

North Wales Stroke Group Bulletin

Summer 2016

The sun shone on us in Llandudno... twice!

Firstly back in May, two intrepid fundraisers and a faithful dog set out from Llandudno to cycle all the way to Cardiff to raise money for the Stroke Association. The two riders, Ruth Allen and Caroline Roberts organised and took part in the event called "The Ride for Bob Allen" in honour of Ruth's husband who had a debilitating stroke in 2011.

The two friends, who 34 years ago were founder members of cycling club Brecon Wheelers, considered riding the UK end to end and coast to coast before deciding that North Wales to South Wales in two

and half days would do just perfectly. With Mike Roberts as back up and support the two set off early on a perfect sunny Saturday morning.



Never seen a dog ride a bike before?

Well no, us neither, but



faithful and aged Russell wasn't to be left behind when there was an adventure afoot (or perhaps, a-paw, sorry!) so he hitched a ride.

Of course these things don't happen without support, so it needed this lot to put up the banners and make sure all went well.



Which of course, with such energy and commitment, it did and when we last heard, everyone had arrived safely and over £3,500 had been raised, which is just fabulous! Thank you to you all.

Secondly on a breezy but dry and sunny Sunday in July, the Step Out for Stroke event, the only one held in North Wales took place, again in Llandudno.

Astonishingly there were 59 registered walkers which made our event not only the third largest Step Out for Stroke event in Wales, but the 17th largest in the whole of the UK.



The brilliant Batale Band from Bangor had everyone swaying to their infectious rhythms and that was before Sian started her essential warm up session.



Then after the Deputy Mayor's kind and supportive opening remarks, he started the walk in traditional fashion with Arthur Millington's New Steps Life after Stroke Group to the fore.



As we said before, these things don't just happen, it needs someone to drum up interest, be responsible for organising things such as health and safety, the stationing of marshals and all manner of loads and loads of other details.

This rested mainly on the shoulders of Emma Kay, our Regional Fundraiser for North Wales, and the fact that the day was a truly huge success was very much down to her leadership of the event.

So very well done Emma, congratulations and thank you to you and all the other staff and volunteers who helped make it great day for all the participants.

Abergele Stroke Club – quiet for almost three whole minutes!

Those of us who have had the pleasure of attending one of Abergele's fortnightly meetings in Pensarn will know that they are usually boisterous affairs with lots of banter and backchat between the thirty or so survivors and carers who regularly attend.

So for the room to be quiet, by Abergele standards anyway, something must have caught their interest.

That something was a fascinating display of microwave cooking by the highly qualified Anne Reney-Smith, a little Mary Berry of the microwave.



Anne has worked with manufacturers Sharp Electronics, the Microwave Association, and has a close working relationship with Lakeland Plastics as well as being the author of a number of recipe books that involve cooking in a microwave.

Using various simple but ingenious devices, including bags in which food is both steamed and microwaved so retaining much more of their natural goodness than usual, she stunned those of us who thought microwaves could only reheat or defrost and soften the butter!

Rack of lamb, asparagus and mashed potatoes from a microwave in a matter of minutes, surely not. But here it is and we know it's true because we saw it happen.



A boon for those who sometimes struggle with heavy pans and hot hobs, there is the added benefit of there being little washing up afterwards.

In spite of the tiny inconvenience of an initial power failure, which Anne took in her stride, she showed how healthy and delicious meals could be conjured up quickly and easily to the much impressed audience.

Anne kindly donated much of what she used and made to the raffle, but not the strawberry and cream shortcake. That just disappeared!

A gracious thank you speech from Barbara concluded an informative demonstration that was much enjoyed.

One of the Group's survivors, who couldn't be there this particular occasion, is Derek Moreton.



Eight years ago Derek twice reached for his dropped tea towel, unaccountably missing it both times. Stooping down to try again, he fell, trapping his arm. It was 5.20pm.

It wasn't until the following morning that his golfing partner, concerned his that phone calls were being unanswered, found him where he fell and called the ambulance.

Said Derek, "Somebody was looking after me, turns out I had both a bleed and a clot, not many survive that"

A previously keen Senior Section golfer playing off a handicap of 18 (11 at his best) it has proven difficult for him to take up the game again as he can only use one arm.

Now, it is possible, to play a form of golf with only one arm. With the great strength Derek developed over thirty four years of working in the pottery industry

we all hope he will soon feel well enough to try it out. He'll certainly be amongst these pages again if he does!

Meanwhile, the fortnightly Stroke Club meetings are a vital part of his continuing recovery and a chance to enjoy the warmth and sociability of this lively, innovative and well organised group.

Mold Mayor's Charity of the Year



The Stroke Association were thrilled to receive a cheque for more than eight thousand pounds collected on behalf of the former Mayor of Mold, Councillor Brian Lloyd, during his year of office.

As the Stroke Association was his nominated charity, he was keen for the monies raised to be used to support stroke survivors and carers in and round the town. Two new initiatives are being trialled which directly result from this tremendous donation.

One is an Art Therapy group run by Pam Hutcheson. This is not about great art, it

is about trying to reduce feelings of stress amongst those who may be having difficulty in finding the words they need, so being a talented artist, or being an artist at all come to that, is not a requirement!

The other, in similar vein, is the proposal to establish a choir in Mold for stroke survivors, carers and family members, to be led by local choirmaster Dafydd Watson.

A third of stroke survivors having aphasia, that is, difficulty in reading, writing, understanding and speaking. Singing, however uses a different part of the brain, so can often be still be enjoyed.

Indeed one survivor who attended the initial taster session last June and who is herself finding communication still very challenging discovered she was able to sing the whole of ABBA's Dancing Queen to her evident great delight!

Both of these new opportunities to help stroke survivors recover and return to being more a part of everyday society are held at the Daniel Owen Centre in Mold.

For details please contact Rebecca on 01745 508530 or e-mail rebecca.chamberlain@stroke.org.uk

Stroke Association Information Points



Thanks to a recent grant of £1,500 awarded from the Bernard Piggott Charitable Trust we can now set up 20 new Information Points in each of the six local authorities in North Wales.

The first Information Points in South Wales are also now being set up and trials to evaluate the possible suitability of the

idea working in big cities are being carried out in North West England.

There will be a need to keep the owners of the businesses who are kind enough to allow their premises to be a Stroke Association Information Point up to date with the progress of the scheme and to help maintain their interest and commitment. We are encouraging volunteers to pass on the news and information as it filters down in what we have called the "Adopt a Shop" support programme.

It's easy, when you are in the shop please tell them anything new about local Stroke Group activities, check that they have sufficient leaflets and that the stickers are in good order. Simple! But effective we hope.

Getting to know you...



Emma Kay
Regional Fundraiser

What a difference a dedicated fundraiser such as Emma has made!

Married with a two year old son, Emma moved back to Wales some seven years ago and was raising funds to improve the local environment on behalf of the local authority when she decided it was time for a change.

A major reason for deciding to join the Stroke Association was that her Dad had a stroke four years ago, though happily he was able to walk her down the aisle a year later.

A keen walker, surfer and horse rider, Emma also loves to travel visiting Singapore, Australia, Thailand and Finland and is currently planning a family trip to explore Iceland.

One of her main responsibilities is to provide exciting events and opportunities to help individuals and groups to raise funds, something she says she really enjoys and at which she is clearly very, very good!

What else?

There is now a newly founded Stroke Group in Rhyl which is aimed at providing long term support for working age stroke survivors and which we will update you all on in the next edition of the Bulletin.

There are plans to see if there is sufficient support for a Stroke Group or Stroke Café

in Caerwys and again we will report on any progress in our next edition.



What's coming up next?



Shriek for Stroke – 22nd-23rd October

Want to have your spine tingled? Well then perhaps you need to register for the paranormal themed challenge to be held at Bodelwyddan Castle.

With expert guides on hand and including two meals as well as refreshments, the event starts at 8.00pm and runs through the night until 6.00am.

If you think this is something you would like to experience, then it's £40 to register and a minimum sponsorship of £160 for this very exclusive event.

Book early! Visit stroke.org.uk/events

Conwy Firewalk – 29th October

If the chance to scare yourself silly doesn't appeal, then barbecuing your feet may take your fancy instead!

Now, of course, there is knack to it and as long as you listen and do what you are told you will be fine.

You must have good mobility and be able to walk unaided across the fire lane.

Registration is £15 and minimum sponsorship is £65.

Open now for booking at stroke.org.uk/events.



For more information...

about our fundraising events or if you have an idea for your own fundraising challenge contact Emma Kay on 01745508632 or email Emma.Kay@stroke.org.uk



Remember ...

The Stroke Association is here to support you and we want to make sure you take advantage of all we have to offer.



Call our **Helpline (0303 3033 100)** with any queries you may have – it's for everyone, not just for those who have just recently had a stroke;

Join the **TalkStroke** conversation online and catch up with others who have similar experiences as you, visit stroke.org.uk/talkstroke



Follow us on Twitter **@StrokeWales** and **"Like"** us on **Facebook** by visiting the Stroke Association Wales page to learn about all the exciting initiatives we are involved in.

You can now find us on Instagram as well, where we've been sharing photos when we're out and about at events.

@StrokeWales - Stroke Association Wales

Keep updated on what is going on by reading **Club Together**; copies of these are sent to your group each quarter.

Remember to send Rebecca Chamberlain your stories.

Contact the **North Wales** office in St Asaph to speak to the team who are always happy to chat. Ring us on **01745 508524**

Got something to tell us?

Good! E-mail: David.Bone@stroke.org.uk or call David on 01352 721089

Until next time!

