were:

(a) PEOPLE
Mrs Kathleen Gallagher
(Londonderry Branch)
Mrs Mary Steven
(Causeway Branch)
Mr Peter Davey
(Knockbracken Branch)

9. REIDA THOMPSON MEMORIAL CUP

There had been keen competition of the cup but for the 6th year in succession the Armagh and Craigavon Branch had come out on top. In presenting the cup (and a small replica), the Regional Officer urged the other 12 Branches to try to wrest the trophy from the Co. Armagh stalwarts.

10. PRESENTATIONS

Beautiful flower arrangements were presented to Guest Speaker Howard Hastings to pass on to his dear wife and to Mrs Flo McKimm.

CONCLUSION

The Chairman brought the proceedings to a close and thanked everyone for their presence. A delicious lunch was then enjoyed by one and all.

APPENDIX: Regional Committee 2013/14

Chairman               Mrs Yvonne Hutton MBE (East Antrim Branch)
Vice-Chairman          Mrs Isobel Elliott-Knox (Causeway Branch)
Hon. Treasurer         Mr Randall Reid FCA (BCH Branch)

Area Representatives
(a) Belfast Area        Mrs Sheila Lowe (Knockbracken Branch)
(b) South Eastern Area  Mrs Rosemary Clarke (North Down Branch)
(c) Northern Area       Mrs Mitzi Reid (Mid-Ulster Branch)
(d) Southern Area       Miss Betty McCrea (Armagh and Craigavon Branch)
(e) Western Area        Miss Doris Bredin (Londonderry Branch)

President              Mrs I Younge MBE (BCH Branch)
Regional Officer       Mr Bertie Thompson
Food for Thought... and a Little Laughter Too

I am indebted to my sister-in-law in Canada for these various ‘pieces’ and I trust you will get ‘something’ from them – I certainly have! Bertie Thompson

Something to Think About

Imagine that you had won the following prize in a contest: Each morning your bank would deposit £86,400 in your private account for your sole use. However, this prize has conditions - just as any game has certain rules.

The first set of rules would be:
- Everything that you didn’t spend during each day would be taken away from you.
- You may not simply transfer money into some other account.
- You may only spend it.
- Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another £86,400 for that day.

The second set of rules:
The bank can end the game without warning; at any time it can say it’s over, the game is over! It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.

What would you do?
You would probably buy anything and everything you wanted, right? Not only for yourself, but for all the people you love, right? Even for people you don’t know, because you couldn’t possibly spend it all on yourself, right? You would try to spend every penny, and use it all, even if some of the cash was wasted - right? ACTUALLY, this GAME is REALITY!!

Each of us is in possession of such a magical bank, but we just can’t seem to see it. The magical bank is TIME!!

Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life, and when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is NOT credited to us. What we haven’t lived up that day is forever lost. Yesterday is forever gone. Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time... WITHOUT WARNING. So, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds? Aren’t they worth so much more than the same amount in pounds? Think about that, and always think of this:

Enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think! So take care of yourself, be happy, love deeply and enjoy life!

Here’s wishing you a great day and may your seconds be well spent.
Student who obtained 0% in an exam

Q1. If you throw a red stone into the blue sea what will it become? *it will simply become wet
Q2. How can a man go eight days without sleeping? *no problem, he sleeps at night
Q3. Where was the Declaration of Independence signed? *at the bottom of the page
Q4. How can you drop a raw egg onto a concrete floor without cracking it? *any way you want, concrete floors are very hard to crack.
Q5. If it took eight men ten hours to build a wall, how long would it take four men to build it? *no time at all, the wall is already built
Q6. What can you never eat for breakfast? *lunch and dinner
Q7. What looks like half an apple? *the other half
Q8. In which battle did Napoleon die? *his last battle
Q9. What is the main reason for divorce? *marriage
Q10. What is the main reason for failure? *exams

Comment: I’d have given him 100

Punography

- I tried to catch some fog. I mist.
- When chemists die, they barium.
- Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.
- A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
- I know a guy who’s addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.
- I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.
- This girl said she recognised me from the vegetarian club, but I’d never met herbivore.
- I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.
- All the toilets in Belfast’s police stations have been stolen. Police have nothing to go on.
- Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

- I’m reading a book about anti-gravity. I can’t put it down.
- I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
- Energizer bunny arrested. Charged with battery.
- I didn’t like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.
- Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn’t control her pupils.
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- What does a clock do when it’s hungry? It goes back four seconds.
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.
- Cartoonist found dead in home. Details are sketchy.
- Venison for dinner? Oh deer!!

How would you describe me...

A wife asked her husband to describe her.
He said, ‘You’re A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K.’
‘What does that mean?’
He said, ‘Adorable, Beautiful, Cute, Delightful, Elegant, Foxy, Gorgeous, Hot.’
She said, ‘Oh that’s so lovely. What about I, J and K?’
He said, ‘I’m Just Kidding!’
Best Poem in the World

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven’s door,
Not by the beauty of it all
Nor the lights or its décor.

But it was the folks in Heaven
Who made me splutter and gasp -
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbour
Who never said anything nice.

Bob, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, ‘What’s the deal?
I would love to hear your take.
How’d all these sinners get up here?
God must’ve made a mistake.’

‘And why is everyone so quiet.
So sombre - give me a clue.’
‘Hush, child,’ He said,
‘They’re all in shock.
No one thought they’d be seeing you.’

JUDGE NOT!!

Every saint has a PAST
Every sinner has a FUTURE!
Now it’s your turn... Share this poem.
Life without God is like an
unsharpened pencil...
It has no point!!

Gift Aid - sign up now!

The new Gift Aid Scheme provides the simplest way ever for members who are UK tax payers to help the HSC Retirement Fellowship. There is no extra cost to yourself and no future commitment. If you have not already completed a Declaration form, please do so now, the effect of which will increase the value of your subscription or donation by 25p in the £1 - to the benefit of both the Region and Branches.

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Address: ...........................................................................
Postcode: ...........................................................................
Signature: ...........................................................................
Date: .................................................................................

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You must pay an amount of Income Tax (or Capital Gains Tax) at least equal to the tax the Fellowship will claim on your donation. You can cancel this declaration at any time.

Please complete this declaration and return it to the Regional Officer, HSC Retirement Fellowship (NI)
c/o Bangor Hospital, Castle Street, Bangor, BT20 4TA as soon as possible.