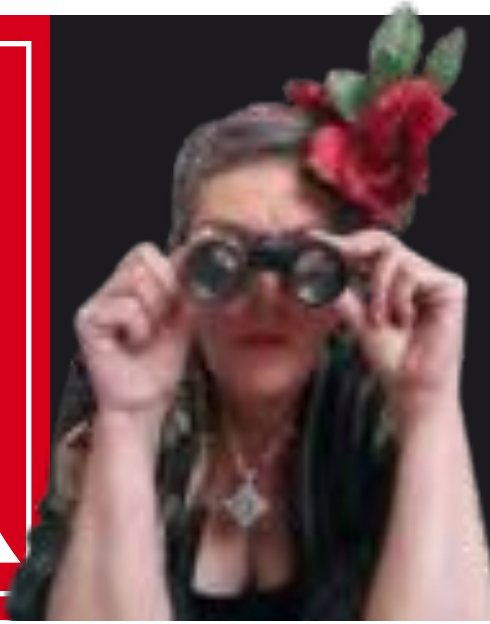


THE POSH PAPER



HASTINGS IN FOCUS

BEANNIE KEEPS A BEADY EYE ON WHAT'S
BEEN HAPPENING IN HASTINGS AND
ST LEONARDS OVER LOCKDOWN

SEASIDE SHENNANIGANS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS IN ST LEONARDS-ON-SEA !!



The cream teas have been flowing recently around St Leonards and Hastings.

Living up to its hard earned reputation as a party town, some of our elegant elders have been enjoying a break from lockdown life with socially distanced, booze sozzled outdoor get togethers, enjoying as much as two glasses of bubbles EACH.

The team from The Posh Club have gone out of their way to force fun times onto some of our isolated elders with doorstep visits, live music and sugary treats. Insiders tell us they have been showered with gifts and scones with FULL FAT CREAM, all enjoyed in a socially distanced outdoor setting... Full story inside



DID YOU SEE POSH CLUB TELEVISION?

It's not too late to watch our internet TV shows PC*TV.

Four live shows recorded in Hastings, London, Brighton and Crawley.

Hosted by our resident pretty boy in a bow tie, Dicky from Duckie.

Go to theposhclub.co.uk on your computer, phone or tablet to catchup.

BEANNIE'S BEGINNING BIT

Hello and a very warm welcome indeed to The Posh Paper late summer 2020 special lockdown edition.

It has been a strange year for everyone, with big changes here at Posh HQ as we try out new ways of celebrating friendship and our community at a time when events are not allowed.

The Hastings edition of The Posh Paper has been researched, written and produced by The Posh Club staff team - Anna, Wendy, Rachel and myself. I am proud of what we have achieved - we have swapped from serving tea, making sarnies and washing up to researching stories, interviewing guests and taking photos.

It has been a pleasure getting to know some of you a little better and to hear your stories. I hope you enjoy reading about yourselves and your local chums. Thanks for coming on the journey as we continue our Posh Club adventure.

With love from your Hastings gals – Beannie, Anna, Rachel and Wendy x

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A NATTER WITH JEAN & DON

By Rachel Spinetti

The lovely Kirst from The Posh Club kitchen and I went to visit our beloved Jean & Don for a cuppa and a catch up. You will all know them as they are Posh Club regulars and Jean particularly loves a boogie to her favourites Status Quo! We were treated to tea and cake in their fabulous garden which is a paradise of colour and summer scents. Don built every wall and step with his own hands and has created a palace of plants, flowering shrubs and little nooks with water features. They shared funny stories, reminisced about their childhoods and it was a joy to spend some time with them.

Can we move in with you Jean & Don?



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ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

From January to March this year, local artist Kate Ardern came along to The Posh Club in Hastings to document the events. Each week found her tucked away in another corner of the hall, observing and capturing moments from the day.

I'm studying for a degree in fine art, had heard all about The Posh Club and wondered what I might be able to contribute. I visited The Posh Club 7 times, sketching and capturing moments of joyful dancing and the madness that we all love. As older people, we often feel somewhat invisible and overlooked. At The Posh Club, age is celebrated in a way we don't often see, and it is this quality that I wanted to capture in this work.

I had planned to make a final triptych celebrating the club but – like all of us, my time at The Posh Club was cut short due to the Coronavirus pandemic. I had the best time sharing those Fridays with all of you though and I'll be back the first day the doors reopen! In the meantime, I'd like to share some of my working sketches with you.

I'm continuing to work on this project during lockdown, and I can't wait to share the final pictures with you all. It's taking on a life of its own, as projects do when there's time to let things develop and grow, so I'm excited to see where it goes!

By Beannie Nicholson



GETTING COSY WITH MARGARET & DUDLEY

A LIFE OF LOVE AND HELPING OTHERS

by Rachel Spinetti



If you are a regular Posher then you will know our super volunteer couple Margaret & Dudley Trowell, always there with a smile, a kind ear and a sunny outlook. Rachel Spinetti met with them to talk reiki, theatre, dicky hearts, bonfires and festivals.

Life in Lockdown

Margaret has been keeping Dudley extremely busy during lockdown with "plenty in the pending tray". So busy in fact that not only did he wear out all his power tools but their lawnmower blew up and he had to drag it to the hosepipe and shower it down!

They have remained positive all the way through lockdown and have surprised themselves by rediscovering old skills. Margaret, a therapist specialising in reflexology and reiki, has rediscovered the joy of sewing, making masks for friends and family.

Dudley, semi-retired and working for the Audiology Department at The Conquest has rediscovered the joy of DIY - fixing taps, painting, decorating and much to Margaret's delight completely renovating her treatment room in their garden, complete with dimmable wall lights- very fancy!

Having been long standing participants and helpers with Hastings Jack in The Green festival they have particularly enjoyed the way everyone came together this year to hold the now legendary celebrations online. This gave them and hundreds of others the joy of getting dressed up in their finery to watch the festivities as one big Jack in the Green Family. Margaret says they were glued to the screen all day and drank a considerable amount of cider!

After hearing about their experiences of lockdown, I asked them to tell me a bit more about their lives- when they first met and their shared histories of living in Hastings.

Margaret and Dudley

Margaret was born in Bath and moved to St Leonards as a young girl attending the convent school for girls on Filsham Road, living with her family and her Aunt Jayne in a large house on the West Hill. At 25 she met Dudley, 8 years her senior and knew immediately that they were meant to be together. She remembers driving behind him on their way to meet family and praying to the universe "please don't ever leave me!"

Dudley came from a family of entertainers who took part in end of the pier shows. He started treading the boards when he was only 10 years old. He grew up in a house on Priory Avenue with a piano in each of its 3 living rooms and a mother who could play music by ear and was a member of the Hasteleons Amateur Dramatic Society.

As a young man, Dudley dabbled in stand-up comedy, played washboard in a skiffle band and finally became a drummer in a band called King, Rod and Co playing shows at the 58 Club in Pett level.

The couple married in 1979 and Dudley became stage manager at The Stables Theatre. He had learnt the art of stagecraft from Leo Halle of the Leo Halle Orchestra and both he and Margaret both soon became indispensable members of the team. They remember fondly:

"They used to say, we need you for this show! And we used to hide because we both had full time jobs as well but it was clear that our hobbies were becoming all encompassing - we were young and had so much energy!"

Then in 1995 they watched the bonfire procession in Battle for the first time. They fell in love with the atmosphere, torchlights, costumes and excitement and subsequently volunteered to help start a Hastings branch. They became Captains of the Hastings Bonfire Society- Margaret of Publicity and Dudley of Logistics, or as he says 'Chief Scrounger!'

Margaret and Dudley loved the bonfire society and worked their socks off, cutting down trees to make torches and building effigies. They made lifelong friends and last year they were given the accolade of Bonfire Couple of the Year having given 26 years of service. They were both rather embarrassed about it, as they don't like a fuss. Margaret remembers "Ooh I wanted to sink into the ground," but they are proud recipients of very posh certificates and cups - Hugely deserved!

Dudley had a big heart operation in 1998, as he says, "they took my heart out, polished it and put it back". He used to smoke like a chimney, and Dudley was still partaking of a sneaky cigarette or two. One day they were going to watch friends play cricket when a mate ran up and said, "we're a man short, you're on!"

So, Margaret joined the ladies watching from the side and they all started clapping the players running out onto the field. Dudley ran out to join them, began clutching his chest and the whole crowd did a collective gasp as they all know his medical history. Margaret and friends raced down to his aid to be met with a bemused look from Dudley who said

"I was just trying to stop me fags from falling out of my pocket!" Blinking heck Dudley!

What a life they have both lived so far - full of joy, hard work, making so many great memories.

We love you Mr & Mrs Trowell!

HOT UNDER THE COLLAR

CATCHING UP WITH FATHER DAVID

by Beannie Nicholson

Father David, Rector of St John the Evangelist, is a familiar sight at The Posh Club, Hastings and a welcoming landlord. A snappy dresser with a booming bass voice, he's a raconteur who always has a joke at the ready if called to the stage. Beannie Nicholson met up with him to talk about diversity, inclusion and the power of a good party.

We meet in the church garden, sitting on two of The Posh Club chairs and he immediately likening our visit to an encounter with the Carmelite nuns of his youth - an enclosed order who practice social distancing for religious reasons, always keeping a physical barrier between themselves and any visitors!

Father David has been a huge supporter of The Posh Club since it began in Hastings and I asked him to reflect on the impact that hosting the Club has had on the local area.

"Churches can be a community hub in many different ways, some are focused on a purely ecclesiastical approach, an evangelistic idea of bringing people into the church and the kingdom of heaven. There are other ways too, and my approach has always been about spreading joy in the community.

This church has a long tradition of inclusivity, being welcoming no matter what your personal circumstances, and we have a lot of good stuff going on. Our services are joyous, noisy and much loved affairs, and there is always a cup of tea on the go at the back! The church building is well used and well

loved. Within our hall we host the homeless shelter, the children's play group, senior tai chi and movement, art classes and much, much more, but it was all a bit disjointed and piecemeal. The Posh Club - and all that has followed on from it, has really brought the hall to life. Being involved with a large, very visible project that truly is making our neighbourhood a bit more like heaven on earth. Seeing our hall transformed each week, seeing the crowds of happy faces coming and going, seeing the energy that you put in every week, has been wonderful.

Being involved with Duckie, with their strong inclusive ethos, their creativity and focus on the arts, is a great thing for us, and a great fit for our congregation. It's one thing having the signs on the wall that say everybody welcome, we're a diverse and inclusive

church, it's quite another having the living embodiment of that happening week in week out for all to see. We all know that Hastings is a special place, it's stuffed with talent, quirky people, music, and best of all it absolutely loves a party. We are all in the business of spreading joy, and The Posh Club certainly does that! Coming from Norfolk, where life is a little staid, it's a real pleasure, and a privilege to live and work in this community, and it's a privilege to work with all of you. Long may it continue.

Finally, the way you are all working to take The Posh Club out into the community is inspirational, I'm really looking forward to the Posh Club TV show too. I might have to pop my head in on Monday to watch Elvis on tour!!! Ah huh, huh huh!"



BRIDGING THE GAP WITH BRIAN

What an absolute pleasure it was to catch up with the lovely Brian Gould during one of our recent Posh Club Doorstep Visits.

We sat on a park bench - in a socially distant style - outside his home and spent a lovely hour having a good natter about all sorts of things. I learnt some fascinating things about his life from before and during lockdown.

Born in Notting Hill, Brian moved to Hove when he was 5 years old, then to Eastbourne before arriving in Hastings in 1973.

Brian spent 27 years at British Gypsum as amongst other things a tarmac tester.

What is particularly impressive - apart from his splendid blue suit, warm witty repartee, and excellent dance moves - is the fact that during these last few months he has put together an online Bridge Club that now has around 80 members. What a wonderful thing to do! Bridge is one of his passions, so while the Bridge clubs aren't running in their usual way, he's taken it online. Well done Brian!

Here he is looking resplendent with his new Posh Mug.... Thank you for your time Brian, I loved it!

The Posh Club is taking a break in September but if you would like to request a door-step visit please call 07848 831 290 in October.

By Rachel Spinetti

BLOWING BUBBLES

Our Posh hostess Rachel Spinetti catches up with Irene Davies to talk friendship, laughter, prosecco and recreating The Posh Club's cake dance in Pevensey Bay.

I sat down with the effervescent Irene Davies for a joyful natter about her beloved 'Crazy Gang' of Posh Club pals and how they have kept her going through these last few months.

Irene is one of the most positive people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting, she is optimistic and philosophical - taking each day as it comes. Irene says:

"What happens happens! There's nothing you can do about it! I don't like negativity and try to surround myself with positive people who like to laugh and put as much fun as possible into every day. I'm OTT and I love fun, I don't care!

Her humour and spirit is irrepressible and her joy of life contagious – even in these difficult times.

During lockdown Facetime was Irene's saviour. All the Crazy Gang kept in touch with each other, checking in every day for chats and laughs - "they're all mad as hatters!" she says fondly.

After lock down, Irene's great friend Maureen Phillips organised a birthday party for her in the lovely gardens at the back of her flat, she hung bunting from the apple trees and made an amazing cake – what a gal! says Irene fondly.

She has also begun to meet up again with the various groups she belongs to including a Bereavement Group and the Salvation Army!

"We meet up in the park and have a coffee and a good old natter, some members haven't been out at all so its been wonderful to all get together. We also meet for coffee at Blackbrook's Garden Centre and sometimes we stay for hours!"

Most recently Irene booked a lodge in Pevensey Bay and invited the Crazy Gang out for a mini holiday.

"I'd say, coffee, tea or Prosecco? They'd all want the Prosecco obviously! I couldn't keep up the pace! I was on water after day two! "

As they had missed spending Easter together, one of the gang Mo had made everyone Easter hats which they all donned one day for some extra special knees up. Irene chuckles at the memory:

"Ooooh we had a marvellous time! We all mucked in and made posh sandwiches in a

sort of production line, one of us buttering and one doing the fillings, we stacked them up on cake stands and I made Peter a pinny out of a tea towel and he did The Cake Dance! We were all shouting - woohooooo! We had such a wonderful time and do you know, there was never one cross word, just laughs and easy company"

Sounds like a little slice of heaven!

Irene obviously holds her friends very close to her heart - when it comes to bringing new friends into her fold she says:

It just takes one person to say hello, how are you doing would you like to join us? Then you can introduce them to the rest of the gang and we can give one big collective hug, hold them close and stop them feeling lonely. This is what we do at The Posh Club – that is the beauty of what it brings! It's friendship. I love all of my friends and trust them with my life.

And what a life full of joy it is - Here's to you Irene, you are a wonderful, positive Posh Club Star!

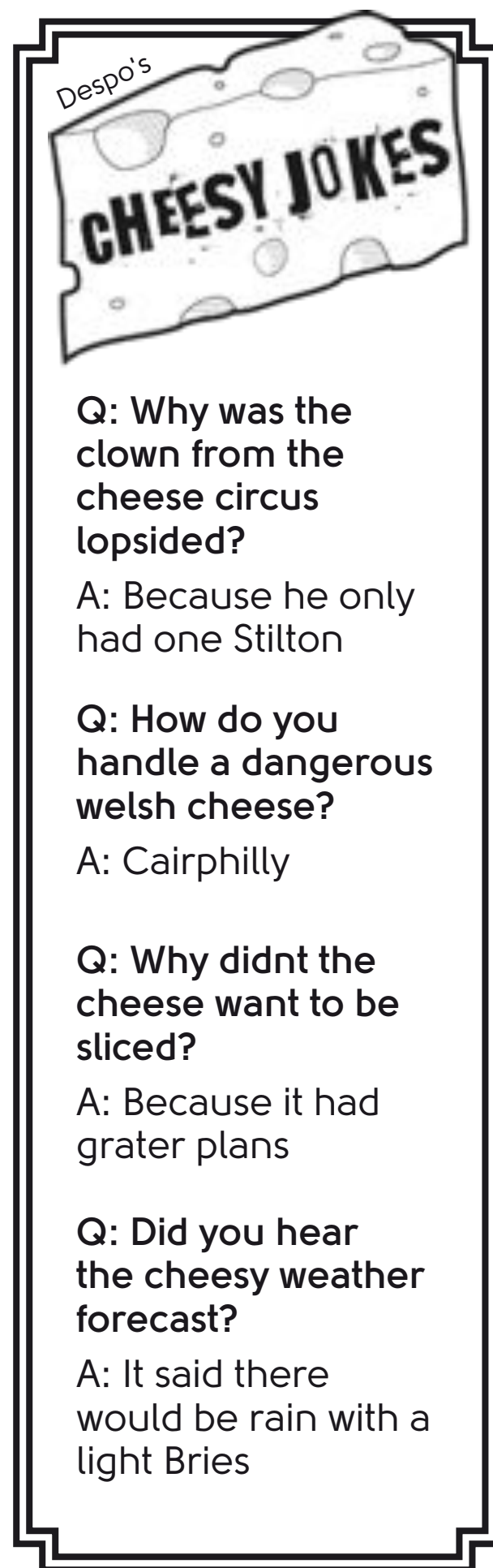
A POSH PRIVILEGE

WHAT VOLUNTEERING AT THE POSH CLUB MEANS TO TESSA KEARNS

When The Posh Club Producer Emmy Minton introduced me to the concept of a new 'club' coming to our town and our community - I felt excited and was adamant I wanted to be involved and support. Being a volunteer with The Posh Club from the very beginning, has been such a privilege - the dedication and love of the volunteering team, working side by side with such passion, is outstanding and nothing I have come across before.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my days at The Posh Club – sometimes it's hard work but the rewards have always been immense! In my career as a Nurse - for over 30 years - I am used to helping people, but I haven't always felt the rewards, as I have from those expressed by the wonderful guests I've met at The Posh Club. The awesome team of volunteers have a common goal, to make sure that at each and every event the guests have the very best time that they can - one filled with joy, laughter, entertainment, friendship and above all a lot of fun.

I've made some great friends and have found my time volunteering with The Posh Club Hastings very rewarding!



Q: Why was the clown from the cheese circus lopsided?

A: Because he only had one Stilton

Q: How do you handle a dangerous welsh cheese?

A: Cairphilly

Q: Why didnt the cheese want to be sliced?

A: Because it had grater plans

Q: Did you hear the cheesy weather forecast?

A: It said there would be rain with a light Bries



This lovely hand drawn sign greeted the gang on one of our visits. Thank you Alan, Louise and Heidi for making us feel so welcome.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF FRIENDSHIP

Posh kitchen maestro Beannie catches up with The Posh Club regular Jenny Wathey and her guide dog Rosa to shoot the breeze about disability, visibility and (wo)man's best friend.

Jenny and I met on a sunny morning in July in to have a catch up about how lockdown had been for her and her faithful companion. Rosa joined us and played with her toys whilst keeping a close eye on Jenny in case she was needed to assist her in any way.

Jenny's visual impairment developed quite suddenly just 6 weeks after her wedding – she initially put it down to stress and tiredness, but was subsequently diagnosed with Stargardt's disease – an inherited condition that causes progressive sight loss. Although she does have some limited vision – she can see outlines and colour impressions, this disappears when she moves around as she cannot process moving images. Whilst Jenny's visual impairment has a significant impact on her life, she says there is a positive side - all humans look young and beautiful, no saggy wrinkles in sight!

After an initial chat, Jenny and I settled down to talk about Rosa.

How did Rosa come to be in your life?

Rosa came into my life about 4 years ago when my condition worsened following the loss of my husband which left me feeling alone and isolated. She is my companion and guide – she keeps me safe and takes me where I need to go. The cliché is true - a guide dog gives you back your life. Without her, I wouldn't be able to leave the house and with her I have the trust and confidence to go where I want. Prior to lockdown, Rosa and I were going to take a trip to Canada and we are still going to do this when we are able to travel safely.

Where did you meet Rosa?

I went to the training school in Worthing to meet Rosa. She had already been in training for 18 months before we met and she was then selected as my candidate dog. I had to learn how to trust her - to let her be in control. My training didn't take as long as hers, but I had to pass muster too before I was able to have her in my life! There is a lot of learning and resources that goes into preparing both dogs and prospective owners for a life together.

What's one popular myth about guide dogs you'd like to debunk?

Probably that they're just there for crossing the road! They are so much more - they operate on a much higher level than that.

For instance, Rosa knows her way to all of my regular haunts and hang outs. For example, I can give her one simple command- 'Rosa go find keep fit' and she knows the bus stop to wait at, the route from the bus to the train, where to get off, the walk through the underpass and along the seafront and down the street to where the class is held. She knows how to get to Tunbridge Wells, Gatwick Airport and many places besides. If she spots a danger she will stop and simply not move until the danger has passed. If there's an obstruction she will reverse to the nearest pedestrian crossing and walk past on the opposite side. She's really smart and remembers more than I do! Once I took her to the Apple store in Brighton, and when I needed to return 18 months later, she took me right back to the door without hesitation. She does so, so much more than crossing roads!

What's changed for Rosa in lockdown?

Rosa misses working just as much as the rest of us do – she is a working dog after all. Her purpose and training aren't being used as much as they should, she's a bit bored and wants to go out and do her job. We have been doing imaginary work and trips, but it's just not the same. On the other hand, there is far more downtime when she gets to play ball and fetch in the garden, and she did find herself very popular in the first weeks when the neighbours were all keen to walk her for some reason.

How have you found the last few months?

Who knew we would end up living through Contagion the movie? Of course I'm bored and frustrated at times, and I worry that Rosa doesn't have enough work to keep her sharp but I have made some new friends chatting in the park. I have found that people have more time to chat now they are in less of a rush to get somewhere else. I feel less invisible and questions about Rosa lead easily into longer conversations now there is time to spare. Also, I've really appreciated how wonderful my friends are, and how much concern there is to make sure I'm ok. I just generally feel more visible.

When I first had to have a mask on in public at the supermarket, I gave Rosa a command and she just looked at me and sat down. She didn't like her mistress in a muzzle and wasn't having any of it. We have since practiced at home and now we can work together when I'm using a face mask but she's definitely not impressed and has made her opinion known!

Rosa is a wonderful friend - she is simply amazing and has transformed my life.



HASTINGS HORTICULTURE

Wendy Metson interviews Despo Hawkins

During lockdown, many of us have looked to our outside spaces as a place of comfort, exercise and refuge. As Monty Don says – "we garden to nourish our souls" and being in our gardens, balconies and terraces has never felt more vital to our mental and physical wellbeing.

Whether you enjoy pottering, growing prize vegetables or just sitting and listening to the birds, many of our Posh Club community have told us they are re-awakening to the magic of their gardens.

Our Posh Club kitchen queen Wendy Metson speaks to our gloriously glamorous volunteer Despo Hawkins about what gardening has meant to her during lockdown.

How has gardening helped you during lockdown?

Gardening has been an absolute lifesaver for me and my husband Chris during lockdown – we spent more time outside than we did indoors. We started by doing garden maintenance to discover what was there – rediscovering plants and attending to trees and shrubs – we drastically cut back the fig tree for the first time in 22 years.

We were really quite pleased that the weather was so good that we could put off doing work indoors and spend our time outside and this has literally borne fruit. The garden is thriving with colorful flowers, fruit and vegetables - carrots, peas, radishes, tomatoes, grapes and figs of course.

Physically, it's been tough but that's also a good thing. It's been so rewarding, even weeding has helped us relax through this difficult and anxious time. Chris and I have rediscovered how much we enjoy gardening – its utterly bewitched us.

What is personal/special about your garden?

My heritage is Cypriot and this has really influenced my garden style – my fig is my pride and joy. It began its life in Hastings as a twig, bought home from my father's tree in Cyprus. The garden it was taken from is now in area occupied by Turkey and it means a lot to me that I have salvaged and nurtured this fragment from my family's history. I have brought other Mediterranean plants to the garden to remind me of my origins -lavender, rosemary, jasmine, lilies, olives and artichokes all nod to my history and my culture and I am hoping to keep expanding this in the future.

What do you make with your figs?

They mostly just get eaten as they are – they are so delicious. Most years they haven't been so abundant but this year we've had a real glut of fruit. I think the lack of pollution during lockdown has really helped the plants and wildlife in the garden. Sometimes I make a fig chutney – last year I made 18 jars but I reckon I'm going to get much more than that this year. It's very simple- you just cut them up and boil them down with sugar and vinegar. Add a sprinkle of sultanas and voila! Fig chutney.

Watch out Monty Don you've got competition!



PATERNAL POSHNESS



Father And Daughter Eric And Anna Richardson

Our Front-of-House stylist, hostess and all round glamourpuss Anna Richardson shares her Posh Club journey with her father Eric who moved to Hastings after the death of his wife Helen. This is their story.

The Posh Club Hastings started in March 2018 and I was honoured to be a part of the original team that set it up. My role was to style the hall, help build a fantastic staff and volunteer team and to create a warm and loving environment for our wonderful guests.

My father Eric moved down from Surrey

in February of that year to the Old Town to be near me after Helen, my darling Ma and Eric's wife of 54 years, died in 2016.

Heartbroken and exhausted from the move, the timing proved perfect, I was able to introduce him to our fun filled Fridays at The Posh Club, where he met some wonderful new people that helped him begin his new life by the sea.

Over the next 10 weeks' I watched him flourish. He is most certainly not a shy man but he seemed reticent at first to get up and dance. The weeks went by and I watched him grow in confidence and begin to leave his inhibitions behind – soon getting up onto the dance floor as soon as the music started.

By the end of our first season he'd be found on the microphone with my partner Piano Man Blair singing everyone out to 'Show Me the Way to Go Home' and not always the clean version! Now known as Old Town Eric he has found his feet here and I hope we can continue to enjoy many more Posh Clubs together in the future.



GILL'S JOKES

What do you call a Russian on a cracker
..... Putin on the Ritz boom boom xx

What did one hat say to the other ?
You stay here , I'll go on ahead xx

What did the duck say when she bought
a lipstick "put it on my bill"

I have decided that from the start of
next week I am going to dress as a
different type of bread every day....Roll
On Monday!

I tried to come up with a carpentry pun
that 'wood' work
I think I 'nailed' it but nobody 'saw'..



LITTLE DITTIES

Our wonderful host is called Rachel
To whom we're ever so grateful
Her quick repartee
Fills us with glee
She's a bloody fantastical marvel

Here's to our wonderful Beannie
She's our fantabulous kitchen genie
Her sarnies are grand
They're the best in the land
Washed down with a vodka martini!

DRESS TO IMPRESS

One of the things we love about The Posh Club is that everybody makes such an effort to dress up. From the rakish to the classy, the swanky to the uber-chic, we know y'all are going to bring it to St Leonard's on a Friday.

Lockdown's presented some challenges to the peacocks amongst us but our Posh Club spirit remains strong amongst the Hastings Glitterati.

Here two of our local fashionistas tell Wendy and Anna about bling on a budget, shoe couture and finding the confidence to let it all rip later in life.

Mavra Bryony

Before moving to St Leonard's, Mavra lived in Kings Cross and worked as a Librarian and Social Worker – not like the life of glamour she lives now. As a child, she was told she wasn't pretty enough to smile, dance or dress up - well my goodness what a change!

Mavra says that her 70's and 80's have been the happiest years of her life. She's living by the sea enjoying the sun and the sea air but more than anything is thrilled to have discovered The Posh Club on a Friday. Before joining our community, Mavra didn't dress up and now she is vision in sequins- uniquely styled each week with her signature top-hat.

So, where does Mavra find all her wonderful outfits? Incredibly, most of them are charity shop finds. The stylish gold dress she wore for our shoot was picked up in a charity shop in Silver Hill for £4 and boy does she look a million dollars.

The Posh Club has given Mavra a new lease of life and her ambition now is to carry on enjoying life, dressing up and dancing.

Yaaas Mavra!



By Wendy Metson & Anna Richardson

Photographs by Alice Denny

"I DON'T WANT TO WEAR THE SAME THING TWICE!"

Cliff Philipps

In his past life, Cliff was a steel worker, the Landlord of the Wishing Tree pub and a DJ. He always wore his black suit with red tie and red shoes to DJ at weddings and became known for his jaunty style. The Posh Club has given Cliff the perfect excuse to indulge his love for clothes and to buy more outfits. A lot more outfits.

'Well I don't want to wear the same thing twice!' he says.

Cliff spends a lot of time searching the internet for the perfect shoes to match his suits. He's our very own Posh Imelda Marcos.

Pearl his wife of 61 years is perhaps not so thrilled by his new collection - 'It takes up a lot of space' she says 'Cliff has his own room with two wardrobes!'

Cliff and Pearl were married in Gretna Green in 1959 and have been having fun together ever since. We left them dancing in their finery and can't wait to see Cliff's new wardrobe back at The Posh Club soon.



POSH PALS

by Rachel Spinetti

We couldn't produce a Hastings Posh Club paper without including Mike Rose and his gang. We love this story - it's what The Posh Club is all about. I met them in the park for a natter and started by asking one simple question - how did it all begin?

Michael remembers "I was at a Hastings Seniors coffee morning and a man and a woman came to talk to us about The Posh Club starting up. Pam Brown said 'ere Mike, this might interest you', they took my phone number and I filled in a form and that first week a crowd of us from Seniors went.

On the second week, I couldn't see any of the others, so one of the volunteers said 'come and sit on this table, they're a good bunch!' and that was it, we've stayed together ever since!"

But the main gang was still not quite complete. Mike chuckles at the memory "there was a comedian on one week, he was asking if anyone was from Tunbridge Wells and this blonde lady stood up and said "ROYAL Tunbridge Wells I'll have you know!" and it was Rene! So she joined the gang.

I did a bit of flirting at first but said 'you're quite safe girl, the machinery is rusted!' Mike is the eldest of the group, with Wendy Rowe as the baby. He remarks "there's twenty years' difference between us, she was born when I was in Singapore, and everyone else is in between. I don't know what my life would be without them. We are such a diverse mix of personalities but we all get on so well. In my mind The Posh Club has achieved what it set out to do. I wouldn't be sitting here now with this lot, (they've all brought chairs and a picnic to the park), I'd be at home doing the ironing!" Mike taps his head and twinkles "it's how old you are up here. We've all reached an age where we can be cheeky and get away with it!"

Jackie (Rawe) remembers "I'd been going for about 2 weeks but had been sitting on a table with all married couples and I thought, I probably won't make friends with these people, lovely as they are! Then the third week, I saw Ann (Broto) in the queue, I asked if she was on her own, and she was, so I asked if she wanted to sit together" They remember "we both loved rock n roll dancing, so we were kindred spirits!" Ann was new to Hastings so this new friendship was a godsend to her- supporting her to settle in and feel at home.

Brian (Gould) gravitated over to this growing table of funsters after trying out a few other tables. "The first few weeks were a bit



random and then I sat on one table where they kept whinging about the sandwiches and I didn't want to sit with whingers!" He remembers Mike from the beginning, "we all migrated onto the table next to kitchen and the rest is history!" Brian particularly likes dancing although felt a bit shy at first, "Jayne (Davidson) our super dancing pixie volunteer wanted dancing partners, so she got me up and that was it!"

Jenny (Challacombe) knew Wendy through a mutual friend. "We all used to go dancing to the White Rock and then onto The Chatsworth. I've always loved dancing, my Dad used to take me Old Time dancing and I did ballet as a child. I'd read about The Posh Club in the newspaper and thought I like the sound of this, so I went and saw Wendy and then met the rest of the gang!

Rene (Purser) had sat on the opposite side of the hall for those early shows, accompanying her friend Shirley. Then after the last Christmas show of the season Wendy asked if she fancied joining the gang for lunch as they wanted to keep meeting on Fridays when The Posh Club was on a break – and that was that, ROYAL Tunbridge Wells was in!

Olivia (Darvill) is Wendy's sister –in-law and was part of the gang from the start. "I was so surprised with the first one I came to - I didn't know what to expect...oooooh it was wonderful! Its so lovely to get dressed up and I've made so many friends!"

Mike says "I speak for everyone when I say the best thing about The Posh Club is the people who are running it. The organisation is first class, the entertainment is first class, the food is first class, the company, the volunteers, Blair on the Joanna, everything! Also a few of this lot don't like the fizzy wine, so I end up with about 3 glasses!"

The 'No Riff - Raff' on the Posh Club posters

has a particular resonance with Mike as he has been a bone fide member of "The Riff Raff Club" since 1955. At that time, he was serving aboard HMS Boxer, a converted Tank Landing Ship visiting the Channel Islands to participate in the 10th anniversary of the liberation from German occupation. After a slightly raucous trip ashore, the Governess of Guernsey told the Captain to cancel their visit and leave. The Captain then gave the ship's company a proper dressing down over their behaviour ashore calling them 'a shower of Riff Raff' from then on they called themselves The Riff Raff Club!

So, his big question is "Do I stay away from happy Fridays at The Posh Club? I promise to behave!" Awww Mike! The Posh Club wouldn't be the same without you and your gang. We salute you!



A BIG POSH FAMILY

WHAT VOLUNTEERING AT THE POSH CLUB MEANS TO CATH COOPER

I found The Posh Club very welcoming from the start and didn't feel like a newbie. Lovely to see our elders enjoying themselves and making new friends later in life, which I feel I have too, we are a big Posh family. I love the cooperation – the tables seem to lay themselves!

It reminds me of my Nan and her "club" in Skegness, where they had lunch and entertainment back in the 80s.

Going to Posh also gave me something to talk to dad about as he was ill and I was there a lot! I also love that we have a uniform – I don't think I'd make it by 9.30 if I had to decide what to wear!!

POSH PALS FAVOURITE POSH ACTS

We asked Mike and his posh pals from the story opposite, what their favourite Posh Club acts are, this is what they said.

Olivia and Ann love all the Elvises

Mike has a particular penchant for Gracie

Jackie loves violinist Kate Conway

There is a mutual enthusiasm for the Victory Sisters, Andrew Farr as Edith Piaf and The Pink Suits and "anyone we can have a good old sing along with!"

Finally, Jenny expressed a hope for more single men!

Have you got a favourite act? Or a special request like Jenny.

Send us a postcard and tell us about it, we would love to hear from you.

You can write into The Posh Club Hastings, c/o 6 Gilbert Road, St Leonard's on Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0RH

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN NEW TRICKS

By Beannie Nicholson

We met up with Posh Club pal Theresa Eagling to talk technology, buckets, gardens and learning new tricks.

Theresa is the organiser of the over 60's social group, The Sunshine Club. Sad about missing their usual Posh Club outings she has been helping them to connect with the digital world. And what better way to start than by getting them tuned in to our Facebook show?

For those of you who don't know, our Fabulous Posh Club compere Rachel Spinetti and I have been broadcasting an online show on Facebook every Friday and Theresa has been working hard to help everyone connect with it. We talk about the joys and frustrations of trying to work online and how old we feel when trying to learn how to do it!

We are new to all of this ourselves and Rachel and I usually have at least one technical failure every week. Most of the time we are blessed to have a nice chap who works behind the scenes to smooth things over for us. Very occasionally though, we are left to our own devices, which is when things generally go wrong!

Theresa lit up as she told me about trying to watch her church services on her TV. She has been watching them on YouTube through her phone, but the screen is very small and the sound not very loud. One of her church friends had told her that you could watch YouTube on a smart TV, which was all very well, but what on earth is a smart TV she pondered? Her friend really wasn't sure as her son had sorted it out when he visited!

After chatting with her own son and a lot of too-ing and fro-ing and clicking and searching, Teresa found out that a smart tv is just one that connects to the internet and even better, that she had one. Pretty soon she managed to find how to watch YouTube and is delighted that she can now see the church services in comfort.

We laughed together, about trying to learn new tricks, trying out new technology and finding ways of coping with being at home for months on end. The little things that can make the day, a phone call from an old friend, the

sun on your face, the light on the rose in the garden. Like many of us, Theresa has found her garden to be a real saving grace of lockdown, and says it is looking the best it ever has after all the love and attention it has received this year.

Teresa ends our chat with a story about her wonderful neighbours who have been doing her shopping for her whilst she was shielding over the lockdown period. She describes how as she lives on a hill, she ended up sending the cash down to them in a bucket on a rope. Now that's genius!

Thank you Theresa, Here is to learning new tricks in lockdown, bucket cash delivery systems, smart TVs, YouTubes and sermons from your sofa!



If you don't have a Teresa but would like help to get online and watch Posh Club TV, The Posh Club has a phone support line that can help you.

Call Posh Kirsten on 07305 351 797 for assistance.

POSH CLUB TV



While the doors to The Posh Club are closed, the team have been exploring different ways to stay connected, including 'courtyard' and 'doorstep' versions of the Club, gifts in the post and of course your own Posh Paper.

Now you can also turn on and tune in to Posh Club TV – a new series of four shows broadcast live from the Club's regular venues and available to watch afterwards on The Posh Club's website.

Internet whizz Kirsten will be on hand to make sure anyone who wants to get online to watch can do so.

There will be one show from each Club, co-hosted by Dicky Eton from Duckie and local compères, each with a special local guest star.

In Crawley, the ever-glamorous Annie is joined by guest star Rod Stewart (or someone who looks and sounds just the same – or better). In Hastings, Spaghetti Oops & Beans on Toast are joined by jazz musician Liane Carroll. In Brighton, Coco DeVille and Becca are joined by local legend Chris from Seaford. And in Hackney, co-hosts Rhys's Pieces and Azara are joined by guest star Black Elvis, who'll be whisked all the way from Brixton in a stretched limo to avoid being mobbed by fans on the tube.

The shows will be filmed inside each Club's regular home, hopefully offering a little reminder of the classic Posh Club get-togethers even though they remain off the table for now.

In each Posh Club TV show, local Clubs will provide their own televisual twist on a range of programming ideas.

For instance, each show will also feature a specially created musical lip-sync number. In Hackney, Rhys and Lorraine will share a very special choreographed and socially distanced version of 'Summer Nights' from the musical Grease.

Every episode will include a singing vicar delivering some personal favourites, ranging from music hall in Hastings, where Father David has a personal connection to Marie Lloyd, to indie pop in Crawley.

There will also be a 'local quiz for local people', with teasers related to the history of each town where the Posh Club takes place, and keep-fit routines from each Club's regulars.

Other bespoke features will include a round of Posh Bingo – have your cards at the ready – and another gameshow format – watch out for Twerk Pong in Hackney!

Some Posh Club TV stars will contribute to all four programmes. There will be cookery tips from Fanny Craddock – better known to Hackney regulars as Tracey.

And the Pink Suits will beam in spectacular dance routines from around the beaches, kitchens and warehouses of Margate. Some bits might get quite steamy – which won't come as a surprise to those who saw Pink Suits member Lennie doing his legendary ballet routine on stage.

Each venue will also have its own unique material. In Crawley, for example, superstar hair and make-up artist Darren Evans will be coiffing local volunteers' hair with an audience phone-in vote to decide the best 'do.

Producers also promise some cutting-edge avant-garde experimental arty content, possibly involving live potato-peeling. They promise it must be seen to be believed.

And what TV format would be complete without an Andrew Marr-style newspaper review? Only this time, they'll be reviewing what's in your very own Posh Paper. Perhaps they'll even tell you what they think of this article!

All four posh club TV shows can be viewed online at theposhclub.co.uk

HOW TO WATCH PC★TV POSH CLUB TELEVISION

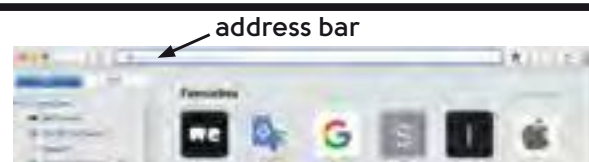


Kirsten

On your ipad, tablet, phone or computer, click on one of these symbols.



2 Click your mouse or tap your finger in the address bar at the top of the window.



3 Using the keyboard buttons, type www.theposhclub.co.uk

4 Press the return/enter key. This key can look different depending on the device or keyboard, look for the button with the words Return, Enter or the arrow symbol printed on it.

5 The Posh Club website will open as shown. Click on the button where it says "CLICK HERE TO WATCH PC★TV" and it will play the show.



Still having trouble?

Call our help line and speak to Kirsten on: **07305 351 797**

VEG & DRUGS & ROCK & ROLL



Posh Club Hostess Rachel Spinetti and Posh Club Glitterati Rene Purser meet up to talk about glamour, positivity, hope and self-care in the face of serious illness.

Our 'Rene' is definitely one of the glamour girls at The Posh Club, a vibrant smiling face and always up for a bit of fun. She is a regular guest and a fabulous positive presence, but for several weeks last year, Rene was away.

We all missed her hugely and when she returned just before Christmas with a new super-stylish gamine crop we were delighted to see her and saddened to hear that she had been unwell. Rene and I met one day after lockdown to talk about her experiences.

Rene's Journey

In Spring, last year Rene noticed she was feeling a bit run down, falling asleep all the time and generally not feeling herself. Following a routine yearly blood test, she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, an extremely aggressive bone marrow cancer.

Rene was given 4 to 6 weeks to live unless she underwent an intensive course of chemotherapy. What happened next was a triumph of human spirit and determination and resonated strongly with my own experiences with breast cancer 8 years ago. I had chemotherapy, radiotherapy and am one boob down (but don't feel bad- I never liked that one anyway) so I was particularly fascinated to hear about Rene's journey.

Rene begins by recalling "I'd always said, if I

was ever unlucky enough to have cancer I would not want chemo, I'd go down the natural route, but 4-6 weeks? That's not enough time, so I did both"

She started her treatment in June, the day she was supposed to be going on holiday to Spain. "The chemo was horrendous, I had to have 3 different types and it was intensive, all day and all night for 10 days straight. I couldn't move or eat very much as I couldn't really swallow. I was neutropenic for 3 weeks as my blood count was so low I got an infection after only 6 days in. There were times when I was very low, I didn't know what the outcome would be. I wasn't frightened of dying, if it's my time, it's my time but I'd think of my daughters having to sort my flat out and think no, I'm not having this! You have to have a positive mental attitude! And the support of my family and friends was incredible".

After being in hospital for 5 weeks, the day after her 70th birthday, her doctor said she could go home. She would have to have another bone biopsy and wait for results and take it from there. She says, "I was so happy to be home from hospital I practically flew up the stairs!" Rene had been taking cannabis oil capsules throughout this time "I'd already noticed great results from them, if my blood pressure was high I'd take one and after 10 minutes it would be down" So when the results of her tests came back and there were no cancer cells present, she knew exactly what she wanted to do next.

"My doctor said, even though there are no cancer cells now, I want you to have more chemo as I am sure it will come back. I had all my family with me and I just thought I can't put everyone through this again, I was so poorly, I'd lost so much weight and I just couldn't do it. So, I made the decision to discharge myself and go down the natural route. Some of my kids were against it (Rene has 7) but honestly, I didn't have the energy to do it again".

So, after speaking to a friend of hers who had followed a similar path, feeling inspired, determined and armed with a truck load of supplements and potions, Rene went au naturel.

She carried on taking cannabis oil, followed a vegan diet and took Salvestrol, Vitamin D3 and immunity boosting

capsules every day. She put magnesium and iodine drops on her arms and legs and juiced carrots, ginger, apples, spinach, beetroot, garlic, vitamin C and spirulina and drank Essiac tea every night.

A year on from her diagnosis and Rene still follows this regime every day and the cancer has not come back. She tells me "I haven't been back to hospital. My oncologist has said to just keep an eye on my bloods and every month they just get better and better. Even the nurses said, it hasn't come back has it? Whatever you're doing, KEEP ON DOING IT! I feel like the luckiest person"

Rene used to be a hairdresser but it didn't phase her in the slightest when she started losing her hair. "I said oooh get my hair off! I was thin, clothes were hanging off me. I used to look in the mirror and not even recognise myself but I WAS HERE! I love my short hair, it's so easy, I just wash and go!"

Lockdown has actually been a bit of a saving grace for Rene. Used to going at full pelt and still riding high on the great results after such a devastating diagnosis, it has given her the excuse to not push herself so hard and to just put her feet up for a while. "I do tend to be a bit go go go all the time, I'm learning to say no a bit more."

She loves her flat which is a treasure trove of gorgeous, glamorous nick nacks, window boxes with flowers and her beloved home grown veggies and a glorious sea view. "I've bought myself flowers every week, I love nature and looking out at that view. I thank my lucky stars for that every day"

The support of Rene's family and friends has been amazing.

"Posh Clubber Wendy (Rowe) came and did some healing and meditation with me and my head was so clear afterwards. During lockdown, we did our "12 o' clock rock every day. We started off dancing for twenty minutes or so, then went up to an hour. Afterwards we'd do a meditation and then have a good natter - it gave us a structure which has been so wonderful".

To sum up, Rene believes that you can heal your body if you put the right things in. "You are what you eat, I am positive of that. Put good things in. The proof is in the pudding, and I like pudding!"

Rene, it is a total honour to share your incredible story. What a total and utter inspiration you are.

**"IF IT HELPS
JUST ONE
PERSON,
THEN I'M
HAPPY TO
SHARE MY
JOURNEY"**

DANCING QUEENS

ST LEONARDS DANCE TROUPE



Anna Richardson and Adeline Offe-Burobey have begun a dance troupe for The Posh Club volunteers and have been holding regular zoom dance classes throughout lock-down. **Beannie Nicholson** met up with them to hear about what they have been up to.

Adeline - Ever since I was a little girl, I've danced all day long, with or without music, as it's always playing in my head! I desperately wanted my parents to send me to dance school so I could tap dance like bojangles, but they never did. Dad did buy me a pair of red tap shoes once, and I tapped around the tiled kitchen floor constantly - until they were too small for me!

Anna - I started ballet at 5, and was lucky to be taught on a scholarship at both the Royal Academy and the Royal Ballet School as a youngster. In my 20s I spent 3 summers dancing with a show group in Turkey - happy days! What a joy it is to be dancing with a troupe again in my 50s.

Anna and Adeline - Inspired by the original Posh Club Dance Club, who travelled from Hackney last Christmas to perform for us in Hastings, we set up our St Leonards Dance Troupe, formed from the ranks of our fabulous volunteers. Our first rehearsal was on the 11th February, and we made good progress, until COVID-19 and the resultant lockdown put a spanner in the works. We weren't all tech savvy, so it took us a couple of months to get organised and start

rehearsing on line. Many attempts and much laughter later we finally managed to have a zoom rehearsal on 5th May. What a pleasure that morning was, to finally see everyone again and we have not looked back since then!

Recently, with the easing of the lockdown we have been able to rehearse together in the fresh air, thanks to Posh volunteer Gail Small's generous offer to let us dance in her garden in the shade of her ancient oak trees. It certainly brightens up a Tuesday morning when we glam up, don our sparkly outfits and bowler hats and head off down the street to rehearsal.

Here are some of our dancers, in their own words, to tell you about the project, and share their favourite dance moments.

Racheal Young - I just adore showing off and dancing - it gives me a chance to glam up. My favourite dance moment? The finale of the movie *Dirty Dancing*.

Gill Sutton - I think there's a bit of a performer in most of us, and as a shy child I dreamed of a future in Pan's People. Now older and not concerned about what people think, I just love to dance. My favourite dance moment? Gene Kelly *Singing in the Rain*

Julie Windus - I've loved dancing ever since I persuaded mum to let me join a ballet class aged 7. Being a part of this lovely, inclusive group in my later years is wonderful. My favourite dance moment? Anything from *West Side Story*.

Jean Parham - I love the dance group, it's great fun. My favourite dance moment? Fred and Ginger, *Let's Face the Music and Dance*.

Margaret Trowell - The dance troupe has been the most amazing experience, and something I hadn't expected at this stage of



my life. My favourite dance moment? *Mary Poppins*, the chimchiminy sweeps.

Michele Duke - My Dad taught me to waltz for the church socials when I was 10 and we would dance for hours. That love of movement has stayed with me always. My favourite dance moment? *Chicago*, 'The Cell Block Tango'.

Ann Tucker - At the age of 5, I was a tulip in my tap class show. All in yellow dresses, we tapped and sang to tip toe through the tulips. It's been a lovely surprise dancing with the volunteers, and a very enjoyable one. My favourite dance moment? Any Argentine Tango or Lindyhop.

The St Leonards Dance Troupe will be performing on-line on August 21st at the first Hastings Posh Club TV online broadcast. This will be the troupe's first time performing together for an audience. The gang will dance to *Staying Alive* from *Saturday Night Fever* and *All that Jazz* by the late, great Bob Fosse.



HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

by Beannie Nicholson

Hope G is an organisation that supports older people, predominantly those of Black and Minority Ethnic heritage, to have an active voice in Hastings.

Beannie Nicholson meets with Posh Clubber and Hope G Chairlady Julia Wells to shoot the breeze about lockdown cold suns and a lifetime of service in the NHS.

Julia invited me to her lovely, bright garden for a socially distanced chat and a trip down memory lane. Julia marks 10 years of work with Hope G this year but the proposed celebrations have been postponed due to the current restrictions. Knowing Julia, her can-do attitude and irrepressible spirit, I'm sure she will find a way to celebrate the club and its members, no matter what life throws in her way.

Born in Trinidad, to a large family, Julia was one of 11 children. As a young woman of 19, Julia responded to a call for nursing trainees in the UK, traveling alone to begin a new life in England. On arrival at Heathrow airport, Julia was met by a representative of the Trinidadian High Commission and whisked in to town by limo. She was given afternoon tea by the Ambassador before being escorted to the train to continue her journey to Yorkshire. That's quite an entrance Julia!

Julia described arriving in Skipton Station in Yorkshire – how she wondered on seeing a row of terraced houses for the first time whether they belonged to the Queen. In a letter to her Mum she wrote 'they do have a sun in England, but it is a cold sun indeed'. Julia also talked warmly about a wonderful matron at Skipton, who supported her training – she recalls a wonderful, firm but fair woman who became a mother to her and other trainees from across the Commonwealth in her charge.

Some years later, a qualified nurse, married and with 2 children, Julia came down south to visit a childhood friend and experiencing the warmer climate led the family in time to relocate to Hastings and the sunny south coast.

Julia worked in the NHS for a total of 46 years up to her retirement 7 years ago. A woman of great energy with a real passion for church and community, retirement was an excuse to get even more involved in her local area. She works hard, participating in meetings and bringing back information for her HOPE G members and their families.

Julia really is a networker extraordinaire, and this is part of what's kept her going over the last few months. Keeping in touch with her members, popping birthday cards in the post, nattering on the phone, publishing a newsletter, even driving to wave through the



Julia Wells with Spaghetti Oops

windows of some members she wouldn't otherwise be able to contact.

Julia is just beginning to emerge out into the social sphere again after lockdown, and has arranged to meet a few members in the local park next week. Julia, I hope the weather is kind to you and you have a fabulous time catching up in person with some of the Hope G gang.

JUST THE TICKET

BRINGING THE BLING TO OUR LUCKY WINNERS

Each week during the facebook live show we have drawn a winning ticket from our golden chalice of joy and our dynamic duo Beans on Toast and Spaghetti Oops have pulled on their prize giving pom poms and pelted over to deliver it, long distance style. **Clockwise from top left:** The chalice, Olivia Darville, Irene Davies, Linda Hellens with Ann Davies, Rene Purser, Catherine and Colin Rendle, Sue Matthews, Myrna Mann



CUP & SAUCER SHOTS

Photos: Caitlin Lock

Way too glamorous for mug shots, these beauties are bone china, gilt edged cup and saucer shots all the way.

Aside from our glorious guests, our devoted team of volunteers are what makes The Posh Club so utterly special.

They are the beating heart of the club – bringing their kindness, hard work and dancing shoes to each show and giving it their all.

We just love our volunteers and are so grateful for their tireless efforts each week, greeting our guests with a smile and a 'how do you do'

We've been having a little chin wag with some of our Posh Club volunteer crew, to find out what the club means to them. You might recognise some of them from the great photos below taken during Lockdown by Caitlin Lock for 'The Good Stuff Participants Project' but you will remember all of them from the dance floor.

Thank you with all of our hearts Posh Club volunteers! You are the best!



MICHELE DUKE

The Posh Club is such a special place. The joy and exuberance is so uplifting! I know that we are making a real difference to the lives of our members and having a wonderful time ourselves too!



RACHAEL YOUNG

I just love the company of all the guests - serving them and acting the clown to make them all laugh. I always leave feeling happy that I'm doing a small bit for society.



MARGARET TROWELL

Joining The Posh Club as a volunteer with my husband Dudley has been amazing. We have made fabulous friends and are all definitely 'family'. We all have huge fun and hopefully make it a fun experience for our lovely Posh Club guests who we love seeing rush through those doors every week. Viva La Posh Club!



ADELINE OFFE-BUROBEY

I am a relatively new volunteer but was hooked from the first day. From the nostalgia of the hall decoration to the friendliness of everyone there. I love all the guests dressed in their finery ready to dance, sing and be entertained. I miss it very much... Capital Pee Oo Ess Ach POSH!

YOU'RE IN FOR A BIG SURPRISE

In the same way that some of our guests have forged friendships, our volunteers have also become one big happy family. In July, our wonderful Posh Club stylist and front-of-house host Anna Richardson organised a gathering for our volunteers and here she is to tell us all about it..

WHEN WE WENT DOWN TO THE WOODS ONE DAY

Five months after lockdown an idea was hatched! Our volunteers would gather together to meet for a picnic in St Helen's Woods to be together, check in with each other and maybe (what the hecko!) sip a cup of prosecco!

A beautiful sunny Tuesday in July dawned. We had arranged to all meet at one o'clock by the barbecue, under the dappled light of the ancient trees and I watched our wonderful volunteers stream down the hill. Each was carrying their own food and beaming with massive smiles. Our Rachael even bought her own picnic table! The fizz flowed and we had hours of fun, chats and much laughter.

A huge success and a great afternoon... looking forward to a repeat in September before the weather turns. Can't wait to see my Posh Club Family again!



JULIE WINDUS

I think the atmosphere at Posh is welcoming and comfy, like a lovely warm bath. I love being part of the volunteer team and being a guest too.



DES HAWKINS

What I love about The Posh Club is the pure love and enjoyment on everyone's faces when they walk into the hall. We feel like a huge extended family and being a volunteer is the icing on the cake!



ANN TUCKER

To be a member of the volunteers at The Posh Club is such a privilege and gives me so much pleasure. Everyone involved is a star and the camaraderie is wonderful. A world of glamour, entertainment, of stage lights and sparkly dresses, of food, familiar music and lots and lots of dancing. I begin to smile the minute I walk in.



GILL SUTTON

Volunteering at The Posh Club is absolutely fantastic. There is so much love in the room. We are one big happy family! When I come in on a Friday morning I feel like I've come home. Buddies, bubbles and bling ..what's not to love!



BLAIR ON A CHAIR

By Anna Richardson and Rachel Spinetti

After the madness of lock down, The Posh Club team found ourselves missing our guests so much, we thought - if you can't come to us, lets come to you! So we packed up our wigs in our old kit bag and headed on out...

ANNA

It was a sunny Monday morning and I was thrilled to be once again putting on my Poshest Posh Club clobber.

In the boot of my car goes ... a small table, one chair (gold and red velvet obviously darlings) 10 bottles of Prosecco, 24 champagne flutes, 24 individual gold cake boxes, buckets of ice, our own Rachel Spinetti and our beloved Piano Man Blair!

Posh Club on tour folks!

Five destinations lay ahead. Five door step visits, five performances by Blair on his (very posh) chair and five moments of joy, friendship, glamour, music and fun.

What a ball we had, greeted by huge smiles and love, in gardens and courtyards, on pavements and terraces. So wonderful to see our gorgeous guests again - to dance, sing, smile and reconnect.

Sandwiches lovingly made, bowls of strawberries and cream, cake stands groaning with treats. Everyone was up for a sing song and a party - socially distanced of course but we had so much fun. We can't wait to do it again!

RACHEL

A joyful riot of smiling faces, glasses of fizz, piled up cake boxes and zooming around town like a posh flashmob in Anna's ageing Volvo!

Blair was rocking his dapper blue suit and signature gold hat and brought the house down at each destination with brilliantly entertaining mash ups of Mini the Moocher, King of the Swingers and Pretty Woman (with me supplying some frankly questionable backing vocals)

It was so fantastic to see some of our beloved guests that I just didn't want it to end.

Anita Bailey had a spread fit for royalty, Mike Rose was celebrating his 88th birthday joined by friends and neighbours, Christine Sargeaunt and pals sat elegantly sipping fizz. Catherine & Colin Rendle were joined by their daughter and granddaughter and finally, Alan, Louise, Mooncie and Heidi Illig received us like royalty in their gazebo and plied us with strawberries and cream - Don't mind if I do darlings!

We really felt the love and we can't wait to get back out there again!



WHAT FOLKS SAID:

Catherine: What an amazing visit we had from Blair, Anna and Rachel. It was pure joy! The Posh Club really knows how to do things in style and bring people together!

Alan, Heidi and Louise: "Wow! What a wonderful Posh Club Visit - guitar serenades, singing, dancing, champagne and cake for all. Thank you so very much. The visit really lifted our spirits!"

Blair: "That was a blast, let's do it again. Where's the Prosecco gone? (hic)"



DIDN'T GET A VISIT THIS TIME?

Just cut out our Blair on a chair, stick him on the kitchen window and pop the radio on. That way it will always feel like he is in your garden serenading you.