



SUCCESS AFTER STROKE

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2016

A note from the Chairman ...

This is our last communication to you all for 2016 which has been a very good and enjoyable year, always remembering those members we have sadly said goodbye to. We have made progress in what we do and I hope we have been able to offer our members ever improving care and treatment as well as having a good time together. We have a very good team at the Stevenson Centre, and we have much to be thankful for.

I am looking forward to our Carol Concert at Long Melford on 6th December. It was such a success two years ago and now, with a sell out congregation, we are in line for another wonderful evening with the choir from Ely Cathedral. Thank you so much to our committee who are doing tremendous work, and thanks to all of you who have either bought tickets or made donations, it makes such a difference to what we are able to do for our members. Starting from next term, we will be increasing the time available for our members to receive physiotherapy, and the money raised at the concert will help greatly with this work.

Rather like the Regent Street Lights ... a little early, but so what ... a very happy Christmas to you all.

Richard Furlonger

OUR TRIP TO CAMBRIDGE

We left Sudbury in good time for our day out in Cambridge and, believe it or not, the sun was shining although it was a little chilly.

We were dropped off a little further than we had hoped from the centre of Cambridge, but enjoyed a leisurely walk through the Backs and over St. Johns Bridge where we admired the beautiful gardens and watched people punting along the river in front of the splendid Cambridge Colleges.



The Backs

Several of us were aiming for the Fitzwilliam Museum which we enjoyed and could have spent much longer in as there is SO much to see in this beautifully laid out and free museum.

Others enjoyed wandering about, doing a little bit of shopping and eating in the numerous cafès and restaurants on offer.

A group of us enjoyed a light lunch in the onsite café at The Fitzwilliam Museum and made a few purchases in the shop.



Kings College Chapel, The Fitzwilliam Museum, ... and Alf leads the charge into town!

Before too long it was time to meander back to the coach, which we did through the cobbled streets and alleyways, enjoying one last cappuccino sitting outside and admiring The Corpus Clock, designed by Dr. John Taylor who used to be at the College. The clock was designed to measure time with a huge and very ugly locust which eats away time and was unveiled by Professor Stephen Hawking.

Thankyou to all the volunteers for your help on the day.

Sj



The Corpus Clock and Leon and Sarah enjoy a sit down on Kings Parade

Swimming Group

On Thursday 6th October Sj and I went to meet the swimming group. Betty Greenaway and Neville Root have been helping the group for a number of years on a completely voluntary basis, originally at a private pool in Bures and latterly at The Leisure Centre in Sudbury. The group meets on Thursday mornings for a swim and then a well-deserved coffee afterwards. Being cowards, Sj and I opted to meet everyone for the coffee, forgoing the pleasure of a dip first!



The swimmers enjoy a well deserved treat after their exercise.

Gill Secretan commented that prior to having her stroke, she had been a keen swimmer, however afterwards it was something that she found difficult to do. Having been going along to the group for a couple of years, Gill has regained confidence and strength, and now swims around 16 lengths during a session. Gill and the other members of the group stressed how beneficial swimming had been to their recovery both physically and in helping regain confidence.

If you think swimming might help you and you need some encouragement to take part, then speak to one of the members of the group and contact Betty or Neville.

Jan

An Amusing Account of Life in and out of Schools by Brian Carline

On Tuesday 13th September, 2016 Brian once again visited SAS. This is Rita Guthrie's account of his talk ...

We were very ably kept amused by Brian Carline in his lovely Northern accent. (At least, it was lovely to me who is used to a Northern accent - my mother produced Yorkshire Dialect plays for many years when I was young).



As I was brought up on Ilkley Moor I knew full well how awful children were on windy days! And how you should never, as a teacher, turn your back to the class - you would be amazed about the swapping of notes, sweets and drinks at the back of the class. I felt sorry for the children on the front row who could never get away with anything. (I always sat on the next row to the back as you didn't get picked on there).

Anyway, thank you Brian - top marks for your clear delivery!

Rita Guthrie

Who do you dress to impress?



When we were younger did you dress to impress your girl/boyfriend? Maybe in a draped jacket, jeans and crepe soled shoes or short bobbed haircut and mini skirt to look like twiggy?



But how about now? As we are getting older do you still dress to impress wife or husband? Just remember that the suit that always fits is your birthday suit. Although, I wouldn't want to be seen in public in mine as a few tucks and a good iron might come in handy!

So next time you get dressed, who have you got on your mind? Me? No one. I dress for myself.

Anonymous Member

Threats to post stroke care

Jacques Forrest had the following letter published in the East Anglian Daily Times on the 8th November, 2016. We thought

you would all be interested to read his views.

"Sir,

Further to your recent articles about proposed cuts to stroke treatment and (ongoing) after care, I would like to add my experiences.

As a stroke survivor (not everyone does survive!) I can confirm that it is devastating, life changing, comes out of the blue and affects both sexes and all ages. While the symptoms of a stroke are physical the lasting damage is mental. All stroke victims have injuries to the brain.

The ambulance for me took less than 9 minutes to arrive, the necessary drugs administered instantly and I was at hospital (West Suffolk) in less than 30 minutes. I was in the CAT scanner in less than 10 minutes had a full MRI scan in less than 24 hours and was discharged after 5 days, alive and functioning but a different person. God bless and thank you NHS.

When I tried to contact the paramedics to thank them I was only given a central NHS email address and I was directly asked if I wanted the details because I intended to sue. What a world we now live in.

Post stroke I received six weeks of help and support from the Early Discharge Unit. I do not know what my wife and I would have done without them - a belated thank you to you all. But at six weeks the support stopped. The thought of stopping this immediate intensive Early Discharge support is devastating. Since then I have joined a self-supporting post-stroke group, which has no external funding. I find it amazing how quickly post stroke victims can improve with such voluntary support. How successful post stroke care could be with

joined-up professional on-going support and future NHS and Social care costs could be genuinely reduced.

Not wishing a stroke on anybody, but you have one and see how you get on when you are no longer requiring intensive care and are asked to leave hospital and see how you cope at home and very much alone.

A revised on-going approach would benefit all living victims of stroke and reduce future care costs.

Worth thinking about in our post-Brexit Britain?

J W Forrest”

singing group as I know that from the small session we did feedback was, on the whole, pretty good and everyone seemed to enjoy it. I was so impressed with the sound that we achieved after our session with Tracey and I am sure that we can build on the foundation.



Songlines



15th November saw Tracy Sharp from Music in Our Bones and Lisa King a younger stroke survivor, attend SAS with a taster session of their singing group, Songlines, which is very successfully run in Stowmarket. Tracy also has other singing groups throughout Suffolk, for which she kindly gave us leaflets. I wasn't the only one who was amazed by the great sound we achieved with Tracey's help ... even harmonising within our first session to Swing Low Sweet Chariot! Lisa was enthusiastic about the singing group she attends regularly.



I think we would all like to thank Tracey and Lisa for their time and for getting us to achieve such a great sound. I hope we can continue to keep up with our own little

This is by no means a choir, it is intended to be a purely social fun event, but one that is scientifically proven to lower stress and relieve anxiety. Studies have shown that when you sing, musical vibrations move through you altering your physical and emotional landscape; and group singing is the most transformative of all. It acts like a tranquiliser that both soothes your nerves and elevates your spirits. This elation may come from endorphins, more commonly known as the pleasure hormone, and oxytocin which alleviates anxiety and also enhances bonding and trust.



It has been reported that group singing has the same effect as group meditation ... and we all know how good that feels after Pam's sessions. Mental health is not the only benefit, singing is also acknowledged

as improving people's respiratory health ... so whether you choose to join us for our planned monthly music session or not, as Tracy said, we hope you will find room in your heart for music, because at the end of the day there is always a song to be sung.

Fiona Yerofeyev

Disability Dogs



**Barry O'Connell with his Dog,
Guy, a Flatcoat Retriever**

On Friday 30th October we were treated to a wonderful talk by Barry O'Connell who visited us with his wife and canine partner Guy, a flat-coat retriever.

Guy became Barry's canine partner in 2009 and assists him with many chores including getting out and about and shopping. Guy helps Barry in the supermarket, picking tins and other items from the shelves to put in the shopping basket. At the till, Barry gives Guy his purse and Guy will then pass this to the cashier.

Barry explained that training a Canine Partner Dog takes about 2 years and costs upward of £10,000. No specific breed is used, but size is important as the dogs have to be tall enough on their hind legs to reach buttons on pelican crossings, cash-

point machines and many other things that might be inaccessible for their human.

Between five and nine weeks of age, puppies are put with families who become their 'puppy parents' until the age of about 14 months. During this time the puppies are socialised and get used to all types of environments and family life but do not undergo any more formal training than the basic commands. At 14 months, the puppies are tested to see if they are suitable for advanced training and if they pass, this takes about 6 months.



Canine Partners, will always match the dog and human in a partnership. The human will have three one-day assessments so that the Charity can work out their specific needs and what character of dog is best suited. Once a match is found the dog undergoes one month of advanced training geared specifically to his partner's needs. Once dog and human finally meet they have a further two weeks of training together and Barry stressed that the After-care Team is always there to help when needed.

Canine Partners keep an eye on the dogs throughout their lives, Barry has to check Guy's weight monthly and the organisation pays Barry and Guy a visit every six months to make sure all is well. Guy is now nine and a half years old and in gen-

eral, Canine Partner Dogs are retired between 10 and 12 years of age depending on the health of the dog concerned. For the most part, the dogs are retired within the family but if this is not possible, then a loving adoptive home is found in which the dog can see out his twilight years.

Sometimes dogs do not manage to complete the rigorous training to become a Canine Partner. However, all is not lost as these dogs are still highly trained and Barry gave several examples of how they have gone on to make meaningful contributions to society. Barry also explained that dogs are now being trained as 'Dual Dogs'. For example, Guide Dogs for the Blind work in collaboration with Canine Partners to train dogs to not only 'see' for a person but also to assist their owners in other aspects of life. Dogs trained in both ways wear a special 'Dual Dog' jacket showing both charity's logos.



Barry is immensely proud of Guy - and not just because he has done so much to improve the quality of Barry's life and protect him on a day to day basis, Canine Partner dogs are never off-duty - but because he has performed over and above the call of duty. Barry and Guy were out one day when an out-of-control 40 tonne juggernaut came careering towards them. Guy (who is the most enormous and strong flat-coat retriever I have ever seen) broke his lead, barked furiously and sat between

Barry and the lorry. Thankfully, the lorry missed them by a whisker and crashed through a wall a few feet away. Guy won a PDSA Commendation for Bravery and Devotion. What a dog! What a partnership!

Barry and Guy will be back in the New Year to talk to the Tuesday Group with more stories about Guy and Canine Partners.

Francis Grainger



Francis and Joyce enjoying bowling in March 2016 at the Members 'Friendly' Tournament. Francis is the reigning 2015 'Members Champion'.

Francis joined SAS in the summer of 2012 following a stroke in January of that year. When he first arrived I like to think that Francis enjoyed coming in and meeting up with one and all. He very much enjoyed the social side of SAS and particularly liked coffee time and the biscuits! Life was not easy for Francis and one had to work quite hard for a smile, but it was worth waiting for when it came.

Francis is the reigning champion of the 2015 Ten-pin Bowling Tournament and holds the John Rose Trophy.

One of Francis's hobbies was repairing and servicing lawn mowers and I have a nasty suspicion that there may still be lots of them in his shed waiting to be repaired -

hopefully Joyce will persuade Dean to deal with them!

Poor Francis, these last months were a struggle for him and his family and I hope that you are all remembering him as he was before his stroke. He will be greatly missed by all at SAS.

Francis's funeral will take place at St. Andrews Church, Great Cornard on Tuesday 6th December at 12.30 pm.

Viv Bourne

Poplar Nurseries 25th November 2016

We enjoyed a bright but cold day for our trip to Poplar Nurseries, Colchester. Twenty members and volunteers made the journey by coach from Sudbury and several others met us there.

Everyone said that they enjoyed their day, looking around the very well stocked garden centre and shops within it. There was a wonderful display of Christmas decorations and plenty of gift ideas.

The café catered for all needs, from a 'warm-up' coffee on arrival to full lunches and some wonderful cakes!



A member was overheard saying "I can't do that ..."

Alf Garnham replied that his boss had once told him, "If you take the 't' off the end - you can".

Reminders



The Christmas Party will be held on Tuesday 13th December to which all Members, Volunteers and Professionals are invited. SAS closes for Christmas at the end of the session on Tuesday 13th December.

We return on Tuesday 3rd January, 2017 and the first Friday group is on the 6th January.

The next Carers' meeting will be on Tuesday 6th December, 2016

Carols by Candlelight will take place on Tuesday, December 6th at 7pm at The Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford. Tickets for this event are now sold-out. SAS would like to thank all those who have purchased tickets and we look forward to seeing you.

SAS re-opens on Tuesday 3rd January, 2017.

SAS meets at

The Stevenson Centre

Great Cornard

Sarahjane Lewis:

07434 931 962

By Post:

Success After Stroke

The Stevenson Centre

Stevenson Approach

Great Cornard

Sudbury

Suffolk

CO10 0WD

E-mail:

info@successafterstroke.org.uk

Web:

www.successafterstroke.org.uk

Success After Stroke - Activities

Success-after-Stroke is an active and motivated self-help support group where the members are helped by dedicated volunteers and therapists in their efforts for rehabilitation, independence and confidence.

Monday mornings: sailing at the Woolverstone Project.

Tuesday mornings: the group meets at The Stevenson Centre for;

- Socialising
- Physiotherapy
- Speech & language therapy
- Reading and discussion groups
- Brain Training
- Basic nail care & massage therapy

Wednesday mornings: Art, drawing and painting at The Stevenson Centre – beginners welcome

Thursday mornings:

- Swimming Group
- Riding at The Shelley Centre for Therapeutic Riding (RDA)
- Pottery

Friday mornings: the group meets at The Stevenson for;

- Socialising
- Physiotherapy
- Speech and language therapy
- Reading and discussion groups
- Brain Training
- Nordic Walking
- Basic nail care & massage therapy - alternate Fridays by appointment.

ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY