



**Success After Stroke
News Bulletin No 37
Thursday March 18th 2021**

Hello everyone,

I hope you are all keeping well and have been able to enjoy some of the warmer brighter days we have experienced lately. With the continued successful rollout of the vaccination programme and reassuring drop in Covid numbers, we do finally seem to be turning the corner and the promise of better times does not seem quite so distant.

On that positive note, I hope this bulletin provides a little light relief and wish you a continued safe and peaceful few weeks.

Shirley.



Recap

Hi,

Research into loneliness in stroke

Building on my recent work investigating loneliness in stroke I am currently running a really important survey, trying to get the views of as many stroke survivors as possible in order to understand loneliness among this population. This project has ethical approval from the University of Sunderland. Would it be possible to advertise this through yourselves in order to boost the responses for this important piece of work?

Cheers

Stephen

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A note from Pam, SAS Well-being Therapist - What's the use of worrying?



A quote about worrying – attributed to The Dalai Lama

“If it can be solved, there’s no need to worry, and if it can’t be solved, worry is of no use.”

At last we have better news about coming out of lockdown and it feels like there has been a collective sigh of relief across the country at the prospect of some sort of normality returning to our lives, albeit still a few weeks away. But perhaps that sigh of relief is tinged with some anxious feelings about the future and maybe you are wondering if life will ever be quite the same again, given that we are told that the covid virus and its mutations are likely to be with us for the foreseeable future. So, I have been thinking about how being worried, even a low level of worry, may have had an insidious and unhelpful effect on all of us.

During this pandemic, I have sometimes thought that there are a few comparisons with war-time, especially WW2. Obviously, that was a very different time, but there are some similarities with the impact on people’s day to day lives in that they had no idea when it was going to end or how life would be when things eventually returned to normal, apart from the family and friends that may have died as a direct result of the war.

Thinking of war time, I’m sure you are all familiar with the song, “Pack up your Troubles” which goes “What’s the use of worrying? It never was worthwhile. So pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile”. This song reminds us that worrying, whilst so very easy to do, never actually changes or resolves anything. In fact, all that worrying about tomorrow does is spoil today!

Of course, just saying that to yourself that you won’t worry is far easier said than done, especially if it is your nature to be a ‘worrier’. So what can you do to help yourself? Perhaps one of the easiest ways is to speak to a friend about what is troubling you. They say a problem shared is a problem halved and that certainly can be true. The caveat I would add to that is that it needs to be a friend who has an upbeat outlook on life and, more importantly, who listens without judgement of how you are feeling. Then I do believe that a problem shared really can be a problem halved.

But what else can you do? Well, just take some quiet time to think about what is really worrying you and ask yourself whether you have any control over the outcome of this situation. If the answer is no, then try to stop letting your thoughts go over and over it, like a broken record. How do you do that? One way can be to distract yourself by spending time in the garden, reading a book, watching a film, listening to music, some sort of craft work or anything else that you know will engross you. Then by the time you come back to thinking about the situation, your levels of worry are very likely to have reduced.

This applies too when we worry about someone else – a family member or friend. In this case, there usu-

ally not much, if anything, we can do to affect the outcome so worrying about it doesn't help them at all and just makes us feel more anxious. The best we can do for others is support them in whatever way we can, whether that is listening to them, helping with cooking, shopping or any other practical way.

Now, I don't want any of the suggestions I have made to seem trite. I fully appreciate that it is far easier to say to yourself "I won't worry" than actually to do it and so it does take some practice. As I said above, the key question is whether or not worrying actually helps change the outcome. If it doesn't, then what it does do is makes us feel more anxious which in turn has a negative impact on our physical and mental health.

Of course, if you really cannot stop yourself from worrying, then please seek medical advice from your GP or give me a call and we can chat things through. As a final note, music is often a really good way to lift our spirits and most people have a tune or song which just makes lifts their spirits, so what is yours? Here's a couple to get you started and can readily be found on the internet:

"Don't worry be happy" by Bobby McFerrin

"Happy" by Farrell Williams

With love, Pam x

When I was small . . . David Guthrie



. . . around six or seven I suppose, all the life I knew about was to be at war with Nazis, whatever they were. Life was about being in a war – that was normality – although I did vaguely remember having my last bowl of Heinz tomato soup (which I loved) when about three. "Why isn't there any more?" "Because we are at war, dear". The war affected everything, even the soup.

At that time we lived in the seaside town of Bridlington on the Yorkshire coast; far away from the fighting but not far from its effects. Immediately north of Bridlington the chalk cliffs of Flamborough Head stuck out into the sea, the first part of a rocky coast heading north towards Northumbria. Immediately south of the then active fishing harbour of Bridlington was a long sweeping bay of wide sandy beaches and low land extending for around thirty-five miles to Spurn Head at the mouth of the Humber estuary. This area was largely empty of people except for Skipsea, Hornsea and Withernsea that were little more than villages. There was major concern that this bay could be an attractive location for a possible invasion from Europe and access to it was prohibited, for at least as far as my family could travel, by a barbed-wire fence. Despite living by the sea, playing on the sand was an unknown, and unmissed, pleasure.

We lived at the south end of town and my bedroom window faced south across a flat low-lying meadow

with no sign of any hill beyond. We had a small garden and immediately beyond our fence began what was called a 'tank trap' that ran for 300 yards across the meadow until it reached the main road from Bridlington to Kingston-upon-Hull, and the 'trap' then continued across the next meadow beyond this road. The 'tank trap' consisted of a line of scaffolding, maybe 12 to 15 feet high, alongside what to me was a very deep ditch and a line of excavated earth dumped along the side opposite to the scaffolding. The water table was normally high, almost at ground level, and the ditch was permanently filled with water.

At that time, no-one seemed bothered about small boys playing around water deep enough to drown them and I don't remember anyone ever falling in, or even falling off the scaffolding which we used for climbing practice. At various times the water seemed full of life; tadpoles, newts, frogs, snails, and even a good number of great crested newts up to 7" long – so many of these latter creatures that I had no difficulty in catching them. I thought they were beautiful. It is many decades since I saw a crested newt in the wild.

The meadow itself was full of wild flowers in summer – even bee orchids that I found fascinating. Why should a flower look like a bee? I sometimes picked bunches of them for my mother. That meadow is now underneath a primary school.

It wasn't until years later that I began to wonder why the authorities had expected enemy tanks to cross a field, get taffled up in scaffolding and stuck in a ditch, when there was a perfectly good main road they could use 100 yards away. Even if the road was blown up, it would only take a day to fix it well enough for a tank to use.

But for a few years during the war life was far from quiet in and around Bridlington. Following bombing raids over Europe the surviving aircraft – especially damaged ones – made their way to the nearest part of the UK so that they could land as soon as possible, which was often East Yorkshire. A common sight during the mornings was to see Halifax and Lancaster bombers flying low over Bridlington (an easily identifiable town from the air when nearly all navigation was visual). Many of these aircraft were obviously damaged. The 4-engined Lancasters were sometimes flying on only two engines, others with holes in their wings and other parts of the plane obviously missing. The sound of a Lancaster bomber is unmistakable and whenever I hear one – which isn't often now – it takes me straight back to that time.

Unfortunately, there were few airfields large enough to take a bomber throughout the whole country and certainly not in East Yorkshire. So a landing strip was built, primarily for damaged aircraft to land as soon as they got over friendly territory. About two miles south of us was the village of Carnaby. I couldn't see the village itself from my bedroom, but I could see where it was. Near to this village was laid down a slab of concrete about 2 miles long and a quarter mile wide! I used to spend time in my bedroom just watching these huge airplanes flying low overhead and landing at Carnaby.

All was not simple though. One of the common weather features on that part of the east coast was a gentle breeze off the sea which caused a low-lying fog, locally called a 'sea fret'. This was enough to visually hide the landing strip from the air. So the system called "FIDO" was developed. I never knew then what FIDO stood for – but what it looked like was a huge fire on the horizon with the bombers landing in the middle of it. The scene was even more dramatic when, occasionally, it was used during the night! And I had a wonderful view from my bedroom of the planes flying away from me and landing into this apparent holocaust.

Security didn't appear as tight as it would be now though. On one occasion I was taken as a treat by car

to the end of the runway where several Halifax bombers were parked. The bored man in charge asked if we would like to go into one? Of course we would! We climbed a ladder to a door into the fuselage which was just a metal tube with strengthening crosspieces. No heating system or pressurisation in those days! I crawled through a hole into the cockpit and was allowed to sit in the co-pilot's seat. Our guide was most excited – not by the guns or the controls - but by the new windows. “These are not glass you know” he said. “These are made of some new stuff called Perspex that doesn't smash like glass; it's much safer and lighter”.

A last little anecdote: one day a group of us were playing in the meadow when, unusually, a German plane flew quite low above us, heading east and home. As it passed near us something dropped from it looking like six feet of metal tube. This fell into the next field. Naturally, we raced across to see if we could find it. All we found was a hole in the grass, about 4 inches across and smoking gently. We lay on the ground but, luckily, our short arms couldn't reach whatever was down there. Maybe it is still there - or maybe it was unearthed when the existing residential roads were built.

[For the record – two other airfields to a very similar plan as used at Carnaby were built during 1943, at Manston and Woodbridge. The Carnaby landing strip was a little smaller than the 2 miles I had thought at the time: actually 3000 yards long and 250 yards wide, which was five times the width of a standard runway then. All three were used during 1944 and '45. FIDO stood for Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation. This consisted of two rows of pipes emitting burning petrol one on each side of the runway, the heat from this fire raised the air temperature above the runway, cutting a hole in the fog and provided crews with a brightly lit strip indicating the position of the runway. More than 1400 emergency landings were made at Carnaby during the war. Not only for visible damage to the plane, but for low fuel, or for suspected damage such as loss of hydraulics, which could mean no brakes and a faulty undercarriage. The Carnaby landing strip is still in use – it is now the base for a huge industrial estate.]



Carnaby landing strip today

NOTICEBOARD

Zoom reminders

JEANNETTES EXERCISE CLASSES:

Tuesday 9.30 - 10 am Question time followed by the formal exercise class at 10 - 10.30/45 am .

(NB: use the existing Tuesday invite to enter Zoom at any time 9.30 - 10.45 am).

Friday 9.30 - 10.15/30 am.

HIT ZOOM EXERCISE CLASS

A higher intensity class with Jeannette for SAS members and volunteers starts:

Tues - 11.00 - 11.30/45am

These classes will run for the duration of Lent (up to the Easter break).

Jeannette strongly suggests you join one class or the other, but not both.

Further information available on request.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Fridays from 10.30am for approximately an hour.

CARERS MEETING

Carers meeting will be held once a month. Date for next meeting to be confirmed. For further information contact either:

Pam : pam@pamlawrence.co.uk

Fran: franwilliams23@gmail.com

Easter recipes

If anyone has a particular recipe they love using for Easter, do let us know and we can include it in the next bulletin (due out on 31st march, a day earlier than usual).

For any enquiries or further information, please don't hesitate to get in contact.

Contact details are:

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