



unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2008

PATIENT AND CARER NEWS

CHARITY NO. 701667



WOLVERHAMPTON CORONARY AFTERCARE SUPPORT GROUP

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Message From the Chair

I write this as the government assures us that we are coming out of lockdown, which during its existence has caused our activities to be much curtailed. We are however indebted to Chris, Jenny and Ros who have worked through the pandemic to keep us all informed and especially Jenny and Ade for keeping in touch with our exercise groups, providing them not only with information but also home exercises.

I understand that some of the exercise classes have started up again and it is our hope that the service will begin to get back to where it was 18 months ago, though I believe there are roofing problems with one of the sites. Chris tells me that he and others are searching for a building where all the classes can be housed under one roof and where we don't have to rely on the good will of the council all the time.

I trust you will read this newsletter, which once again Ros has compiled, as it is full of articles to keep you informed and yet again my thanks go to Ros for her diligence in the compilation. Perhaps when you have read it you will pass it on to someone else who may be interested in the service we offer.

Every blessing to all of you.
Ken Timmis (Chairman)

Fundraising/Donations

Donation from **The Wolverhampton and District Cribbage League** of £250.

Mr D Hutchinson donated £100

£215 donated in memory of **John Cooper**

Albrighton Angling Club held a charity match and raised £100 for the Group

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR VERY GENEROUS DONATIONS

If you would like to help by donating to our Just Giving page or by texting WCASG to 70085 to donate £2 we would be most grateful.

Cardiac Rehabilitation:

Phase 1 and 2 Update



Smoking Cessation Service

The NHS Long Term Plan focuses on the importance of preventing avoidable illness and more active management of the health of the population. Smoking cessation is specifically identified as a key service that can improve the prevention of avoidable illness.

The Trust previously provided a comprehensive smoking cessation service, which no longer became accessible for patients in hospital. The Cardiac Rehabilitation (CR) team needed to act, and with a multi-disciplinary approach both in the Trust and with colleagues in Primary Care, now provide a dedicated smoking cessation service for our cardiac patients admitted to the Heart & Lung Centre. Members of the team are trained in smoking cessation, and meet with the person stopping smoking before they leave hospital and carry out consultations over the phone to discuss their quit progress once they've gone home. The CR Team provide ongoing support and work in partnership with colleagues in the community and pharmacy teams, as well as those within the cardiac speciality. This service is a branch of the wider aim of supporting hospital patients to continue their stop smoking efforts from admission to discharge and thereafter, bridging the gap between secondary care smoking cessation services and those based in the community.



Where are we now?

The CR team have managed to maintain services throughout the pandemic with the use of a variety of digital platforms, both effectively and successfully! The digital-world has allowed the CR team to not only maintain a service for our patients and their families, but has also allowed us the opportunity to develop their services. The CR nursing team have continued to provide face-to-face contact with patients before they go home from the Heart & Lung Centre, telephone and video contact following discharge from hospital, and comprehensive home-based exercise programmes from Chris and his colleagues. The CR team work in collaboration to provide this excellent service for our patients, their families and communities, and have now reintroduced face-to-face clinics. The team are currently working with partners to ensure we look ahead to the future and safely plan hospital-based exercise programmes.

Phase 3 Update

Face to Face Phase 3 exercise groups are still suspended, awaiting the go ahead from the Trust to resume. However, the team are now able to see patients individually to complete their assessments and to provide advice and guidance.

The team have supported the Cycle to Work month by recording a short video on the benefits of cycling. In the video Chris, Specialist Exercise Physiologist at the Trust is encouraging everybody to start cycling this summer as it has so many health benefits. In the video he gives a few facts about how cycling can help you both physically and mentally.



Phase 4 Update

Aldersley classes are continuing to run very well using a new online booking system, with both days being quite well attended. Jen was hoping to increase the number of attendees there from 12 to 15 per class, but this has been put on hold given that the Covid-19 cases remain high.

We are still running a reduced Bilston class at the moment (Wednesdays only- 3 classes), but looking to reintroduce our Monday class ASAP.

We are still awaiting a definite return date for our Bob Jones Hub (BJH) venue at Blakenhall as we were told to expect to be invited back at the end of August. In preparation for this, health screens were carried out for BJH patients by Jen at St Martin's Church, Dixon Street on Monday 9th August. Non attendees were screened via the phone, with just a handful yet to be completed due to not being able to contact them.

Ashmore Park remains closed to groups at the moment as they are continuing to provide Covid-19 support in the area as a lateral flow testing centre.

Phone calls and check-ins are still being done with our phase 4 members, updating them on venue status and encouraging them to continue exercising using the material we have provided online or via the post.

We would like to thank Phase 4 members who have contributed extra donations to help out with the cost of sanitising products that we have provided for classes to ensure that they remain as Covid-19 secure as possible.

Other News

Many of you will know **Julia Burrows**, who celebrated her 60th Birthday on 23rd July. Julia qualified in 1983 and worked on the Cardiology Ward from 1983 to 1994. After a brief career change (as a Practice Nurse), she joined the Cardiac Rehabilitation (CR) team in 2000. Julia has supported CR and the Group throughout her career so we would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her support. We hope that you had a very happy 60th birthday Julia!



Chris Scordis, Specialist Exercise Physiologist and Lead for Cardiac Rehabilitation, celebrated his 20th year in CR on 23rd July. A lot of hard work and dedication has gone into his career in CR and long may it continue! Congratulations Chris.

Covid-19: Keeping yourself and others safe

There are still cases of COVID-19 in England and there is still a risk you could catch or pass on the virus, even if you are fully vaccinated. The Government are encouraging us to remain cautious and consider the risks. While no situation is risk free, there are actions we can take to protect ourselves and others around us. These include getting both doses of the COVID-19 vaccination, wearing a mask if possible, washing your hands and opening the windows when meeting people indoors. If you get symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, please get tested.



In our Spring bulletin we announced the passing of one of our Phase 4 members and long term supporters, John Cooper. His daughter, Anne-Marie Cooper, has shared her reflections of his life with us.

John Gordon Cooper: My Dad, Best Friend and Inspiration.

What an honour it is for me to be writing an article about my Dad for this newsletter.

Trouble is, where do I start? Dad lived an amazing life spanning nearly 93 years, what do I include, what do I leave out? How best to pay tribute to my Dad, Best Friend and Inspiration (and also keep it relevant!)?

Well, I guess the best place to start is 1998 when Dad had a heart attack and we were both introduced to Wolverhampton Coronary Aftercare Support Group. I can honestly say that Dad's cardiac event changed both our lives (for the better!).

I was working overseas in the travel industry at the time and made the decision immediately to return to the UK in order to support Dad, as Mom had passed away suddenly in 1992.

I think, that's when I truly got to know the man I proudly call Dad.

Together we began our steep learning curve.

Dad embraced the help and support offered by WCASG and looked forward to his gym sessions, however, always a smartly dressed military man, I had a struggle to convince him that joggers, tee shirt and trainers would be more comfortable gym attire than trousers pressed to perfection with a razor sharp crease, his trade mark shirt and tie and shoes so highly polished, you really could see your face in them!

Those weekly sessions became so much more than exercise, they played a pivotal part in his life. If you're reading this, you or someone you love will have been affected one way or another by cardiovascular disease and will understand how good it feels to see the person you care most about in the world go from a place of fear and uncertainty, to become stronger, fitter, grow in confidence, make a support network of lifelong friends....the list of benefits is endless....

It also gave Dad a well-earned break from me and an opportunity to be with people like him, who had also been through a cardiac event and could understand first-hand how he felt, as although I meant well, my constant worrying that "something else might happen" along with watching his every move was irritating to him to say the least!

But, not one to sit on the side-lines I joined Dad on his journey, learning as much as I could about heart disease, cardiac rehabilitation and the work of WCASG.

In fact the knowledge we gained and the support I received as a relative not only inspired my millennium mile swim, it also changed my career!

It was a proud moment for us both when I swam a mile at midnight on millennium eve and raised £3000 for this well deserving and much needed charity. It was challenging, but with Dad at the poolside cheering me on, I was not going to fail. And my career change? I have spent the years since that swim re-training and working as an Exercise Supervisor in a cardiovascular rehabilitation service, giving to others what was so freely given to me.

Dad went from strength to strength and as his confidence returned so did his purpose. He became an appropriate adult for vulnerable young people and sat for many years as chair of the Wolverhampton School Admissions Appeal panel giving a voice to those who had none. Most important of all, we made time to talk and listen to each other. I began to really appreciate Dad's words of wisdom and as I'm writing this I can hear him say "you have two ears and one mouth; use them in that direct proportion"....

As the years passed, I'm so glad I listened. I learned about Dad as a young man and I learned about his military career. It wasn't until he approached 90 that he talked about his time at the liberation of Bergen-Belsen camp, although he never revealed the true horror of what he saw, it was clear that those scenes were etched in his memory as if he'd witnessed them yesterday. I also learned about the role he was assigned during the Nuremberg trials; identifying those guards who were posing as inmates in order to avoid standing trial.

Some of my happiest memories of later years are of the two of us looking through the few photos of Dad in uniform and reliving his army days....(however, I'm pretty sure he never told me everything!).

Dad lived every day of his life with purpose and intent. His quiet strength, support and determination in the face of adversity inspired me to do the same.

Strong, softly spoken and sincere, a truly gentle Gentleman, I miss him every day, but I know he's not far away, he's right where he's always been, by my side cheering me on and encouraging me to live my best life!

Good night and God Bless you Dad, reunited with your one true love, your beloved wife Mary.

I have so much to thank WCASG for. You helped restore my Dad to full health, you inspired my career and most precious of all you gave me time with my Dad, my Best Friend and Inspiration.

Anne-Marie Cooper

Our sincere condolences to those of you that have lost loved ones recently.