



# Success After Stroke News Bulletin No. 14 Friday 29th June 2020



## Hello Everyone,

Once again, thank you to everyone who is contributing to the News Bulletins. It is lovely to hear from you and about what you are doing. If you have a story to tell, maybe about your working life or a trip somewhere (amongst many other things of interest), please share it with us. You might think your life stories are not interesting to others, but I bet they are! If you would like some help with scribing, I am sure there is someone who would be willing to help, so please do get in touch with me (email address at the end of the News Bulletin).

This week's photo at the top of the page is of a gorgeous lady we met (along with several of her chums) whilst on a walk over the North York Moors a couple of years ago. Despite appearances she was very calm and not at all bothered by us being there. In fact, I'm sure she struck a pose for the camera. The walk was supposed to be a circular 'seven-miler' over the moors, finishing with lunch at a pub next to the bus stop, where we intended to catch the bus back to the village at which we were staying. We had it so well planned! As we waited ... and waited for the bus to arrive, we realised that the timetable at the stop bore no resemblance to the one online. It transpired that the online timetable had not been updated, so we ended up walking another seven miles through the forest back to our campsite. The well deserved ice cream at the end of our walk tasted wonderful!

Next week will see a slightly different News Bulletin. It is time for the Summer Newsletter and this will incorporate News Bulletin No. 15.

Keep safe and well.

Jan

## Lands End to John o'Groats ... by bike!

When I decided to retire after twenty-three fantastic years as Headteacher of Boxford School I

started to look around for a new challenge. Having spent much of my life engaged in sports activities I decided to take up the increasingly popular sport of cycling. Following two long-distance challenges, Lowestoft to St David's Head and London to Paris, it was time for the big one - Lands End to John o'Groats; (LEJOG).



Careful planning and research followed and accompanied by my ever willing brother we decided to go on an organised 14 day tour starting at Lands End in Cornwall and finishing 14 days later at the remote Scottish town of John o'Groats in September 2017. We chose September because in general terms

the weather tends to be quite calm and starting in Land's End means that the prevailing winds at that time of year tend to be from the south, or at least that's what the experts say!

Day one and a group of twenty-eight cyclists met at Lands End on a typically misty, murky, damp Cornish morning. The disappointing weather became a feature of the day, and in fact the whole trip, as we made our way over the constantly undulating Cornish landscape to the



coastal town of Fowey. Following a pleasant evening in a local pub and a good night's rest, day two beckoned with rain as we set off for what was described in our route notes as hard. Today would see us venture over the notorious Dartmoor with its steep climbs and descents, topping the moor at the town of Moretonhampstead on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park. Fortunately the weather improved, and we were able to make good steady progress, enjoying some stunning views of the tours whilst negotiating

some savage climbs and avoiding the fearless Dartmoor Pony.

Days three and four saw us negotiating yet more inclement weather as we made our way north to the historic town of Monmouth on the Welsh border passing through the beautiful cathedral town of Wells and crossing Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge, with stunning views of the Severn Gorge. Sadly, whilst Brunel designed the spectacular iron bridge, he never saw the view from the completed structure as he died before it was finished. After crossing the Severn Bridge we made our way north along the Mon Valley to Monmouth, birthplace of Henry V (of Agincourt fame) and home to a very welcome launderette, where we were able to refresh our soggy, muddy cycle clothing.

Days six and seven saw us make our way north to the town of Northwich on the outskirts of Manchester, stopping overnight in the town of Clun. Whilst the weather was a little kinder and the terrain less demanding, it was nonetheless two quite challenging days, as the wind was from a more northerly direction in our faces for long sections of the ride.

We had now reached the midpoint, at least in terms of the days, of our tour and all but one of the members of our party were still present. People who had done LEJOG before informed us that they found the first two days amongst the most challenging of the ride so we were quietly satisfied that we had broken the back of the ride and that things would be a little easier during the days to come. Little did we know!

To be continued ...

**Rob Giles**

### **A Note from Pam, SAS Well-being Therapist**

In News Bulletin No. 8, I wrote about insomnia with a promise to return to this topic with some further suggestions that may help if poor sleep is a problem for you.

Having read in the press recently about the increasing numbers of people finding good sleep elusive, it seemed a good time to return to the topic. Of course, for many people, especially those still working, the change of routine to their day may be at the root of their current insomnia

or alternatively there may be a level of anxiety around the coronavirus and lockdown which under normal circumstances is just not present. But, whatever the cause, one of the many negative impacts of poor sleep is a lack of energy to do what needs to be done, as well as what you would like to do. There is also a tendency to overeat as the body tries to re-energise itself by eating carbohydrates to combat the tiredness.

As I mentioned last time, not all the suggestions will work for everyone and so you may have to try them out and see what works best. So here are some more things to try:

- ◆ **Try not to nap during the day** - which can be easier said than done, I know! But if you just can't stay awake, particularly in the afternoon, then try to limit the time you sleep during the day to less than 30 minutes. That said, there is a school of thought which says a 10 minute power nap can have a really restorative effect and not affect your night's sleep.
- ◆ **If you are still wide awake 30 minutes** after going to bed, then get up! Go back into your living room and read a book with as low a light as you can comfortably see by, maybe watch a quiet TV programme or listen to some calming music. Then, when you feel your eyes beginning to close, go back to bed to sleep.
- ◆ **Try a herbal based remedy.** These are available over the counter in pharmacies and usually have valerian in them. But please be careful about using them and only after making sure that whatever brand you buy agrees with your medication. ***Ask your pharmacist or contact your GP to check.***
- ◆ **If an overactive mind is keeping you awake**, then try a breathing exercise, such as breathing in for a count of 4, holding your breath for a count of 2 and then exhaling for a count of 5. Don't worry if this takes a little time to get the hang of or if you find you keep going off track. Just keep returning to the counting and gradually the mind will give in and allow you to sleep.
- ◆ **If worrying and feeling anxious is keeping you awake**, then try keeping a daily journal or diary. By writing down your thoughts of what is bothering you, you can help your

brain to process the worries, which can help you deal with them more effectively instead of keeping you awake at night.

- ◆ **Try downloading and using a sleep app on your mobile phone.** There are many available and some are totally free, whilst others give you a week's free trial. Some have sleep inducing music or stories which will send you off to sleep. By using a set of comfortable headphones, you should find it easy to listen with your head on your pillow, all ready to drop off to sleep.

I hope you find these and the previous suggestions helpful. But of course, if insomnia is a regular occurrence for you, please speak to your GP about it. Many GPs are now holding telephone consultations so you may not even need to go to the surgery – just ring and find out.

Stay well and safe.

**Pam x**

### **Friday Catch-up With The Conversation Group**

As usual we chatted about all sorts of things, at one point wondering how we managed to get on to a particular topic! It went a bit like this ...

We were chatting about what everyone had been up to as, with measures easing, a bit more has been happening in the last few weeks. A few trips to the shops; Peter bought a microwave and Diane travelled 350 miles for her granddaughter to cut her hair. The rest of us (except Peter!) a little jealous as we've got to wait for hairdressers to open in July. Antonia had been to the farm shop and bought some plants and had an ice cream. Ray and Diane went to Southend which was pretty busy with people too close together. They had an ice cream from Rossi's - ahhh who remembers Rossi's ice cream? Stella told us that Francis Rossi of Status Quo is part of the Rossi family. The Italian side of the family set up the ice cream parlours and he lived up the road to them in Catford Bridge. Peter knows this area well as he lived there too. Stella's husband, Tony, told us of another well-known Catford personality, John Surtees. Tony worked at John Surtees' father's motorcycle dealership on a Saturday morning. As we know, Peter is a bit of a motorbike enthusiast and he knew exactly who John Surtees was, as did Ray as Surtees was also a Formula One racing driver.

In fact, I have discovered that he is the only person to have won world championships in both motorcycling and motor racing!

Do you get the gist?

We also talked about old fashioned British expressions, things that we say here but which, if you've been brought up outside the UK, you probably wouldn't have a clue what we were talking about!

Most of the group are Londoners and knew the Cockney rhyming slang phrases like 'apples and pears', 'frog and toad', 'jam jar' and 'dog and bone'. We came up with variations on a theme for some expressions, for example, someone who's a bit daft might be described as 'a few sandwiches short of a picnic', which was first heard on the Lenny Henry Christmas show in 1987. Others were a bit older, 'tuppence short of a shilling', 'hasn't got all their chairs in the front room' or 'a few slices short of a full loaf'!

I've listed some of the expressions below, but no doubt you could come up with a few more!

Gallivanting, chuffed, bagsy, doddle, cost a bomb, miffed, bees-knees, gaff, bog-standard, broolly, chinwag, gobsmacked, half past, Bob's your uncle, lurgy, codswallop, dogs dinner!

It was fun!

Thank you to Peter and Brenda, Stella and Tony, Antonia and Emma and Ray and Diane

**Chris Clark**

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### **What we've been doing ...**



**Ken Newson** celebrated his 80th birthday and I am sure we would all like to wish him a belated 'Happy Birthday'! Anesta says, "Ken had a lovely 'plan B' 80th birthday. Not what we had quite planned, but he enjoyed himself. Morning coffee and cakes with neighbours, followed by a Zoom meeting with all our kids and grandchildren, and in the evening, supper with old friends in our garden".

### **And following the birthday theme ...**

**Sj** sent the following photos of a very special birthday party ... her dog, Nella, turned 13 and Sj made a cake for her.



The cake was clearly very much enjoyed by Nella and her daughter, Luna, and it is lovely to see they dressed for the occasion as well!

The cake was made from; carrots, flour, peanut butter, a squeeze of honey and doggy treats!



Sj has also had problems with a very hungry Mullein caterpillar (moth) which has destroyed her Verbascum. She doesn't say what happened to the caterpillar after its meal ...

Jan says, "following Sj's elderflower cordial recipe last week, I was reminded to make elderflower posset. The recipe I have is very simple and uses equal quantities of double cream and elderflower cordial. Whip the cream to soft peaks and gradually whisk in the elderflower cordial. Put into individual serving glasses or freeze in one container. Remove from the freezer a little while before you require it and serve with red fruits and a lemon shortbread biscuit (or just find a nice quiet corner away from everyone else and tuck in)!

Do you have a recipe that uses elderflower cordial or other favourite summertime recipe which you would like to share?

### NB 13 Quiz Answers

1. Rhubarb
2. Beetroot
3. Blackcurrants
4. Zucchini
5. Cranberry sauce
6. Romaine lettuce
7. Potatoes, onions and leeks
8. Pomelo
9. Drupes
10. Kumquat
11. Banana
12. Grape
13. Mandolin
14. A cabbage
15. Pomegranate
16. Brassica
17. Orange juice
18. Dates

19. Cabbage
20. Bournemouth AFC

### NB 13 Riddle Answer

A dictionary.

### And NB 13 just for fun ...

The nine letter word in the word wheel is 'encourage'. How many other words did you manage?

### NB 14 Quiz

Can you identify the brands from the pictures below?  
With thanks to Kensquiz.co.uk



### NB 14 Riddle

What is cut on a table but never eaten?

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Take care, stay safe and well.