FROM THE CHAIRMAN – A LAST WORD

I have been a member of the Association for what seems like a lifetime. I served as General Secretary for a number of years and, latterly, agreed to take over as Chairman to save the Association from becoming prematurely extinct.

I joined the Association shortly after taking early retirement in 1995, after 38 years with the Company. I was able to make contact again with many of the friends and colleagues I used to work with in Berkeley Street and various London branch offices before relocating to Peterborough in 1975. I took on the job of General Secretary at the end of 1995 and have served the Association since. My time with the Association has been very enjoyable, particularly on those occasions when I was able to attend various regional functions and to meet up socially with old friends. I have a number of cherished memories of those occasions.

However, all good things must come to an end. In my case I feel unable to continue in office since I suffered a stroke some three years ago, which has left me unable to do all the things I used to, and I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that it is time for another to take over.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and friendship over the years and to tell you that I am proud to have been a member of the “Family of Cook” for many years – long may it continue. Finally I must say a big thank you to all those who have, and indeed continue, to devote some of their time to serving the membership of the Association in various ways – you are all much appreciated.

My very best wishes to all of you and my sincere thanks to everyone for putting up with me for so long!

I don’t intend to disappear completely and I am sure it will be nice to hear from you from time to time.

John
**Dates for your diary**

**Scotland Region**  
Coffee morning first Thursday of every month 10.30am—12.00pm  
Bill’s Restaurant, 22/24 West Nile Street, Glasgow, G1 2PW (new venue).  
Everyone is welcome including any members visiting Scotland.  
**Contact:** Doreen Kingsbury: 0141 237 1943  
E-Mail: doreenk@uwclub.net

**Middx, Herts, Beds, Berks, Bucks Region**  
**Lunch:** Wednesday 11 November 2015, Wednesday 13 January, Wednesday 9 March, Wednesday 11 May.  
**Venue:** Beefeater, Ruislip, 11.30am for 12.00  
**Contact:** Gordon Wroe: 01923 404543  
E-Mail: charles.wroe@ntlworld.com

**Midlands Region**  
**Venue:** The Boars Head Hotel, Station Road, Sudbury, Derbyshire, DE6 5GX  
**Spring:** Wednesday 23 March 2016  
**Summer:** Wednesday 22 June 2016  
**Autumn:** Wednesday 14 September 2016  
**Christmas:** Wednesday 14 December 2016  
**Contact:** Ian Blackband: 01562 745866  
E-Mail: ianblackband@btinternet.com

**Eastern Region**  
**Christmas Lunch** - Monday 7 December  
**Venue:** Masonic Centre, Peterborough.  
**Contact:** Cliff Grace: 01778 344131  
by 21 November.

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**Thomas Cook Pensioners Association AGM.**

In accordance with the Constitution of the Association, notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting to be held on Monday 7 December 2015 at 11.45am at The Masonic Centre, 127 Ellindon, Peterborough, PE3 8RD. All members of the Association are welcome to attend. The meeting will consider approval of the revised Constitution, election of Officers, approval of the accounts and presentation of the Officers reports as appropriate. The Eastern Region Christmas lunch will be held directly afterwards. If you wish to attend the AGM, you may also join the lunch on payment of the appropriate charge - please contact Cliff Grace on 01778 344131 before 21st November for further information.

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**From the Editor**


This will be the third edition to be published online. Type this address into your preferred browser, www.thomascookpensioners.co.uk to view our website.

Many of you turn first to the “In Memoriam” page of the Bulletin, however the “In Memoriam” section is updated each month on the website so you don’t have to wait six months for information about any former colleagues.

If you currently receive your copy via our website and you change your email address please let the Membership Secretary know as we notify you by email when the Bulletin is available online. If you would like to receive future copies of the Bulletin online please let the Membership Secretary know your email address and you will be advised when the next edition is available.

The next Bulletin - Spring / Summer 2016 - will be published in April 2016 (closing date for copy 31 March 2016).

You will have seen a last word from our current Chairman - John Lumley. On behalf of the Editorial team I am sure you will join with me in thanking John for his excellent work for the Association and we wish him well for the future.

We are therefore inviting nominations for the position of Chairman. The duties are not onerous. Basically the role involves chairing the AGM at the Christmas Lunch and attending a few meetings when the Bulletin is planned, although this part is optional. For details of how to apply see page 3.

Martin Adkins
North Sea Oil is 50 years old!

Well actually technically the oil is a lot older than that but the UK started extracting it from the North Sea 50 years ago this year. North Sea oil and gas reserves may be running dry, but for the last 50 years they have been making an enormous contribution to our economy. It was on 21 September 1965 that BP announced that its barge, Sea Gem, had made the first successful test drill, forty miles off the Yorkshire coast. Sea Gem was one of a number of competing test rigs prospecting the North Sea at the time. Geologists had been certain for quite some years that the reserves were there and in mind boggling quantities. Sea Gem was improvised using a French-built work barge, eight specially made telescopic legs and a drilling rig. Sea Gem started work in June 1965.

It was only in 1964, when Britain joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), that the North Sea was considered worth a really serious look because EFTA membership meant the end of tax incentives that had propped up Britain’s quite large onshore oil industry. Anglo-Iranian Oil (which eventually became part of BP) had been operating several wells in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire since the 1930’s. Their output had been invaluable during World War II and when Iran nationalised its oil wells between 1951 and 1953 and in 1964 they hit peak production.

Sea Gem’s well was actually the fourth to have been test drilled in British waters. The first had been for an American company in December 1964 and two more followed in Spring and Summer 1965. By September all three had been completed and found only dry wells. When Sea Gem started work, a further four rigs were also drilling but showing no signs of success.

By September, Sea Gem’s drill had bored down to nearly 3,000 metres and it was starting to look as though this was yet another dry hole. When its instruments began to indicate the presence of gas, nobody thought it was exciting – small pockets were often found as the drill went deeper. But then the fluid retrieved from the bottom of the well was observed to be frothing and bubbling. Within two days the rig’s crew were certain they had a viable well. The initial announcement was tentative and said that the find was not ‘commercially significant’ but by mid-December the first well was yielding ten million cubic feet of natural gas a day – enough to justify building pipelines to the shore. And the rest (as they say) is history.

There was a sad postscript to the start of the UK’s exploration into oil and gas – on the night of 27 December, while Sea Gem was moving to another test site, two of her legs gave way. The rig collapsed and sank into an icy sea – most of the crew were rescued but 13 men died.

Nominations for the position of Chairman of Thomas Cook Pensioners Association should include a proposer and seconder and be sent by email or post, no later than 23 November 2015, to Eleanor Hardingham, Membership Secretary, 1 Royle Close, Peterborough PE2 7LN, email: tcpensioners@outlook.com.

Although the rest of the committee are prepared to continue in office, nominations are also invited for the positions of Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Secretary, Social Secretary and Bulletin Editor to the above address.
Are you sitting comfortably?

As we get older, we all start to sit down for longer. But is it good for us? Sitting down for hours is the norm for many of us. But there is increasing evidence that too much sitting could significantly shorten your life. In the last decade research has increasingly proved that prolonged sitting is a health risk in itself, regardless of how much or how little exercise we do and can cause irreversible damage.

A study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine in 2008 estimated that for every hour we sit watching TV after the age of 25 (yes 25!), our life expectancy decreases by 21.8 minutes, while a 2012 study in the Lancet estimated that inactivity causes 9% of premature deaths. So why does sitting result in shorter life expectancy?

Recent studies show a 147% increase in the incidence of cardiovascular events (incidents causing heart muscle damage) and a 112% increase in diabetes risk among those spending longest sitting compared to those who sat least. Inactivity is known to increase breast and colon cancer risk too, as well as (unsurprisingly) obesity. Some experts believe that sitting is more dangerous than smoking.

We know that prolonged inactivity results in decreased bone density and evidence now shows it reduces the action of enzymes that maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

So what can we do about it? A moderately active lifestyle which includes housework, walking or gardening is ideal. Take regular active breaks from seated activities (such as reading and watching TV): mop the floor, take a quick walk or do a few minutes walking up and down stairs. If this is beyond you, then you could also consider:

- Standing or walking while on the phone
- Walking outside around the garden (if you have one) – if not, then take a gentle walk to the local shop or park.
- Active sitting – it won’t replace standing or walking but it’s better than nothing. Try:
  - raising your heels up and down,
  - contracting your stomach muscles,
  - raising and lowering your lower leg from knee height or whole leg from hip height,
  - swivelling your chair (if you have a swivel chair) using just your hips,
  - tensing, stretching and bending your arms,
  - rolling your shoulders.

Many local community centres have gentle exercise classes using these techniques – see if you can enrol to do this at your local community centre. So next time you sit down to do something, consider if you can do it standing up, even for part of the time. Bear in mind though, that constant standing isn’t ideal either. Experts recommend aiming for a 50:50 split between sitting and activity.
Firstly, let me declare an interest. I am a member of the U3A. I originally joined because I had been learning Spanish at the local college and the U3A was cheaper!! But I am now in my third year of membership and I am stunned at how many different things you can do with the U3A and the enthusiasm and friendliness of the members. I can’t comment on other local U3As, but in Peterborough, we pay £10pa single membership (or £18 for two people at the same address) and then for my weekly Spanish lesson (in term time only!) we pay for the room at the Community Centre (c£7-8 per term depending on the length of the term) plus £1 a term for the tutor’s printing costs. Our tutor is excellent and puts such a lot into preparation and keeping it interesting. She used to be a teacher!

So if you are thinking of joining – stop thinking and just do it! And now for the official stuff – from the U3A national website: The University of the Third Age (U3A) movement is a unique and exciting organisation which provides, through its local U3As, life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities. Retired and semi-retired people come together and learn together for the sheer joy of discovery! Members share their skills and life experiences. There is no accreditation or validation and there are no assessments or qualifications to be gained.

The U3A movement is supported by its national organisation, the Third Age Trust, run by a National Executive Committee democratically elected from the membership and offers a range of services, to support and advise local U3As, although the local U3As remain operationally independent.

Here are some quotes from the U3A website:

“Belonging to a U3A has taught me that it’s never too late to try something new”
“U3A means I never have any spare time any more”
“U3A gave me a chance to expand my interests and learning”

It consists of local U3As all over the UK, which are charities in their own right and are run entirely by volunteers, drawing upon the knowledge, experience and skills of their own members to organise and provide interest groups in accordance with the wishes of the membership. Between them U3As offer the chance to study over 300 different subjects in such fields as art, languages, music, history, life sciences, philosophy, computing, crafts, photography and walking. A typical U3A has about 250 members but could be as small as 12 and as large as 2000.

Want to know more? National Office is at 19 East Street, Bromley, BR1 1QE
Tel: 020 8466 6139 or complete the Email request on line at: http://www.u3a.org.uk
Lonely? You don’t need to be

As we get older, it’s very easy to be lonely, especially if your partner has passed away and if your family don’t live close by. Also, it can be difficult to get out of the house if you have physical disabilities. A recent survey of older people found that a large proportion of those questioned about their ‘best friend’ said that this was their television. Ageing is not an illness but it can be challenging. However, there are organisations that can help. I’m sure everyone has heard of Esther Rantzen, who launched the successful Childline service. In 2013, after a pilot project, she launched a UK wide expansion of The Silver Line, with help from a grant from the Big Lottery Fund. The Silver Line is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. So you can call them anytime on 0800 470 8090.

Or there is Age UK, the country’s largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. The over 60s is the fastest growing group in society and there are more of us than ever before. Age UK provides services and support at a national as well as a local level to inspire, enable and support older people. Their vision is a world where everyone can love later life. The Age UK network comprises around 170 local Age UKs reaching most of England. The Age UK family also includes Age Cymru, Age NI and Age Scotland as well as Age International.

Each local Age UK branch is a charity in its own right and as a result, not all of them are able to provide the same services as other larger or more prosperous branches. But many of the local Age UKs provide a befriending service, which can offer a regular visit to your home or a telephone call. They won’t do housework, shopping or gardening, deal with money or bills or deal with any personal care, but they will visit or call you on a weekly basis to discuss anything that is worrying you or just for a friendly chat. This service is provided by volunteers but they are carefully screened and trained and any personal information you give the volunteer is treated as confidential.

Some Age UK branches can also provide Friendship Clubs (again run by volunteers) for those who prefer, and are able to, get out of the house. These will be on a weekly or bi-weekly basis and will (typically) take place in community centres, village halls or church halls, although there is one in Peterborough that meets in a pub!

If you want to know more or whether your local Age UK provides these services, then ring the National Age UK Advice line on 0800 169 6565
How to Stay Safe on the Internet

1) Don't use lazy passwords
If your account is hacked, (to break into computers and computer networks), it's often because someone has worked out your password. Never use a password that anyone could guess or work out - a middle name, pet's name or favourite football team. Include capital letters, numbers and punctuation for extra security. So if you're pet is called Hamish, try using the password Ham15h! And never use the same password for different accounts. That will mean when people can get into one of your accounts, they can access everything.

2) Never open email attachments or click on links from strangers
Viruses are often spread via attachments on emails, so if you don't know what an attachment is, do not open it. Never open .EXE attachments. The same is true of links. Even if it looks like a safe link, it may be forwarding to somewhere you weren't expecting.

3) Watch out for email scams
Spoof emails are very common, ranging from Nigerian princes asking for a short-term loan to proper looking companies asking you for personal information. This is called phishing. If you get an email from someone like a bank, eBay or PayPal, saying there is a problem with your account, forward it to the company in question to get confirmation it's from them. Most companies will never ask you to tell them your password. Try searching on Google for similar scams.

4) Even emails from friends can be suspicious
Robert Fox, a journalist for the Evening Standard, told of how his email contacts were all sent an email saying he was stuck in Cyprus after having his passport and wallet stolen and asking for money. Some of his friends did this. All of this was done when a hacker got into his account, changed passwords and locked him out.

5) If you're doing online banking, use all the banks security recommendations
Many banks will recommend adding a piece of software which guards against hackers. Do it. That will give your account maximum protection. For example, HSBC uses a programme called Rapport. Only complete online transactions where the URL starts with 'https' and not just 'http'. The 's' stands for secure. Don't do internet banking on computers that may be infected. Again, remember your bank will never ask for your login details via email, text or phone.

6) If you get hacked, change your password immediately
Often, when you are hacked, a spam email will be sent to all your contacts. If you find out this has happened, change your password to something completely different immediately. Alert the people that may have received a spam email from your account to delete it immediately without opening it.

7) Read the small print
When you're signing up for an account, make sure you look for the box near the bottom, which asks if you want to receive more information. Some require you to tick them to opt-in, some require you to tick them to opt-out, so read it carefully. Only fill in the mandatory boxes, marked with an asterisk *. Some companies will sell your personal data, so make sure you take time to tick/untick the right boxes.

8) Use a firewall, anti-virus programme and anti-spyware programme
You can use Windows' own firewall, or a third-party, such as Avast or McAfee. But make sure you don't use both as they can interfere with each other.
- A firewall will stop unauthorised people hacking on to your computer.
- Anti-virus programmes will guard your computer from viruses which could destroy your computer.
- Anti-spyware will look out for programmes such as keyloggers and trojans which spy on your computer use in an attempt to learn passwords or account details. For further information type this into Google. http://www.ageuk.org.uk/work-and-learning/technology-and-internet/internet-security/staying-safe-online/
Wendy Hawkins, the daughter of the late Douglas Meek was recently having a clear out and kindly passed a copy of the 1969 Cooks Staff Magazine to us. I am sure many of you will remember Douglas. We have re-produced the following about his departure for South Africa.

D. E. Meek takes up his duties late in October as Managing Director of Thos. Cook & Son South Africa (Proprietary) Ltd. He joined Thos. Cook & Son (Bankers) Ltd. in July 1937 and now leaves Head Office to become head of Cooks new South African Company.

Mr. Meek joined Thos. Cook & Son (Bankers) Ltd. from school in July 1937. In July 1940 he entered the Royal Navy as a telegraphist. From December 1940 to June 1941 he saw service in the cruiser H.M.S. Ark Royal. He was commissioned in September 1941 and served in H.M.S. Arethusa from October 1941 to September 1942. He then joined the staff of the Rear Admiral, Alexandria, where he remained until January 1943.

He was appointed Administrative Officer, H.M.S. Nile, Alexandria in January 1943 and served in that capacity until October 1944. From December 1944 to August 1946 he was Administrative Officer at the R.N.V.R. Officers Training Establishment, Hove.

Mr. Meek rejoined Cooks on 14 October, 1946 in the Foreign Exchange Department. On 19 January, 1947 he was appointed assistant to the Company Secretary and was made Assistant Secretary on 1 April, 1951.

He was appointed Company Secretary of Thos. Cook & Son Ltd, and subsidiary companies on 1 January 1954. In 1966 he was appointed Assistant General Manager (Administration). From May 1947 to July 1957 Mr. Meek was also secretary to the Creative Tourist Agents Conference.

Mr. Meek took an active interest in staff matters while at Head Office. One of his particular interests was the establishment of the Family Gathering held each year in October. His work in helping to found this group helped considerably to make the first Gathering a very big success. The committee have expressed their regret that he will be unable to participate in this years Gathering.
Many of you based in Thorpe Wood will remember the Hairdressing salon.

Memories of Kathy Whitaker - Silver Scissors Hair Salon

Grieving for the loss of a long serving colleague would be a difficult process for anyone. For Carole Beeby nee Thomson, not only will she now have to work out how her business will run without her partner but more importantly, how her whole life will need to adjust following the death of someone who became her very dear friend. We've asked her to take a look back at some of their most memorable moments in Silver Scissors.

How did it all start? As an apprentice, Carole was employed by Sandra Jon in a salon based at Thomas Cook in Thorpe Wood, Peterborough in 1979. Along came a more experienced stylist called Carol Beck who later became Carole's partner in the running of the business in the early eighties. But it was the end of the decade, when Kathy took over from Carol, that witnessed the start of the dream team. All it needed was just one other - Kathy's daughter Deborah Weston was called in, initially just to cover Carole's holiday and she never left!

It wasn't long before Kathy showed her true colours; about three months to be precise! Even broken bones couldn't halt her tenacity - returning to work the day after she broke her knee with assistance of crutches and the maintenance man, who carried her up and down the escalator. Maybe that was a good example of where Health and Safety policies really should have been in effect!

Always up for a laugh, fundraising for those less fortunate, the three of them have enjoyed many a charity event over the years including the completion of the Great Eastern Run, raising money for Children in Need by collecting donations dressed as snowmen in boiler suits one year and throwing custard pies at Mike Rawson another.

The trio had a chance to have a change of scenery in 1996 when Thomas Cook put the salon out to tender. Having had links with Peterborough United Football Club's Chris Turner, the move to the premises at London Road gave the ladies more freedom to run their business their way. And it has clearly paid off - Silver Scissors celebrated their 25th (Silver) anniversary on 5th May in 2014.

Sadly, Kathy passed away on the 4th September this year after a short illness. As a mark of respect but also a testament to what the ladies do, the customers have rallied round offering support in many forms: cleaning the salon, shopping, anything that would have helped them in such a difficult time. The funeral service and wake had almost 300 mourners. A significant number of them were the 'friends' she made whilst running Silver Scissors. Carole and Debbie said 'We are so grateful for all the support we have received. Having such fantastic, loyal customers is a true comfort to all of us'. Let's all hope that the many good times and Kathy's spirit will help them get through this difficult time and that they will be celebrating the business for many years to come!

To all that knew Kathy, she lived life to the full, laughed every day, told fantastic stories and made our visits to the salon such a pleasure.

She will be so sorely missed.
HOW IT USED TO BE DONE by Avril Lavender

I have an extremely old booklet that encourages readers to turn their hand to some rather eccentric (by today’s standards) recipes with some very exotic ingredients – for instance:

French Polish was made of dry burnt umber, lamp black and burnt dry sienna and that made walnut stain for wood.

Lacquer for brass contains spirit, annatto, saffron and turmeric as well as seedlac, coarsely pulverised. (See box below)

To make vanishing ink you need powdered nutgalls diluted with nitric acid then add sulphate of iron and chloride of ammonia. For coughs you could make horehound syrup with white horehound and sugar.

A cure for drunkeness requires peppermint water, spirit of nutmeg, magnesia and two and a half grains sulphate of iron. Ten drops on a lump of sugar twice a day is sufficient!

To make Freckle lotion you need 5 grains bichloride of mercury (poison!) mixed with water and glycerine.

For hair restorer you mix Jamaica rum, rose water, sweet oil and one drachm tincture of cantharides and apply three times a week.

Altogether there are 400 recipes for just about everything you could need and all for the grand sum of 3d. Life was obviously quite adventurous in the good old days, probably even pre Thomas Cook. There is no date on the booklet but it was published by Success Publishing Company Limited, 20 Bartlett’s Bldgs., Holborn Circus, London E.C.4

Avril Lavender.

Lac is the scarlet resinous secretion of a number of species of lac insects, of which the most commonly cultivated species is Kerria lacca.

Cultivation begins when a farmer gets a stick (broodlac) that contains eggs ready to hatch and ties it to the tree to be infested. Thousands of lac insects colonize the branches of the host trees and secrete the resinous pigment. The coated branches of the host trees are cut and harvested as sticklac.

The harvested sticklac is crushed and sieved to remove impurities. The sieved material is then repeatedly washed to remove insect parts and other soluble material. The resulting product is known as seedlac. The prefix seed refers to its pellet shape. Seedlac which still contains 3-5% impurities is processed into shellac by heat treatment or solvent extraction.

The leading producer of Lac is Jharkhand, followed by the Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and Maharashtra states of India. Lac production is also found in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, parts of China, and Mexico.
Please remember that we now have no official connection with the Company’s Personnel Department so we need you to tell us of changes of address, etc. Let the Membership Secretary, Eleanor Hardingham, know via email (tcpensioners@outlook.com), or write to address on page 3, so that our records can be kept fully up to date.

If someone you know is in receipt of a Thomas Cook pension and passes away, advise the Pension Administrators, Towers Watson - address below.

Thomas Cook Pension Trust Limited  
Pensions Administration  
PO Box 545  
Redhill  
Surrey  
RH1 1YX

Tel: 01737 788111

You do NOT need to notify the Thomas Cook Pensioners Association as Towers Watson, Administrators of the scheme will advise us officially.

“More Howlers from The Book”

Back in the 1980’s someone in the Thomas Cook Marketing team started a book of howlers that people came out with. When they left the company ‘The Book’ was left in the capable hands of Philip Odell who continued the good work. When Philip also left the company a few years ago, ‘The Book’ was left in the Commercial team but no one took responsibility for it and it disappeared. A few months ago ‘The Book’ was found in a cupboard and was given to me so I thought I would share some of the best bits on a regular basis in the Bulletin. Linda Simms.

Has Eric Reich sanctified the changes? (When talking about the final draft of the Faraway brochure).  
The Mafia just shoot your knee caps - TCH would kill you dead permanently.  
My head’s on the line.  
She waits on those children hand and fist  
When you look at your kids you wonder where they came from  
It’s a harmonica folder what I want, oh no, I mean a cortina folder (meaning a concertina folder!).  
It’s the sheer ambulance of the place.  
He deserves a slap around the finger.

More next time!

Joke!  
Notice in a newsagents window. “Help an unmarried mother, take one of her kittens home”

Did you know?  
The word “Tory” comes from the Irish word for outlaw, bandit or robber. It was applied to Conservatives by the “Whigs” as an insult.

The Bulletin can only be produced with your input, the editorial team desperately needs some new articles, so please start thinking about how you can contribute. If you have any stories or any ideas for improving the Bulletin please let the Editor know. I can be contacted via email in the first instance at: editortcpa@outlook.com

It can be holiday ideas, money saving tips, ways to avoid the many scams being perpetrated these days, but the editor reserves the right to edit articles and information provided where required.
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As the Bulletin is only published twice a year - in April and October the Committee have decided that an “In Memoriam” section will be published monthly, whenever possible, on the website. To access this please use the following link: www.thomascookpensioners.co.uk