



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

MINI NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2021

WE'RE BACK IN BUSINESS!

The GB Vets celebrated the relaxation of rules by fielding a team in the London Festival of Squash and a first club match against Carlisle SC reported on in this issue. The Club can now look ahead to its Golf Day on September 13th at Surbiton and the Festival of Squash at the RAC on October 10th. We are very pleased at the

positive response to the tournament email and Geoff Howes has sent entry forms out so please reply by 21st August.

Competitive inter club squash is still a distance away but there are lots of GB Vets fixtures and I do recommend you consider playing in some. You will enjoy the

competition and the social side too. It will also give you a chance to buy kit with our 50% off offer.

Welcome back to squash everybody. May your opponent's mishits occur early in each game and your own nicks on game ball!

Ian Graham Chair GB Vets

NEW KIT TO START YOUR RETURN TO SQUASH – 50% OFF!

Ask yourself these questions:

1. **Do you look good in GB Vets Squash Kit** - (average answers over the last 10 years 100% said-yes)?
2. **Did you train hard during Lockdown** - (average answers over last 12 months- 120% said yes-3% said no and 99% were don't knows-statistics can be unreliable)?

3. **Are you out of Squash Furlough** - (That means you have been back on court - average answers last 21 days 100% thought they had but couldn't remember the result or whether they had played PARS)?
4. **Are you back fully employed as a GB Vets Squash Player** - (future opportunities abound see fixture list)

MEN'S SHORTS



Also available in white

~~Was £19.00~~

NOW £9.50

WOMEN'S SKORTS



~~Was £25.00~~

NOW £12.50

MEN'S POLO SHIRT



Also available in Red/white & Red/black

~~Was £24.00~~

NOW £12.00

WOMEN'S & MEN'S T SHIRT



Also available in Red/white & Red/black

~~Was £19.00~~

NOW £9.50

UNISEX WARM-UP JACKET



~~Was 37.50~~

NOW £18.75

Regardless of your answers just to remind you that if you are playing in a GB Vets Match, we would like you to wear our kit. As a post lockdown incentive all Kit is available for Members at a 50% discount until the end of 2021. Kit as shown above can be ordered from www.iProsports.co.uk Click on the 'Club Zone', scroll down and click on the GB Vets logo.

Browse the range, go to checkout and then follow the instructions! To claim your 50% back please email me on Robert.Smith@sgsmithproperties.co.uk with details of your account name, sort code and account number with a copy of the iProsports Invoice and I will refund the 50% of your order. **Robert Smith, Treasurer Mobile: 07836 218703**

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The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

NIGEL BELLE - One Player, Five Questions Interviewed by Aubrey Waddy

Nigel Belle, our club's Honorary Secretary, claims to be "an enthusiastic rabbit". I pointed out that we can't all be Philip Ayton, or, I should have added, Mandy Akin or Karen Hume or the great Jeremy Lyon, who sadly passed away recently. The evidence from Nigel's playing record is plain: he has so far been selected four times for England in the Masters Home Internationals, twice in the o-70s and twice in the o-75s. He captained the o-75 team in the most recent international weekend. That hardly qualifies him as a rabbit. The other half of the phrase, "enthusiastic", will be well recognised throughout the club.

Within GB Vets, Nigel isn't actually defined by his squash prowess. It's everything else he does. He maintains the GB Vets archive, which goes back to 1963; he is the editor of the comprehensive newsletter; he's one of the creators of both the 40th and 50th anniversary books. To most of us he's half of an iconic GB Vets partnership, the Mr and Mrs Belle partnership.

Jane and Nigel have been married for more than fifty years, and she is as familiar a figure at club and Masters events as Nigel. It's impossible within GB Vets to write separately about them. Jane adds so much behind the scenes, strikingly reserved about her involvement but emphatically another 'non-rabbit'.

GB Vets, with the exercise-induced longevity of its members, has a fine collection of winners' trophies in many age categories. The Burrell, donated by the late Colin Burrell, is one trophy that isn't restricted to a specific age group. It recognises 'serving the club well and enhancing its reputation'. The Burrell trophy was awarded to Nigel way back in 2005 for his many contributions, and it could probably go to him every year. He was pipped however in 2015 when it went to Jane in recognition of everything she does.

The newsletter is a unique strength of GB Vets. Nigel didn't give a straight reply when I asked how long it takes to produce. To quote Jane, "I have to say Nigel does spend hours..." When I asked about Nigel's photography at club events he is diligent about capturing players before and

after matches, and at social gatherings – all he said he was, "not particularly good." A familiar pattern: Jane said, "very good"!

Nigel's squash began on the concrete floors of the courts at Lancing College. This was under the eye of the legendary Sam Jagger, who launched the careers of Mike Westrup, David Jude, David Brazier and Jeremy Lyon. But Nigel's main sports enthusiasms at school were for cricket and more notably soccer, which he continued playing at a good level into his thirties. Nigel's parents had been persuaded to send him to Lancing because soccer rather than rugby was the primary winter sport. Nigel had been outstanding (my word – he is far too modest to use it) at soccer at his prep school. Prompted by Jane he explains that he was naturally two-footed, always the penalty taker – amazingly, with either foot – and far from being passive and defensive from his left back position, he revelled in going forward, beating opponents and putting in crosses from the left wing.

A legacy of Nigel's football days at Lancing is his first-name acquaintance with the current President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, "Billy" to his soccer team mates back then. Mr Akufo-Addo returned to the school a couple of years ago, when he was presented at a big reception

with a copy of the team photograph from the early 1960s. He was still Billy to his team mates but "Mr President" to everyone else.

Nigel and Jane met at a West End advertising agency. There, in addition to their no doubt significant work input, they breached stifling 1960s etiquette by, I'm seeking a word, by consorting. To avoid the disapproving eye of one of the directors, who apparently stopped speaking to Jane altogether after what was regarded as her truly biblical transgression, they used to foregather in a café in Bond Street appropriately called 'Mr Love'.

Jane's early inclination had been to work in the field of heraldry, which perhaps accounts for the wonderful range of charms on the necklace she often wears. It would be interesting to see the shield she might have designed for the prudish director in the West End office. Perhaps there's a heraldic emblem for a fossil?

You'd be hard pressed to guess the business that occupied the main part of Nigel's career. When he tired of advertising he accepted an invitation to join Jane's father in his business, which provided a service maintaining supermarket trolleys. In due course Nigel took over the company and successfully ran it till 2009 when he retired.

Nigel returned to squash from soccer at the age of thirty five. At the invitation of a friend he joined the South Kensington club, and then moved to Bromley Town, a hotbed for GB Vets recruitment. He went on to Limpsfield when Bromley Town withered to a single box league, down from its peak of fifteen, and didn't provide enough competition. With his Kent base Nigel has played regular intercounties Masters squash since then, from the o-40s onwards, including captaining the county o-65 team.

Since joining GB Vets at the instigation of John Woodliffe, Nigel, with Jane, has been involved in most of the club's activities. The club's health is a reflection of the time invested by the Belles and the other central figures. There isn't space for all the stories, but you don't have to delve far into GB Vets' past, nor look far into its future, to find the names of Jane and Nigel Belle.



Nigel Belle

1. How many squash tours have you and Jane been involved in?

"We reckon eleven," is the response to this question. That doesn't include the six World Masters and four European Masters championships Nigel has entered. The tour destinations comprise Santander, Rome, Antibes, York and St Francis Bay in the Western Cape, the home of one of the most distinguished of GB Vets, the late Sir Michael Edwardes. Sir Michael was a great exponent of doubles, and he was central in defining the dimensions of the doubles court. There were two of these at his club!

2. What achievement linked to squash are you most proud of?

In 2013 Brian Brock and Adrian Wright started telling Nigel that he was accumulating enough points in the regional Masters tournaments to gain selection for the England o-70s team. Nigel had never until then considered

that he could be involved in the Home Internationals. Playing for England is hard to trump, but his proudest achievement is his nomination, in 2018, as captain of the England o-75 team, the pinnacle of his squash career. Captain of England, not bad for a rabbit.

3. What was your hardest or most memorable match?

Nigel has bittersweet memories of his hardest match. In the 2018 tournament, in Galway, he as England captain, and Vinnie Taylor representing Scotland, played the final match. The result would determine the overall winner. Nigel and Vinnie always have close games. This one fluctuated as only squash can, Sisyphus striving all the way up to the summit, ten all in the fifth game. Nigel had two match points. Vinnie had four. Sadly he prevailed on the last of these, 16-14, to take the championship for Scotland. Nigel was devastated, but spare a thought too for Jane, who apparently isn't a calm supporter at the best of times!



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4. *If you had to choose, squash or soccer?*

Nigel doesn't give a direct answer to the squash or soccer choice, but it's not credible that he would have turned down, at a precocious age, the opportunity to represent Lancing in its major winter sport. Again, he is too modest to put it like this, but in a single mazy dribbling run down the left wing he could clearly have left all of Messrs Lyon, Westrup, Jude and Brazier trailing in his wake if they'd lined up to tackle him!

Fifth question, chosen by Nigel:

5. *What other highlights have there been during your time with the GB Vets Club?*

Nigel cites the two anniversary books as highlights of his time with GB Vets. Production of each took a whole year, and involved a rota of monthly meetings at the houses of the Woodliffes, the Hendrys, the Kinders and of course the Belles. Remarkably, with sales each time of about three hundred copies, and some financial support, neither book needed any funding from the club. The newsletter is another source of pride. At a time when members aren't able to get together on and off court, the newsletter is one of the ways the cohesion of GB Vets is sustained.

2021 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

If you haven't already entered this year's tournament do so
NOW!

Final date for entry is 21st August

Early rounds will be played from beginning of September with the finals – semis and finals – being played at Colets, Thames Ditton over the weekend 27/28 November 2021.

FESTIVAL OF SQUASH

This excellent, important event in the GB Vets calendar, which was postponed last year, is now due to take place at the RAC Woodcote Park, Epsom on Sunday 10th October 2021.

3 singles players and 3 doubles pairs compete against the Army, RAC and Escorts for the coveted Festival trophy.

If you wish to be considered for the GB Vets team please contact our Chairman Ian Graham: ipg49@btinternet.com

FRIENDLY MATCHES

Thankfully, after over a year, these are now back on the menu. A number of matches have and are being planned and a list will be published in the next Newsletter and be posted on our website.

If you fancy playing in any of the matches please don't wait to be asked, contact the Match Manager.

NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

This will be available very shortly

If you wish to receive a copy please contact the Hon. Secretary, Nigel Belle belles@waitrose.com 07973 658120

MEMBER INFO

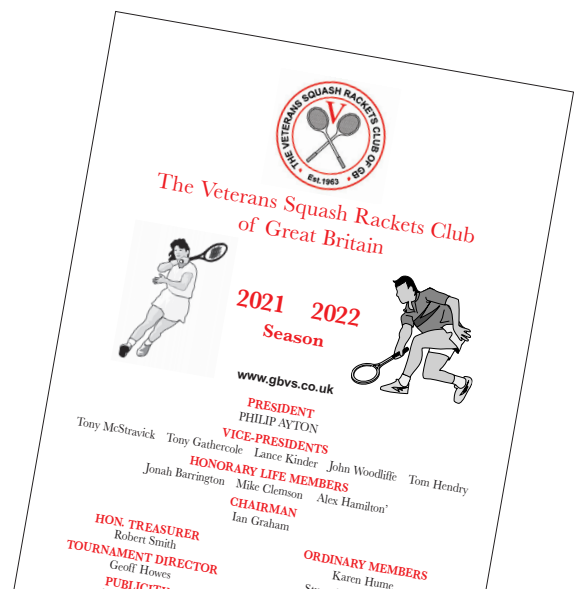
Don't forget you can access all members details via our website:

www.gbvs.co.uk

Login: **GBVETSSQUASH**

Password: **RACKET7288**

ALL UPPER CASE!





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MATCH REPORT LONDON SQUASH FESTIVAL

Bexley Tennis, Squash & Racketball Club, 3/4 July 2021

When he is not helping the next generation of world beating squash players such as Gina Kennedy, Ben Ford organises many events to support squash in the South-East from his base at Bexley Lawn Tennis, Squash and Racketball Club. Having successfully run the PSA Challenger Bexley Open at the end of June, Ben moved on to this year's staging of the extremely popular London Squash Festival over the weekend of 3rd/4th July. This event is run for teams, split into divisions with two divisions at each level. Teams play round robin matches on Saturday and Sunday to determine their division positions and then have a final against the team with the equivalent position in the other division at their level. Each player gets a fixed 30 minutes on court with their opponent and play does not finish with the first to win three games so player results can be anything from 1-1 to 8-0 or beyond! Finally, each team must have at least one lady in the squad.

The GB Vets team, consisting of **Jeremy Krzystyniak, Dan Sweeney, Dean Newberry, Mandy Akin** and **Nick Sheppard** were confident of doing well in Division 2 however the first surprise of the weekend was finding we had been placed among the young guns in Division 1! Our opponents would be teams from Thanet Squash Club, Bexley LTSC and the RAF.

First up were Thanet on Saturday morning. For those readers who pay attention to Squashlevels, our number one, Jeremy, is a masters England international with an extremely respectable Squashlevels rating. Surprise number two, and a worrying one, was to discover that the entire Thanet team were not only significantly younger than any of the Vets but also all rated significantly higher than Jeremy! Nevertheless the Vets played their hearts out on the extremely hot Bexley courts, going down valiantly to a 4-1 loss with the solitary win coming from one of the Thanet players not turning up.

Moving on to the afternoon, rain might have cooled the temperature outside but the courts were still unfeasibly hot for the Vets match

with a Bexley team led by Bradley Masters, currently ranked around 600 in the world and a fine opponent to test Jeremy's fitness. Again, the Vets played to their limits and the matches were much closer than the morning fare against Thanet, however the heat and the fatigue of the earlier exertions proved too big a hurdle to overcome and the Vets fell to a 5-0 loss.

Sunday dawned, bringing with it the final round robin match against an RAF team led by the redoubtable Spencer Beresford accompanied by some young and extremely fit colleagues. The matches were again closely contested with Jeremy and Dan both extremely unlucky to be edged out. On another day each result could have gone the other way. Dean registered a solid win at three to keep the Vets in the match. Down the order Nick and Mandy swapped at four and five as a precautionary measure. The RAF number four was solidly built - more of a Nick than a Mandy - and as the RAF player had had a somewhat bumpy match against another teams lady on the Saturday it was thought prudent to change and avoid having to peel Mandy off the wall! Unfortunately youth and fitness made too much of a difference and Nick lost however Mandy picked up a good win at five against the RAF lady leaving a final result 3-2 to the RAF.

So, the playoff match for 7th and 8th beckoned

and the opposition would be Bromley. By this stage the exertions of the weekend were beginning to tell and Bromley announced they were down to three able players, asking if they could borrow the services of Dan, who is a member there, in order to make a four string match. The transfer having been agreed, the contest began and - surprise number three! - Jeremy walked on court for a 30 minute match to be confronted with Bradley Masters brother Josh, currently ranked 85 in the world. Jeremy stuck to his task impeccably in the face of the tall PSA player controlling the T but there was just too big a gulf in age and world ranking to overcome! Meanwhile, Dean lost another athletic match at two, bringing on the number three match between Dan and Mandy. At the end of a great weekend of squash, this was a hugely enjoyable match to watch with Mandy's accurate length hitting edging the result over Dan's deceptively languid movement and anticipation. Bromley finally ran out of players to give a walkover at four and a tied result at 2-2. Technically there should have been a countback of games won but as no-one had the energy to read back the scoresheets a tie it remained.

Big thanks have to go to Ben Ford for successfully running the festival in the face of the restrictions that have affected us for so long.

More thanks go to the Vets team - Jeremy, Dan, Dean and Mandy - for turning out to play for our club in a new setting. Mentions should also go to GB Vets Duane Harrison, who had to drop out through injury just before the festival, and Marcia Brittain, who signed up for the Vets but was poached by Ben to another team who needed a lady player. Roll on 2022 and (hopefully) a spot in division two!

If any members are aware of other events which might be suitable to enter with teams under the banner of the GB Vets, please contact the Secretary, Nigel Belle belles@waitrose.com or the Match Secretary, Nick Sheppard jnjshepp.home@gmail.com
Nick Sheppard, Match Manager



GB VETS TEAM

Dan Sweeney, Dean Newberry, Mandy Akin,
Jeremy Krzystyniak, Nick Sheppard

HOW TO PLAN A HOLIDAY...

My husband purchased a world map, gave me a dart and said 'throw this and wherever it lands I'm taking you for a holiday when this pandemic is over'.

Turns out we're spending two weeks behind the fridge.





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MATCH REPORT CARLISLE

17th July 2021

A hot and sunny day in Carlisle was the venue for our first excursion into competitive squash for nearly 18 months. A team of seven, reduced by two due to last minute call offs contested a keenly fought but very friendly series of matches.

First up was **Tommy Elves** who played a tactical game against a much younger opponent taking the first rubber 3-1. Tommy showing all his experience and guile in getting the Vets a well deserved lead.

Polly Woodward and **Ali Goy** extended the Vets lead both playing well against their respective opponents. Polly coming from a game down against Kath Gray. Ali did the business against a younger and fitter player winning 3-2. Two great results for the girls.

Terry Belshaw was up next against Dave 'scratch' Gray losing 3-1 in a drop fest.

The match of the day pitted **Ian Bradburn** against Damien Whelan in what proved to be a pivotal contest. In an entertaining match which thrilled the large Carlisle crowd Daimo clinched the match 13-11 in the fifth. Braddie playing as well as he has for many a year. The boy is back !!

Allen Barwise then played his friend of over 40 years Dave Box, another close five setter with Boxy coming out on top 11-7, skill and trickery out doing the determination and guts of Barwise on this occasion.

With the match poised at 3-3 **Neil Harrison**

took on local No1 Tony Hetherington, again this match could have gone either way, Neil continually confused Tony with his disguised backhand drive but the younger man eventually got on top winning 11-6 in the fifth.

A great day was had by all and special thanks has to go to Ronnie Bell and Carlisle SC for hosting the event and making our return to competitive squash such a memorable one.

Allen Barwise, Match Manager



GB VETS TEAM

**Neil Harrison, Allen Barwise, Polly Woodward, Terry Belshaw,
Alison Goy, Ian Bradburn, Tommy Elves**

PETER LEARY – his life so far!

His long sporting career started with Rugby Fives then moved on to squash, tennis and golf. Highlights:



Peter Leary

- Breaking his dad's top of the range wooden Maxply the first time he ever played squash.
- Playing squash for Edinburgh University (captained by Peter Wilson)
- Moved to Hertfordshire for first job and having to be a court cleaning member to get into Harpenden Squash Club due to a huge waiting list!
- Poached by Terry Mabbitt to play for many years for Bedfordshire then later for Hertfordshire.
- Playing for England Vets in the Home Internationals.
- Played 2 tours of South Africa with VCGB.
- World O60's Masters in Cologne.
- Canadian Masters in Vancouver 1996.

Tony Swift was coach at the Club where they played and he was not allowed on court until he had changed his blue shorts to white!

In 2018, now retired, moved to Cheshire and joined Prestbury Squash Club. After one season his right shoulder became so bad with Osteoarthritis that it threatened his golfing activities so shoulder surgery loomed. He decided instead to switch to left handed squash which, pre-Covid, he could play well enough for a run around! His new house has a patio virtually the same size as a squash court so whilst the courts are closed he tries to keep fit by doing shuttle runs (currently a pyramid of 6)

“So, greetings to all those who know me, and I hope you are surviving Covid and will be back playing soon.”



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KEITH WHITE – Profile

With grateful thanks to Ian McKenzie of the Squash Player Magazine

Keith, who has been a member of the GB Vets since 1985, is the co-owner of the prestigious West Country jewellery business Michael Spiers. Having been Managing Director for over 40 years is now Chairman. He has passionately played and promoted squash for over 70 years.

He won the British Junior U16 open in 1956 and 1958 and the Evans Cup (the U16 Public Schools Championship) while he was at Brighton College.

He competed in all the age groups, representing Middlesex and then Devon and

helped Devon to the National Inter County title in 1988.

He was awarded an MBE in 2011 for his contribution to squash in the South West for over 50 years.

In 2010 he presented 'The Keith White Trophy' for the Ladies O50 Singles Champion for our annual tournament.

Thank you Keith for all you have done for squash and the GB Vets over the years.

The Squash Player magazine is offering a free T shirt if you take out a print subscription..now.



Keith White

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| ESM Regional – North | Pontefract | 1-3 October 2021 |
| Festival of Squash | RAC Epsom | 10 October 2021 |
| ESM Regional – Midlands | Edgbaston Priory | 12-14 Nov 2021 |
| GB Vets Finals Weekend | Colets Thames Ditton | 27-28 Nov 2021 |
| ESM British Open | Colets Thames Ditton | 8-12 December 2021 |
| ESM Regional – East | Ipswich Sports Club | 14-16 January 2022 |
| ESM National Championships | TBA | 9-13 Feb 2022 TBC |
| European Masters | Edinburgh | 22-25 June 2022 |
| World Masters | Wroclaw, Poland | 21-27 August 2022 |

GB VETS GOLF SURBITON

Monday 13th September 2021.

Full cost is £73 which includes bacon rolls and coffee before your round, a 2 course meal afterwards and prizes. Contact: Geoff Howes 07836 335494 NOW if interested.

WINDERMERE

Monday 9th May 2022.

Approx. cost £60. Interested? Contact:
allenbarwise@hotmail.co.uk or 07974 352013

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We are very happy to announce 2 new Area Representatives who have joined our Committee:

Andy Murray - Midlands

Allen Barwise - North

They now join Ian Ross - Scotland

Lynne Davies - Wales

Our sincere thanks to Mike Clemson (North) and Rachel Woolford (Midlands) for all the hard work they have done for the GB Vets in the past.



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TOUR TO SPAIN?

Fancy a tour to Santiago de Compostela, Spain from 18th to 22nd November 2021? Numbers are limited to 10 players and will of course be Covid-19 dependent and protocols decreed by respective governments at the time.

If you are interested please contact: mobile: 07974 352013 or allenbarwise@hotmail.co.uk

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following new members who have joined since the last Newsletter:

James Etheridge - Holbrook
Mick Broomhall - Stoke-on-Trent

'LOST' MEMBERS

Surely someone must know the whereabouts of a 'lost' member below? If so please let the Hon. Sec. know.

Alf Barker Tim Higginson
Geoffrey Hickson Robert McIntosh
Aubrey Smith David Taylor

TONY STANLEY-JONES

Sadly Tony passed away on February 13th this year aged just 66.

A member since 2016 a very good friend and supporter of Paul Reader he will be sadly missed by his wife Debbie, family and his many friends he made along the way.



Tony Stanley-Jones

SHEILA MACINTOSH

Sheila tells me that lockdown has not been bad for her as she doesn't travel far afield and she is very lucky in having Alistair near to help her. She watches more television than she should – travel, nature, documentaries and sport, mainly Tennis (but hates the grunting!), Athletics and Rugby Union. Recently, during lockdown, she has taken the opportunity of sorting out old family papers. Here she came across a letter from Ken Fisk (then Treasurer of the GB Vets) dated 1st May 1983 welcoming her as the second lady member of the Club! NB Ed.

I'm Very Well, Thank You

There is nothing the matter with me
I'm as healthy as I can be
I have arthritis in both knees
And when I talk - I talk with a wheeze
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

Arch supports I have for my feet
Or I wouldn't be able to be to be out on the street
Sleep is denied me night after night
But every morning I find I'm all right
My memories failing, my heads in a spin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

My moral is this, as my tale I unfold
That for you and me, who are getting old
Its better to say, "I'm fine" with a grin
Than to let folks know the shape we're in.
How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well, "my get-up and go" has got up and went
But I really don't mind, when I think with a grin
Of all the grand places my "get up" has been.

Old age is golden, I heard it said
But sometimes I wonder, as I get into bed
With my ears in a drawer, my teeth in a cup
My eyes on a table, until I get up
As sleep overtakes me, I say to myself
Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf?

When I was young my slippers were red
I could kick my heels right over my head.
When I was older my slippers were blue
But still I could dance the whole night through.
Now I am old my slippers are black
I walk to the store and puff my way back.
I get up in the morning and dust off my wits
And pick up the paper to read the obits!
If my name is still missing
I know I'm not dead.
And so I have break fast
And get back to bed.

Amen

STAY FIT, SAFE, HEALTHY AND HAPPY!