



# The Independence

Thalidomide Society Newsletter, September 2019

---

## News from the Board of Trustees

The Society's chair is Geoff Adams-Spink; our Vice Chair and Line Manager of the Secretary is Kath West. Brian Payne is chair of Finance and Rowland Bareham is chair of Governance. Our other trustees are: Cas Bulmer, Margaret Hogg, Wendy Stubbings, Guy Tweedy and Tom Yendell.

## Thalidomide Society Trustees:



Geoff Adams-Spink



Rowland Bareham



Cas Bulmer



Margaret Hogg



Brian Payne



Wendy Stubbings



Guy Tweedy



Kath West



Tom Yendell

## Thalidomide Society staff and officers:



Ruth Blue

Secretary to the Board of Trustees.



Jenny Tunbridge

Honorary Treasurer

This year the Society has changed its constitutional status from a Company Limited by Guarantee to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). From July 2019, the accounts will be based on a simpler and cheaper system than for a limited company; we will continue to keep October as the year end. The registered charity number stays the same but there will no longer be a company number associated with the Society. A copy of the new CIO Constitution will be provided for every Society member, hopefully in time for the 2020 AGM.

The conversion also included an update to the Society's objects which now appear as below:

**The objects of the Society are for the public benefit:**

**(1) to assist in the relief of persons with impairments attributable to the effects of the drug known as thalidomide and other persons with similar impairments by:**

- **providing such persons, their families and carers with opportunities to meet each other either in person or via social media at events and meetings organised by the Society;**
- **providing support and information to such persons, their families and carers;**

**(2) to advance the education of the public in the subject of the history of thalidomide by collecting, collating, archiving and preserving documents relating to the history of thalidomide and by undertaking or assisting in the undertaking of educational and research projects concerning the effects of thalidomide and the work of the Society and by publishing the useful results of such educational and research projects.**

## **Report on Thalidomide Society AGM and Conference 2019**

This year, the Society's AGM and Conference was held at Hilton St George's Park, Burton on Trent on 6 April.

At the AGM, as well as the usual business of approving the minutes of the last meeting and the accounts, we asked those present to vote on proposed changes to the Society's objects and the conversion to CIO (see above).

At the end of the AGM, there were memorials for Louise Medus-Mansell and Peter Williams. Society member Stephen Simmonds wrote and presented moving tributes for Louise and Peter and there was a two-minute silence. As dedicated members of the Society, their familiar faces at our AGMs will be very much missed.



Louise Medus-Mansell  
23 June 1962 - 7 November 2018



Peter Williams  
25 April 1961 - 15 March 2019

Our afternoon, chaired by Kath West, kicked off with a talk from Liz Newbronner entitled *Adapting not Surrendering – the health of UK thalidomide survivors as they age* based on her extensive PhD research. Graham Kelly discussed the latest findings in the blood pressure project and urged those present to contribute to the study if possible.

After the coffee break the NAC presented a health and wellbeing session, chaired by Simone Illger. Katy Sagoe talked about the Holistic Needs Assessments and what the Thalidomide Trust is learning in terms of the health and wellbeing of all beneficiaries. Susan Brennan made a presentation entitled *Lifestyle matters: a holistic approach to health*. There then followed a series of short presentations under the title *Shared stories – the road to success*. Annie Bates discussed her dramatic weight loss, David Fullerton discussed finding music through OHMI, Sue Gooding described her daily exercise regime, Kath West talked about her diet and there was a surprise video guest – Mat Fraser, who talked

about the importance of exercise whilst displaying some high kicks. Teresa Smith made a presentation about the use of hypnosis for weight loss entitled *Fatnosis*.

Throughout the day the Society had been selling tickets for the raffle and also asking for bids on the items in the silent auction which this year included art works, a mosaic and crochet by Society members. All proceeds went to the charities favoured by Louise and Peter – Woodcraft Folk and the Midlands Air Ambulance respectively.

In the evening we had entertainment from comedian Tanyalee Davis, music and dancing with the assistance of DJ Daddy Cool and fun and games with the Magic Mirror photobooth and casino tables.



## 2020 AGM and Conference – save the date!

The next Society AGM and Conference will be held at Radisson Blu, Stansted Airport on **Saturday 25 April 2020**. Booking forms and full details will be sent out towards the end of December.

**Next year is the first ever joint event with the Thalidomide Trust’s National Advisory Council.** A combined team of Society trustees and NAC members have been sharing ideas and discussing logistics since summer 2018 and have decided on the theme ‘Telling Your Story.’ In the morning, the NAC session will include an interactive run through of the findings of the Holistic Needs Assessment as well as updates from the Trust. The Society will hold its AGM and a presentation on *Thalidomide Stories: an oral history of thalidomide survivors* (see below for a project update).

After lunch we will continue with the theme and invite presentations from members of the thalidomide community who have rarely, if ever, told their story to other thalidomide survivors as well as inviting a guest speaker (to be confirmed). The second half of the afternoon will include workshops featuring Selina Hurley from the Science Museum updating us on the thalidomide element of the new Medicine Galleries, a music workshop from the [OHMI Trust](#) and more!

Throughout the day we are planning on holding an art and craft fair / break out area. If you feel you might be interested in participating in this, please contact Society trustee Wendy Stubbings either directly or via the Society.

In the evening, as well as our traditional three-course meal, we will have entertainment from comedian Laurence Clark, Daddy Cool, last year’s DJ back by popular demand, a portrait photographer and some fun with large games including a giant Scalextric.

The Society and the NAC wish to stress that all parts of the day are open to everyone attending. All beneficiaries who are not Society members are eligible for free membership and so can attend the AGM if they wish. The NAC are happy for non-beneficiaries to attend their morning session. We’re all very keen to make this event inclusive and to bring people together.

# Thalidomide Stories: an oral history of thalidomide survivors

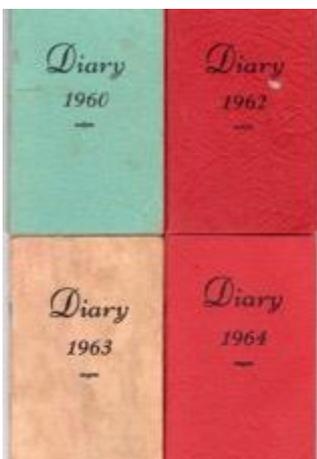
In summer 2018, the Society was awarded almost £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run an oral history project. The project started last October and, after our initial mail out and press release, we received more applications for members to be trained as interviewers than we'd expected. We had to go through a very difficult process of deciding who to train and based our selection on geographic location to try to ensure that we cover effectively as many areas of the UK as possible. We have also received a large number of applications from people wishing to be interviewed and we are working in collaboration with the Thalidomide Trust to make sure that all of our selection criteria are met. The British Library have been advising us on the project with the plan that the finished interviews and transcripts will become part of the British Library sound archive.



The volunteer interviewers were trained in June by Michelle Winslow from the Oral History Society. They are not just trained as interviewers however. They are a fully integrated part of the entire process including deciding on themes and questions as well as working out any ethical issues that the project may come up against.



(Photographs by our project photographer, Annie Bates)



One of the secondary aims of Thalidomide Stories is to collect photographs and items from interviewees to enhance their story.

A fuller presentation of the project with interview clips will be made at the 2020 AGM and NAC joint event.

# Other words from Society members and trustees ...

## The Roehampton Collection – poem by Mat Fraser

When I and all the other Thalidomide children of the South East of England were growing up, it was a late 1960s world, the apex of medical empire building, that had been initiated burning a path from the Sun, under the gaze of the ever watchful all-seeing eye, through the snake entwined pyramid path of progress, offering new post war worlds of medicinal order, only to be brought to a juddering halt by the news: BIRTH DEFECTS CAUSED BY MORNING SICKNESS PILL!



Our phocomelic, that is, short or no limbed appearance  
Was beyond the believable boundaries of the medical mould  
Too disturbingly redesigned,  
Too much realisation of the way we'd been maligned,  
The reality of their arrogant medical experiments,  
Were the defects of our radical detriments  
The safety-safe state drugs became things that could give grief,  
We helped to burst that bubble of belief,  
That everything the BMA did was good,  
(that's the British Medical Association with their Vicious Radical appropriation),

Yeah that everything the BMA did was good,  
That we could trust them though that's something that I never could,  
What they never made mistakes, errors, fuck ups, disasters,  
Because they were Scientists, Lords of the New Church Masters,  
The ones that brought us carcinogenic birth control,  
And anti Biotics that put Superbugs on patrol ...

Back in the day when in the charts was Peter Frampton,  
When psychiatric patients were being kicked down the hallways of Rampton  
Way before the cage fight scene was big in Southampton  
I was a teenage member of the collection in Roehampton

There were a lot of us kids in that 60's selection  
Thalidomatastic customised imperfection  
The Societal guilt, from the shock that they'd built,  
A brave new world clogged with phocomelic silt,  
A by-product of profit; cup filled but can't mop it up  
Spilled the left overs, the limbless dregs in the drain,  
We no leaf clover truths that brought shame,  
Out of court then they claimed, to have admonished their blame  
For their lawyers a game to make profit from pain.  
No doubt there are some who maintain their erections,  
At the vaults that contain The Roehampton collection ...

(for 4 years it was sold but why did they not stop it?  
I think they hid the facts and sold it for the profits)

Let's face it, we the were the first genetically modified beings,  
Well, technically, that's the tetrant scene, not mutant genes,  
As in radically altered but not permanent,  
A drug induced tetration - a freak accident.  
The price for profiteering from the scientists' whims,  
Was lots of little kiddies with small or just no limbs,  
All caused by a drug called Thalidomide,  
That the BMA-persuaded Doctors had prescribed,  
*"The company Distillers wouldn't lie!"* they cried

There were two collections ... the long list of limbs  
Testament to the whims of mechanical mind mops,  
That solved problems in workshops, far away from the  
hurt sobs,  
The heartfelt plea to the bedroom wall, never heard that  
sadly strangled call,  
The frustration of trying, for hours and days lying,  
In prostrated positions, to conform to conditions,  
Of appearance not needed, nature so superceded,  
With no confessions of knowing, that the seeds they were  
sowing  
Had genes that were growing in directions un planned;  
Us, a body of children banned,  
Given clipped wings from the BMA Nation - British Medical  
Association,  
Cutting shark's teeth on us with no admission of guilt,  
No partner-to-the-profit responsibility built,  
Into small deformed handouts of cash,  
Small pawned plasters for such a big gash,  
And they tried to make us look normal ...

Purchased from a German company Grünenthal,  
They marketed the drug as being good for all  
First licensed then prescribed, the business - doctor relation,  
The salesmen for drug companies' procreation,  
Dirty pimps of the products, potions and pills,  
Their promises of miraculously relieving ills,  
Then the sheer arrogance of contesting the bills,  
Not enough the deceipt, now they refuse the receipt?

That it wasn't their fault, just a fact in a vault  
The historic note taking of the cake you been baking,  
And your slices of profit, claiming ignorance while you stuff it,  
Into mouths that need beating, as you had us retreating  
From your top power lawyers doing deals with Distillers  
Defending the indefensible but not billing the killers

So yeah we were the inhumanely modified UHT cream of the crop  
But they got no chop, not told to stop,  
Carried on in the shop, making cash 'til they drop.  
But evidence got circumstantial and it all went wrong,  
When it comes to alarm bell babies we were the ding dong  
Even though there was proof, that this deformed youth,  
Was preventable foresooth -  
*"Friends, scientists, Businessmen, lend me your limbs"...*  
Well of course the profit margin peaked,  
In private the drug Company freaked,  
At our fall down funky new physiques,  
Not off the rack or on the High street,  
But in the fact stats that never were released,  
Which far too flagrantly in their face,  
Brought shame on them - embarrassment, guilt, disgrace,  
That they'd been caught out; our parents were sought out,  
Put spin on their legal ignorance so we were then bought out,  
And forced to settle, by men of fine fettle,  
Templared stealers of our health for the heaviest of metal...

Normal according to the BMA's view of that word.  
Physical visage was all to them, for me, absurd  
If you didn't notice our difference when you passed us in  
the street,  
That was success! Never mind the mutilation to fit the  
false feet  
If you can't see it then it isn't there,  
If they seem normal, then you won't stare,  
And think of blaming, the ones who were maiming,  
Who prevented us from claiming, so abusive and  
enflaming  
Hell if they had had litigation back then,  
The slack men would've been whacked when,  
Evidence was tracked to them; not quite Zen...  
They let it happen, all the facts didn't flap 'em,  
Cos there was dosh to hand over,  
Grünenthal's no leaf clover, had already provided,  
Limbs were sub divided, for their profit multiplied-ed ...

(Posh Brit accent) *"We told you to trust us, now put these  
on,  
never mind that they're uncomfortable, and you feel wrong  
never mind that they inhibit your every move,  
take away your identity, your beautiful groove,  
render you invalid, incapable of everyday things  
We're the orchestrators and we're telling you to sing!"*

..... And so, in the more extreme critiques,  
The most creative reactions of the physiques  
To the onslaught of man meddled interruption,  
Medically arrogant hateful corruption,  
When we manifested body protests which caused such  
ructions,  
Oh this was a set of bods way, way beyond liposuction ...

... Oh no, to squeeze those flagrant design departures into  
the pretense facade of formal normal, first we had to  
endure the front-line fascism, the right of the wrong knives,  
the naked gun of control, the fixtures and fittings of cruelty  
without beauty. I speak of course of the spiritually bereft  
phrase that is ... **corrective surgery.**



If anything represents the evil that our magnificent mainstream men in their flying  
Medic dreams do in our name, it is that they cut and chopped and sliced away at Our  
glorious beauty.  
Our individuality was terminated, though we'd been born from what they'd  
germinated

And as I love my difference, others could have grown to uniquely serve their own Bodies and perhaps the world in outlandishly  
new ways.  
But now they dismembered the club foot to fit the club boot, the extra fingers were surgically cut away to fit the fake arms  
That would only really be put on in for public view, be outgrown in a year,  
Rejected forever in two, but those forgotten fingers could never come back to do  
That personalised swear mime, their own special V sign,  
They'd been eradicated, as flotsam and jetsam they were fated,  
Potential clever new music never created,  
All those Thelonus-esque chords most un satiated,  
Gentle caresses unlike any others,

The passionate differences of Thalidomide lovers,  
 The special loving strokes of future mothers,  
 The missed high hand holding, comforting folding,  
 All that pain for conforming, cheap rejects for pawning,  
 What they were saying was we can just tuck them away,  
 So you won't have to say,  
 You were part of the plan, glorified superman.  
 We were the price paying, for their techno braying...



History shows it was mistaken selection,  
 The limbs lie discarded in dusty rejection,  
 Now put to display in fact resurrection  
 The Science Museum's Roehampton Collection.

## A Father's story – an extract from Ed Freeman's father's diary

I was holding onto the door handle when I said with all the calmness I could muster "I'm praying to God that I won't not collapse, 'What's the matter?" then not wanting to hear the answer. It didn't help much when I saw that the midwife to was at a loss for words. At this point my memory is a bit hazy, but wasn't something like "It's my wife who it." Then "No, it's the baby." "What's the matter with the baby." It hasn't any arms or legs. The nearest I can get to the way I felt that moment is someone taking the pin out of an hand grenade and giving it to you, as a present. Sometime after (I don't know

how long) I asked the midwife if the child was dead. She told me that the baby was a boy though he (the baby) was alive, she had sent for an ambulance. I shall never forget the faces of those two poor women. "My wife" I asked how is she? "She's quite alright" said the midwife. I have never felt alone as I did that moment. Surely it's not me that this thing is happening to, not me, Teddy Freeman.

I must pull myself together what do I do? Where do I start? Down & there & check. My mind is going to accept any moment but I know there is a trouble

amount I have to do. One thing I didn't know at the time was, that my wife never knew anything either. I have never had to break bad news to anyone in my life. I hope never to again.

Mr Freeman said the midwife, the ambulance is here, will you go with the baby so as to give all the necessary particulars at the hospital.

I told her that I would follow the ambulance in my van so as I could return home quickly, as it was too early for the buses.

I left the house & went along to a friend's neighbour, "The" "The" "The" came down and opened the door, at that

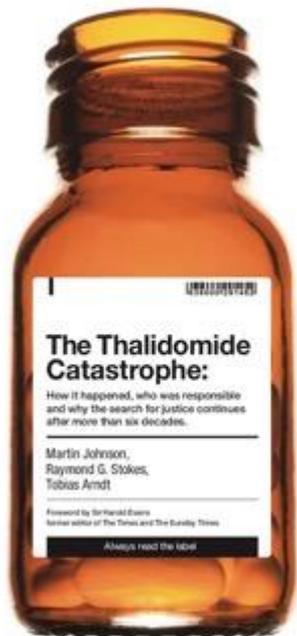
early hour it was strange to see a smiling face saying to you "What's Beatie got, assuming that was the only reason for my being there." It was that moment when I broke. I cannot remember anything else. They must have taken me back home. X X X X

On arriving at the hospital I followed the doctor & ambulance man who was carrying the baby, into the children's ward. I remember then talking and answering questions from the ward sister, & the question that stands out the most was "He is going to be christened now, have you a name for him." "No more, this awful

This extract is taken from the remarkably heartfelt diary of Ted Freeman and recalls the night of his son Ed's birth. A full copy of the diary with transcript, will be available on the Thalidomide Society website from early October.

# The Thalidomide Catastrophe: How it happened, who was responsible and why the search for justice continues after more than six decades

## Book review by Cas Bulmer



'Aftershocks' is a key word in the long-researched and recently published book which documents the story of thalidomide from the origins of the drug in the 1940s and 1950s through Chemie Grünenthal's patent and manufacturing; to never-before published statistics about the sheer numbers of victims and a pertinent world map showing just where it impacted post-World War II.

Thanks to the meticulous research by the team over eight years, we now know more of the truths behind the cover-ups than ever before. This book presents them to us all in one place with unprecedented density of detail. Martin Johnson's professional and personal connections to the British thalidomiders give the book the human touch and also its unique perspective. It never lets the reader shy away from the sheer scale of the physical damage that the drug inflicted – the book opens with a chapter entitled "A Preventable Disaster. How the entire disaster could have been prevented and more than 100,000 babies saved."

Photographs of several prominent members of the British thalidomide community as babies and toddlers illustrate the text. There is a calculation about just how many mothers miscarried or endured stillbirths because of the prescribed medication, advertised as safe during pregnancy. Those children lost before their first birthday because of terrible internal and external damage caused by the drug. By their teens,

about a three-quarters of those born alive in Britain had died. No compensation ever reached any of these victims or their parents, in their tragically foreshortened lives.

One of the many things that I learned from the book, was that there were countries other than the USA who 'denied or significantly restricted' the introduction of drugs containing thalidomide – Turkey; East Germany; France; Austria and Portugal. As we know, there are many survivors of our age in West Germany; Britain; Japan; Canada and Australia; plus those born in the 1980s in Brazil. The book looks at the global catastrophe with a focus on the British survivors' journey.

Reading the whole of this academic book (240 pages of text plus revelatory patent charts at the end) may well prove an 'aftershock' in itself for readers who are themselves thalidomide survivors. There is so much information to process; so many facts and figures to assess and so many tears to be shed for those we have lost. The physical, emotional and psychological pain that we, our parents and attendant medical professionals have endured; the self-interest of and betrayal by 'Big Pharma' and governments in affected countries and the resultant length of time that it has taken for a comprehensive truth-seeking book to be published.

The drip, drip, drip of the truth over more than half a century has only added to our trauma. I believe that cover-ups are an evil in themselves – whether thalidomide; Hillsborough or contaminated blood. Time passes and the opportunity to immediately learn from the catastrophe is gone. Worse, the 'success' of one corporation and/or government in delaying (or denying) a public inquiry and/or not paying full recompense can only encourage others to do the same. The book shows us how the German trial, which was a travesty, seems to have almost acted as a template for later financial 'settlements.' Until survivors know their whole story they cannot truly heal; they will always have a sense of information being withheld by 'The Powers That Be.' Martin Johnson has done much to help us understand what really happened.

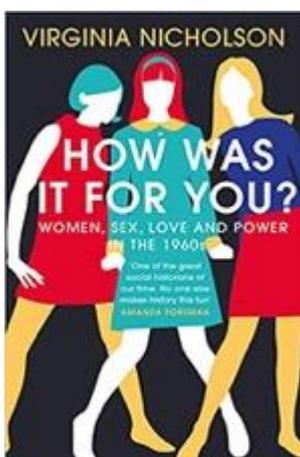
Sir Harold Evans wrote the hard-hitting introduction to this book and crowned the diligent researchers and writer 'The Three Musketeers.' He wisely suggests that, "The nightmare of thalidomide would best be ended by the appointment

of five international jurists charged not with criminal adjudication but with truth.” A Truth and Reconciliation Committee in effect.

*The Thalidomide Catastrophe* is a unique and important book that should be widely read and discussed. What we need now, to stand alongside it for posterity, are as many Oral Histories from surviving parents and thalidomiders themselves as possible. However painful, we must face the pain of our shared past and tell ‘Our Version of Events’ through the Thalidomide Society’s Oral History Project in Britain. Martin Johnson; Raymond G. Stokes and Tobias Arndt have given us what will probably stand as the most thorough exposé of the scandal that survivors have lived with and through in our lifetimes. Thalidomide survivors the world over must now try to find the courage to tell our own stories to ensure that we are never forgotten and so that the ‘aftershocks’ of our truths reverberate long after we are gone.

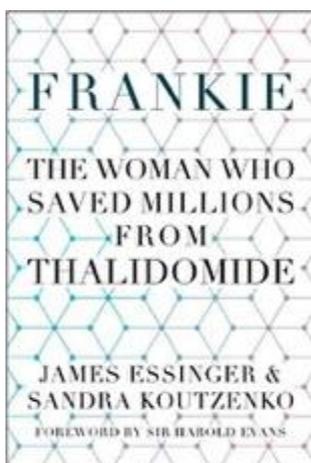
***The Thalidomide Catastrophe: How it happened, who was responsible and why the search for justice continues after more than six decades*** by Martin Johnson; Raymond G. Stokes and Tobias Arndt.  
Published by Onwards and Upwards Publishers, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-78815-629-5

The Society has also assisted in research for the following two books which we thoroughly recommend!



**How Was It For You? Women, Sex, Love and Power in the 1960s.**  
by Virginia Nicholson. Penguin Random House UK, 2019.

This book includes the story and words of Margaret Hogg, now an Honorary Trustee of The Thalidomide Society who has been a key player since the Society’s foundation. Margaret tells of what she and husband Billy went through when David was born in October 1960, damaged by thalidomide. Their story is a cover-up in microcosm as Margaret’s GP destroyed her medical records showing that she had been prescribed cough mixture containing Distaval. The family’s tale is told chronologically and made all the more poignant as a hard truth helping to explode the myth of ‘the Swinging Sixties.’



**Frankie: The Woman who Saved Millions from Thalidomide.** By James Essinger & Sandra Koutzenko. The History Press UK, 2019.

The story of Frances Kelsey (‘Frankie’), which details her life and her heroic stance against the licensing of thalidomide in the USA. As a new medical officer at the Food and Drug Administration, her reluctance to pass the drug and incessant questions of Richardson-Merrell ultimately saved more pregnancies than it is possible to estimate had the drug been widely distributed. Featured throughout is the story of Kevin Donnellon in the UK, in his own words and those of his mother.

# Other news ...

## Thalidomide Stories in Wellcome Collection's Reading Room\*

To coincide with the gathering of thalidomide oral histories, Ruth has been working with the Wellcome Collection to curate photographs and other archive materials in order to 're-write' the way disability is displayed in a museum setting. So far, one board has been designed with photographs and captions written by the donor of the photograph (see below) but we are hoping to expand on this to produce a photograph album with your photographs, described in your words. Ruth will be in touch about this later in the year.

### Thalidomide stories

The story of thalidomide is often told in museums by displaying prosthetic devices like the one above. But these devices don't necessarily represent the lives or experiences of people living with the effects.

Here, five people affected by thalidomide have shared a photograph of themselves and describe, in their own words, the 'things they wished people knew' about living with the effects of thalidomide.

Some thalidomide survivors' autobiographies and other key texts about thalidomide are on the bookshelves to the left.

Thalidomide was prescribed to pregnant women in the UK between 1958 and 1962 to treat a range of conditions from morning sickness to insomnia. It had not been robustly tested, however, and caused damage to the developing fetus – usually in the form of missing or shortened limbs, but it also affected the eyes, ears, face and some internal organs. It is estimated that 10,000 pregnancies in the UK were affected and that there were 2,000 live births. There are currently 460 thalidomide survivors in the UK.

Wellcome Collection would like to thank the five contributors who shared their stories, in collaboration with the Thalidomide Society.



*Clockwise from top left*

**Kath – first Riding for the Disabled holiday**

1974, photographed by her father  
I loved riding. It was a pair of legs that I hadn't got that worked! Two pairs of legs in fact, that went an awful lot quicker, and for once in my life I was higher than everybody else and looking down on them. Instead of having to peer up. And I just absolutely adored it. This was before I had an electric wheelchair and so it was a way of moving around that was just really liberating.

**Fred's hand**

2008, photographed by a friend  
In June 2008, I was in the German city of Cologne and decided to visit the nearby town of Stolberg. It's home to Grünenthal – the epicentre of the Contergan/Thalidomide scandal and I'd never been there before. While standing outside the company's headquarters, I asked my friend and fellow Thalidomide survivor to take this picture. Cause and effect in one frame.

**Hazel with her mum**

1964, unknown photographer  
I was in the garden with my mother. She told me the hospital wanted to remove my feet but she refused to let



them do that because she thought it should be my decision when I was old enough. They removed feet because it made making prosthetics easier and made them easier to wear. I am fifty now and have still got my cute little feet. I use them for so many things and I've never seen any reason to have them removed. You can see how dangerous these lower prosthetics would have been for a very young child to try to stand on just in order to try to look 'normal'.

**Tom with camera**

1981, photographed by a friend  
This camera device was designed for me by the Engineering Department at Brighton University, where I was a student on the

Expressive Arts course. It enabled me to take photographs using my chin and gave me a lot more freedom than using a tripod, which I previously had to do. I used it for twenty years and now use an updated version of the same device.

**Wendy – with her legs of, on holiday**

1980s, photographed by a friend  
I've worn prosthetic legs since I was a little girl. They are a pain (literally) at times but when I was a teenager they were great for hiding my ciggies in so my mum didn't find them and I've always enjoyed using them to play tricks on people. If people are going to stare, then you might as well get some fun out of it!



\*Please note that this is a draft copy and some of the wording in places is not yet 100% accurate.

## Update from Selina Hurley about the Science Museum thalidomide display



The *Medicine and Treatments* gallery, where the story on thalidomide will feature at the Science Museum for the next 25 years, is currently in an exciting and final stage of its development. Objects, including donations from members of the Thalidomide Society will be going into their new homes in the next few weeks, ready for the opening in late Autumn this year. Alongside the display will be a short film from archive footage showing life with the impact of thalidomide and a special thank you to Kath West, Geoff Adams-Spink and to Ruth Blue for their comments in its development. We have also just received the first printed copy of *The Medicine Cabinet* one of the books written by the curators at the Science Museum and published by Carlton in time for the new galleries opening. One of the 114 stories in the book is Ed Freeman's Mini Clubman complete with new photography.

Once the Medicine Galleries are open, there will be a number of talks and tours. Selina would like to thank everyone for their involvement so far and their incredible support for the Medicine Galleries project. She is looking forward to welcoming the Thalidomide Society on a tour once the galleries are open and seeing you all at the AGM in April.

## Lady Hoare archive at Hoare's Bank

Ruth has made some visits to Lady Hoare's archive to research the items relating to thalidomide that are held there. The Society hope to collaborate with the archive to produce a small historical leaflet or pamphlet relating to Lady Hoare's involvement with the Society and Society members in those early days. Ideally we would like to compliment this with archive items from the Society which also tell the story of the early days of the 'Parents' Association' which went on to become the Thalidomide Society. If anybody has early Society documentation or has parents alive who remember or have any letters, photographs, leaflets, **we'd love to hear from you!**

## Srey Hang project update



Last year, members very kindly donated further funds to assist the four-limb deficient young woman from Cambodia, Srey Hang, who is currently at high school. Our support has meant that she is able to return home from school every day in the tuk tuk we purchased for her (rather than having to stay overnight near to the school without proper support), has adapted desks, wheelchairs and, most recently, computer equipment that she is able to use, with some bespoke training sessions. As well as covering her daily care costs, we are also providing her with regular medical check-ups.



Srey Hang is doing extremely well at school and, thanks to our support, is looking forward to going to university once she has completed her current studies. The money donated by Society members is already enough to support her for the rest of her years at high school and we are closely monitoring her progress through MJP Asia and ExCeed in Cambodia.



## Support the Society, play the Lottery!



The Society Lottery has been up and running for four years now and as the number of players increases, so do the chances of winning. Anyone can play – friends, family, other organisations and every time you play you are helping to raise money for the Society.

It is really easy to sign up to play – click on the logo above or go to [www.unitylottery.co.uk](http://www.unitylottery.co.uk) and select Thalidomide Society from the list of charities. If you don't like computers then please contact Ruth for a form to sign up by post.



We are already looking ahead to 2022 - our Diamond Jubilee. Like the 2012 celebration, this will be a major event. We will be looking for money from sponsors and other donors with deep pockets. We're also asking our members to do something very special for us: if you shop online at any of three thousand plus retailers (ASOS, John Lewis, Amazon, etc.) they, not you, will give us money as a percentage of your total spend. All you need to do is click on the logo above or visit <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/thalidomidesociety/>. Amazon has slightly different charitable arrangements - if you regularly buy from Amazon, please visit [smile.amazon.co.uk](http://smile.amazon.co.uk) and then choose the Thalidomide Society as your charity. It will cost you nothing, but it will benefit everyone.

## And last but definitely not least ...



The Society has now been on Twitter for four years – if you are too, please give us a follow and check our feed regularly! @ThalSociety