Something every woman should keep in mind

Your body is precious.
One of the best ways you can protect is to get the regular exams you need to detect health problems early, when they are much easier to treat. A reminder to all women to have their annual mammogram and pap smear.
Chairman’s Message

Here we are, where did a year go? Our favourite time of year when we are all running around like headless chickens, arranging for the arrival of family and friends whilst preparing get togethers and parties.

We have our Christmas Lunch at the Chatrium on the 6th and our Christmas Coffee on the 11th at Bistrro 33, an exciting free event for our members. We very much look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there, I am sure a good time will be had by one and all.

We would also love to see and hear many of you at our annual carol singing at the BNH Silom on 12th December. An early 9:30 start in the hospital foyer, finished by 11:30 after our hard earned sherry and mince pies! Trust me you do not need the voice an angel, it’s more volume that is needed! I hesitate to say “any scream will do”.

We already have many exciting events lined up for early next year which we hope you will support, watch out for save the dates!

It just remains for me to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas, a Happy Healthy New Year and thank you for your continued support.

"It’s a delightful thing to think of perfection; but it’s vastly more amusing to talk of errors and absurdities”

Editor’s Note

Welcome to the December edition of Contact.

As you read this we will no doubt have started the Christmas Festivities, our BWG Christmas Lunch is sold out but there is just enough time to sign up for the Christmas Coffee, see details inside this issue.

Looking forward to 2019 (eek!) there are already dates for your diaries, BWG Golf Day, Newcomers Drinks and the last ever Embassy Drinks in February.

I wish you all lots of fun and happiness over the festive period, and safe travels for those going back to their home countries.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

www.bwgbangkok.org  info@bwgbangkok.org  British Women’s Group Bangkok
The aim of the Group is to enable its members to meet socially, to welcome its new members and associate members to Bangkok and to establish a programme of social, welfare and cultural activities.

Please note that the deadline for advertisements is the 5th of the month prior to issue. Please contact advertising@bwgbangkok for more information.

PLEASE NOTE : Contact is published as a service to our members to keep them informed of news and events within BWG. The accuracy of other information cannot be guaranteed and is not an endorsement by the group. This also applies to advertisements that are included in Contact in order to cover some of the production costs. Every effort is made to produce Contact in good time to reach members before the first scheduled meeting, but the editor cannot be held responsible for unavoidable delays caused by circumstance beyond their control. It is the members’ own responsibility to know when meetings are scheduled and to contact someone to check if any changes have been made. Members are also asked to bear in mind when booking actives that most venues are not deemed suitable for children over six months of age and to make appropriate child minding arrangements.
# December Diary

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## Weekly/Monthly Activities
You are invited to join these groups, but final approval is at the discretion of individual group leaders

### Monday
Mah-jong - (beginners welcome) (10am - 1pm)

### Tuesday
- **Bridge** - Audrie Sill
- Beginners/Intermediate Golf - (morning) Ann McKinnon
- Golf - (morning) Sheona Jackson
- Bookworms - 1st Tuesday (10am) Jane Upperton
- Scottish Dancing - 1st Tuesday (7:30pm) Karen Burr

### Wednesday
Mah-jong - (beginners welcome) (1pm - 4pm)
Art Group - Bistro 33 Sukhumvit Soi 33 (10am -12:30pm) Melissa Preston
by Martin Kneath

British Women’s Group, Bangkok or now known as the British Whales Group!!

'We are going 'Whale Watching' on Monday!'
'Oh, are you going to Australia then, that’s a long way to go!'
'No, here in Thailand.'
'No, there aren’t any whales in Thailand.'
'Yes there are in the Gulf of Thailand.'
'No there aren’t any whales in Thailand.'
'Yes there are in the Gulf of Thailand.'
'I’ve lived here for over 15 years and I have never heard that there are whales in Thailand.'

And so the conversations continued in the lead up to Monday the 29th October 2018!

As one of the BWG Activities Sue Williams organised a merry band of ‘whalers’ to arrive at the 7Eleven on Sukhumvit 105 at 0600 armed with: Hat, Sunscreen, Towel, Cameras and binoculars, A light sweater, A rain coat, if the weather is looking dicey! But that Swim wear was not required - presumably to stop members of the party diving overboard to ride the whales!

The organisation with which we were travelling are: https://www.wildencounterthailand.com/

All duly arrived before 0600 and we were allocated to one of two minibuses to transport us to Krua Baan Pramong : about 1 ½ hr travel time on the western seaboard. Those travelling in the silver coloured minibus wondered whether or not the driver was trying to impersonate a kangaroo, the lack of skill used in changing gears! The on-board itinerary was from 0830 to 1500 spending the time looking for Bryde’s Whales in the Upper Gulf of Thailand, with lunch and tea served on board.
The sense amongst the group that even if we did not see any whales, it would be a glorious day out - the weather was superb, with only a small swell across the Gulf.

We were given a very good lesson on the Bryde’s Whale we were likely to see and also how this particular species and others developed.

Not widely known, the Gulf of Thailand is indeed home to whales, specifically Bryde’s (pronounced ‘bruda’) Whales. These majestic 15-metre long creatures live in the waters off Samut Songkhram and Petchburi provinces year round, but they flock to the northern gulf to feed on an abundance of anchovies during the rainy season. As Bryde’s Whales are endangered, there are only 50 or so left in the area; however, the chances of spotting them, we were told, are good.

The common Bryde’s Whale (*Balaenoptera brydei*, Olsen, 1913) is a large form that occurs worldwide in warm temperate and tropical waters, *B. brydei* gets its specific and common name from Johan Bryde, Norwegian consul to South Africa, who helped establish the first modern whaling station in the country, while *B. edeni* gets its specific and common names from Sir Ashley Eden, former High Commissioner of Burma (Myanmar). Sittang whale refers to the type locality of the species. In Thailand, locals distinguished Sittang whales different from *B. edeni*, and it is unclear whether Sittang whales were applied for later classified Omura’s whales by locals.

The boat’s accommodation allowed for viewing from the aft and bow decks, covered seating between and a ‘snoozing’ deck above, of which a number of the ‘whalers’ made excellent use!
The Captain steered the boat to an area where it was expected sightings would take place. The lookout stood on the cabin to give him best view for these sightings. Quite a bit of excitement was generated when the first sighting took place - we were given the hours of the clock, in relation to the prow of the boat as ways of knowing where to look (though, as the excitement grew with each sighting, we usually heard, oh look another one over there ......!!), to which the rejoinder was where? by which time the Bryde had dived below the surface!

Gradually, our eyes became accustomed to the range and to the colours of the whales, their environment and their behaviour. There would be a time of the whales circling, which was when corralling the fish ready for the feed took place. During a fairly frenzied movement, the Bryde would shift on to its side and turn rapidly to feed - at which moment suddenly, as if from nowhere, hordes of gulls appeared, presumably to pick up what was left! Bryde’s Whales feed on a wide variety of fish, planktonic crustaceans and cephalopods. Bryde's Whales use several feeding methods, including skimming the surface, lunging, and bubble nets.

As the day progressed, sightings became much more common, our guide naming the mothers and babes, and regaling us with their history and the reasons for their injuries. Between 20 and 30 sightings took place, everybody trying desperately, some more successfully than others, to photograph the proceedings. As the boat left the area, it was followed by gulls circling around, diving into the waters to ‘fish’ for anchovies churned up in the waters.

The overall world population of Bryde’s Whales may include up to 90,000–100,000 of them, with two-thirds inhabiting the Northern Hemisphere; therefore, everybody felt that they had been very privileged indeed to not only have seen the Bryde’s Whale, but also to have seen so many in such a short period of time.

The ‘Whalers, returned exhausted and exhilarated - thanks to Sue Williams for organising such a fantastic day!!
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BWG at the Melbourne Cup
BWG at the Melbourne Cup
BWG Christmas Coffee Morning

Tuesday 11th December
11am - 1:30pm

Bistro 33
Free for members

RSVP : 5th December

coffee@bwgbangkok.org
November Activity ‘Puzzle Room’

by Jane Williams

Eight members of the BWG went to Puzzle Room for our monthly activity. There are several themed rooms with clues which have to be found and solved, and locks which needed to be opened, leading to yet more clues with the aim of escaping the room within one hour.

Four ladies decided to do Prison Break, in which they had to escape a WWII prison, four ladies opted for Bank Robbery, during which they had to steal the cash and escape. The staff were very friendly and helpful and gave us some useful tips before we began, along with a walkie-talkie in case we got stuck and needed their help (which we did!).

It was interesting and great fun to be working as a team, with everyone pulling together to find and solve the clues, and also a little tense as the clock counted down. Team Prison Break didn’t quite make it out in time, and their experience ended with flashing lights, sirens and barking dogs as their escape attempt was foiled by the guards. Team Bank Robbery were more successful, escaping with the loot with 3 minutes to spare. Well done Bank Robbers!

Everyone enjoyed the experience and several ladies said they’d be keen to return at some point and do another of the rooms. Thanks to the activities team for organising something a bit different in Bangkok, it was a great success!
BWG GOLF DAY

SATURDAY 26TH JANUARY 2019 @ THANA CITY COUNTRY CLUB

Tee off from 12pm onwards
4-Ball Scramble

5,500 THB per player

Includes: Green Fee, Cart, Caddy Fee and evening buffet dinner with free flow wine & beer from 6.30pm - 9.30pm
(Excludes: Caddy Tip & on-course drinks)

Non-Players are invited to join the evening event which will commence at 6.30pm for 1,500 THB

We are limited to 72 players, If you would like to join us please email: specialevents@bwgbangkok.org
Thanks for BWG Poppy fundraising

There's a new generation of veterans that need your support

Your Royal British Legion poppy helps us support thousands of modern veterans, Service men, women and their families.

rbl.org.uk/remember

Thank you for supporting the Poppy Appeal

Together we raised £72,273 (3,050 Barns)
SAVE THE DATE FOR THE BWG

EMBASSY DRINKS

Tuesday 5th February 2019
6pm - 8.30pm

Further details to follow soon
Our Very Own Iron Man!

by Clare Nevin

Sally Dicken has been a BWG member for over 3 years, she is married with 2 sons. On Sunday 17th November in Langkawi, Malaysia, Sally became an Ironman finisher, which is an incredible achievement.

What is Ironman?

An Ironman is the hardest one-day endurance race in the entire world, covering a staggering 140 miles from start to finish. Athletes begin with a 2.4 mile swim – with a quick transition, you jump onto your bike and get pedalling on the 112 mile cycle segment, and then finish the day (hopefully!) by progressing onto 'the run'. which is actually a marathon – 26.2 miles of running after you’ve already covered well over 100 miles.

How long did you train for and did you follow a set plan?

I have been training all year for this race. I have a good friend from when we lived in Switzerland who is a certified triathlon and Ironman coach and she provided me with online training plans. Training generally ranged from about 8-14 hours per week.

Did you go on a special diet?

I didn’t really go on a special diet – just generally tried to eat healthily. I did however have to plan what and when I ate - especially when doing longer cycle or run sessions. I seemed to be constantly hungry - always thinking about the next meal!

How long did you give up wine for?

I didn’t give up alcohol altogether but definitely cut down. I did most of my training first thing in the morning and having a few glasses the night before did not go well with getting up at 4.30am for a long cycle ride! I certainly enjoyed my first beer after the race!

What time did you start the race and finish?

I started the race at around 8.00am and finished at 10.30pm.
Our Very Own Iron Man!

by Clare Nevin

Which part of the race was the hardest?

Definitely the run. I knew it was going to be tough but just not prepared for how tough! Apart from having tired legs a lot of the route was on empty roads around the airport with nothing to see and no supporters. It was even worse after it went dark!

How do you go to the toilet during the race?

It was easy during the swim :-) I did think about going on the bike but there always seemed to be someone already waiting and I didn’t want to stop for too long. I managed to hold out until transition 2 (changing from bike to run) by which time I was desperate so it was a quick hobble to the portaloo before I could even get my running shoes on!

What did you eat and drink during the race?

On the bike I ate marmite sandwiches, malt loaf, salty pretzels, nakd bars and energy gels plus sports drinks and water. On the run it was mainly energy gels plus some watermelon which was so refreshing. I drank water, coke and isotonic drink. At the finish line there was spaghetti bolognese - it has never tasted so good!!

Will you do it again?

For the second half of the bike and the whole of the run I swore that I would NEVER do it again but it’s amazing how quickly you change your mind - a bit like childbirth!! It was so inspiring at the awards dinner seeing women older than me winning their age group that I do think that I would do it again but definitely not next year!

Next challenge? Not sure - am having a few weeks off training over Christmas and New Year and will then decide what’s next!

Will you get the famous Ironman tattoo? A lot of people have asked me this! Not sure but if I did it would be very small and discreet.
January Coffee

Please join us for either a brunch or coffee and cake at Jones the Grocer on the ground floor of Emquartier. Jones the Grocer is an Australian based chain of grocery shops with restaurants. Here in Bangkok the emphasis is on the restaurant. There is an extensive menu of brunch items and a great cake selection, as well as a wide range of coffees and teas.

Date: Thursday 17th January

Time: 10am - 12noon

Venue: Jones the Grocer, Emquartier, Phrom Pong

Cost: pay as you go

RSVP: to coffee@bwgbangkok.org by Monday 13th January so that we can give the venue an idea of numbers.

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SUPERB VALUE
IMPECCABLE SERVICE


RAJA’S FASHIONS

DRESS SHARP. LOOK SHARP. FEEL SHARP.
January lunch save the date: 24th January

The January lunch will be held at the ‘Nadimos Lebanese restaurant in Silom, please check the January edition of Contact.
Whenever my cousins come into town (Sharon Skovron from Australia and Anne Bailey from England) they like to get involved with whatever is going on and this November was no exception! One of their favourites is Gift of Happiness with Edward Haworth and this year they had a double dose, with yours truly, of course!

We joined Eddie in Samut Sakorn with Ailsa and Martin Kneath as staff from a Bangkok relocation company were taking part in a team building exercise so had spent the morning entertaining children from local schools and providing them with a special lunch. Eddie then performed for them to the great delight of us all, although the children were slightly hyped up due to copious amounts of fizzy drinks!
The following week we visited a slum community on Sukhumvit Soi 77 (Onnut) to deliver supplies of clothing and household wares where we were joined by Siti Survo. Lunch followed by lots of catching up with each other as we have all been away from Bangkok for a while! All good fun whilst volunteering!

Sharon and Anne also went to Rung Moo community in Klong Toey to join the Milk Run team which is being carried on in Sister Joan’s name (Presentation Slums Mission) and is mainly run by volunteers from ANZWG with the perpetual assistance of the intrepid truck driver - Milos Bang! Babies are weighed and appropriate dry powder milk distributed – lots of baby holding and oohing and cooing goes on!

Sharon had also brought a suitcase full of donations for Gift of Happiness as well as two bags full of knitted squares (thanks to Jean Altshuler) and toiletries for Sister Louise. Charity must be a family gene!

Apart from the above we all attended what was the last Remembrance Sunday service being held at the British Embassy followed by lunch at the British Club. My cousins have been to Bangkok many times but there is always something different and interesting for them to see and do besides seeing their old cousin!
At KIS International School all students can shine. The midsize, caring community allows KIS students to be confident and to be appreciated as an individual, with unique dreams and strengths. The school is a full IB school, offering the International Baccalaureate Programmes for all age groups (IB Primary Years Programme, IB Middle Years Programme and IB Diploma), ensuring an academically rigorous curriculum that not only prepares students to be successful at university, but also teaches important life skills. KIS, it’s all about Knowledge, Inspiration and Spirit.

Check out the students’ videos to learn more about their passion www.kis.ac.th

“With the power of imagination, characters can actually fly off the page”

Jun, Grade 11.
Birthdays in December

1st           Pornvalai Suwannaphet
5th          Amelia Deely
5th          Anita Lane
8th          Linda Belonge
10th        Michele Savage
12th        Sara Martin
12th        Sheena Gibson
18th        Julie Hedge
20th        Joanne Lawson-Smith
21st        Julie Dunda
22nd       Debbie Thompson
23rd        Basia Filzel
28th        Jane Williams
30th        Sally Frisken

Don’t forget to let Phyllis or Tracey (membership@bwgbangkok.org) know if any of your details change, or you leave us, so that they can keep the database and, of course members up to date with the latest information.

If you use Facebook you can join the group : BWG Bangkok Women’s Group

Newcomer’s Coffee Mornings

December      there will be no newcomer’s coffee
January    instead of coffee there will be a social evening on Wednesday 9th January at
‘Indulge Restaurant and Bar’ 403-403/1 Sukhumvit, by Asoke BTS exit 6
February    Wednesday 6th February at Bistro 33, 22 Sukhuvit, Soi, 10am - 12 noon

Please let Tracey (membership@bwgbangkok.org) know if you will be attending.

New Members

Catherine Bowers  - I have been living in Thailand for 23 years and brought up 2 children here. I worked part time as a contributing editor at Thailand Tatler magazine and at the same time had a weekly column in the lifestyle section of the Nation Newspaper. I also ran an online lifestyle publication for 5 years with a Thai partner. Currently I am not doing anything work wise.

Shirley O’Sullivan - Previously lived in Manchester UK from Cork in Ireland. I have spent the last two years in in Bangkok and I am now working in admissions at Shrewsbury International

Joanne Lawson-Smith – Before having a family and supporting my husband’s career move overseas, I was a primary teacher and also worked for OFSTED Early Years Directorate as an inspector. We lived in the US, Germany and Australia before coming to Thailand. I enjoy keeping fit, love outdoor activities and really enjoy cooking and entertaining.
This year two charities have been selected

**Gift of Happiness - Steps with Theera**

Depending on funds raised, we will also make a token donation to a few smaller children’s charities as a treat for Christmas

**THANK YOU**

Your donation will mean so much to those who will benefit

**FAR BETTER TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE**

A gift card and/or donation certificate is available for those who would like to donate in lieu of a Christmas present to those more fortunate to let them know that a less privileged child will benefit on their behalf.