Quarterly Newsletter – January 2020

A warm welcome to our quarterly newsletter

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, you beautiful lot! Thanks for making 2019 the best year we've ever had and here's to a wonderful 2020 together.

Wow! what a busy past 3 months it's been. We have held the most activities ever and had so many terrific events. We have gained some lovely new members that are settling in brilliantly. A big welcome to our newest members and a big hello to all our loyal members that come week after week. We also want to say a huge thank you to everyone that's been helping lately. We very much appreciate all the help we get with clearing the room and tidying up.

We want to say a massive thank you to all that contributed to our Christmas Hamper Raffle and bought and sold tickets. Our Bumper Raffle 1st prize had over 60 items and was a hamper fit for our Queen. Not only did you sell tickets, but Hays Travel in Port Talbot sold them on our behalf, we also held 3 Christmas craft fairs. We raised an incredible £1761. The importance of this Raffle was that most of the funds we raised came from the public. You tirelessly support us and we sometimes feel it's you guys we ask over and over for money, so along with our Nataly Churchill Nights, Christmas raffle, and Christmas Craft Fairs, we are raising funds from the public and by doing this our name and reputation are getting out there to other stroke survivors that need us. Thank you so much, you were amazingly generous. Well done to all the lucky winners.

What Stroke Group Means to Me:

Three years ago I had my first stroke and within the first 3 weeks I ended up having a numerous number of strokes. I thought life as I knew it had ended. I found it hard to cope but I got by day to day. I crafted as a child due to having Scoliosis, so then after having the strokes I turned back to crafting after not being able to get out and get a card for my sister's birthday. I'm a peace when I craft, it relaxes me and stimulates my brain. I was offered stroke group from within the hospital and other sources in the last three years, but I refused until I went back to work. I work in direct payments and my boss Vicki Thomas told me she knew people within the stroke group and gave me the push I needed to go. I thank my lucky stars I took that leap of faith and started going. Since starting stroke group, I no longer feel like a victim, I know I'm a survivor. Stroke group has given me the confidence I needed, it's also helped me accept the damage the stroke has caused and understanding more about myself. Stroke group is brilliant and everyone in it. I have my social life back, and I've taken part in many events and activities. This group has made such a big difference in my life and I will be forever grateful, especially after the heartache myself, my kids and my family endured in that time of my life. With the help it has given me I wish I attended this group sooner. Adele Collins

What we have planned at weekly group meetings in 2020

We carefully looked at all the Surveys you completed at our AGM in September and have planned 2020 events and activities accordingly. You told us you preferred hands-on activities at weekly group meetings, so we have changed that for you all. We hope you've been enjoying the things we've done during the past few months. We intend to have more fun, interaction and laughter each week. Any ideas you have are gratefully received. Look at Rob smile making a bath bomb and he hasn't even got a bath!!

Grants & Donations

Last year cost a staggering £25,000 to run our group but we only raised £23,000 so we had to rely on funds we had raised in previous years that were in the bank. It's incredibly important that not only do we hold fundraising activities but we also apply for Grants and donations from many different places.

In November we were awarded £3062 from the **Co-op local community causes.** Thank you, Lee and Jon Evans, for getting this amazing pot of money.

Briton Ferry Community Shop awarded us £500 towards the incredible work we do. All monies that the shop raised get split annually and donated to successful local applicants. Last year they donated £37000 to a huge number of local groups. So, if you're having a new year or spring clean please donate your unwanted items to their shop at Villiers Street, Briton Ferry.

Local Giving Magic Little Grants awarded us a £500 grant towards a physical activity. We thought what better than to hold regular cycling events with Bikeability in Dunvant? We will let you know soon when the cycle events will be happening.

TATA Steel have donated us £250 as a local community neighbour.

National Science Week have donated us £500 toward a trip to Techniquest in Cardiff

We are also waiting to hear from NPTCBC 3rd Sector Grant and a Big Fund Lottery application. Fingers crossed everyone.

This is what this busy NPTSG bunch has been up to.

Blackpool

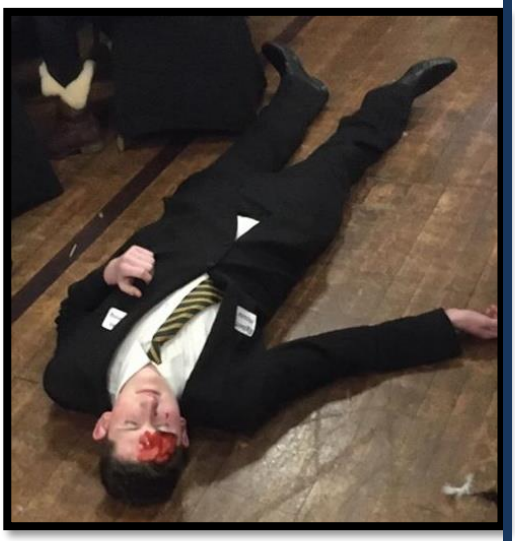
At the end of October NPTSG organised a 5-day trip to the illuminations in Blackpool. Our travellers went on a recce of what awaited the Strictly Come Dancing contestants. The luxurious fabled tower ballroom was visited and dancing viewed and afternoon tea taken. A visit to the top of the tower where the view was fantastic, although a little breezy. The tower circus, dungeons, and an evening of cabaret was thoroughly enjoyed at Funny Girl (Lee and Tony felt they really fitted in). Fleetwood Market and Blackpool pleasure beach were also visited. As you can see it was a fully packed week of seaside extravaganzas. All the travellers wanted to say what an amazing time was had with wonderful friends.

Brecon Mountain Railway

After a competitive but fun morning pumpkin carving, a 40-odd strong group of us made our way to the Brecon Mountain Railway. After a bit of lunch in the station cafe (or nearby McDonald's for some) we made our way to the platform and boarded the steam train. We then enjoyed a fantastic ride into the mountains surrounded by absolutely stunning scenery. After reaching our turning point, we came back to the converted railway carriage we had earlier passed for a much looked forward to warming cuppa. Just what was needed on a cold day! A lovely couple of hours passed too quickly a great afternoon out had by both the adults and children.

Murder Mystery @ St Cakes School

This year instead of our usual Halloween Quiz, we decided to do something completely different. A do it ourselves Murder Mystery at St Cakes Public School @ The Four Winds. What an amazing night it was. All the schoolhouses competed by answering the St Cakes challenge and solving the murder. Who would have thought the French Teacher Sherri was capable of murdering both the Headmaster Jon and the Head boy Rhys?? Brutal!! Solving the murder was a tie break and it went to Marys table. The best actor went to Head boy Rhys, the best house song was performed by Amanda's table and the best costume was Paul (Paulene). Talk about a great night. Thank you to everyone who came and made it such a fun night.



Birmingham Christmas Market

Sunday 7.45am and we were on the coach in Swansea Bus Station preparing for our trip to Coventry and Birmingham Christmas Markets. Our driver was called Eric and was a lovely man. Makes such a difference if you have a nice driver! We had quite a few pick ups on route but then we were on our way. There were 20 + members from our group who were making the journey. Plenty of banter and chatter all the way.

We stopped at Gloucester services and then Stratford upon Avon. Shakespeare's home. The town was well decorated with Christmas decorations and the Christmas market was wonderful. We then made our way to the Britannia Hotel Coventry. The hotel is in a fabulous location. Just around the corner from the shopping centre. Just right for the few that didn't want to travel to Birmingham the next day. Monday saw a great day.The majority went off to Birmingham and a few stayed in Coventry. That evening we again met in the bar and took part in a music quiz. Two teams (from our group) managed to be joint winners and won a bottle of bubbly each. There was also some dancing going on and a great time was had by all. The next morning it was time for breakfast and then to get all our bags on the coach. Eric manfully managed to fit everything in the coach. I think we all came home with double the amount that we went with – everyone had bought far too much! It was a wonderful 3 day break. Great company; great venue and a great trip.

Cardiff Christmas Market Shopping Trip
22 of our members caught a slightly delayed private coach to Cardiff for a bit of retail therapy. The weather stayed kind for our little excursion, and we helped keep the economy and the high streets thriving by spending in the markets, shops and cafes. We hope to continue providing trips out in the future. However, this will depend on interest and commitment from our members as we really need to have more bums on seats to make them a viable group activity.

Christmas Lunch
This year's Christmas Lunch was hosted at Manor Park Clydach. What an amazing venue this was. The room was absolutely beautiful, the food was delicious and the staff were incredible, they couldn't do enough for us. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed we had so much positive feedback. We held the draw to our Public Prize Raffle and an additional raffle was held just for Christmas lunch with Ann winning a Christmas hamper (she's now won it 2 years in a row! 😊). We had a magician, table top quizzes, pass the Christmas parcel and more importantly lots of laughter and good cheer. Due to Manor Park being such an overwhelming success we have booked the venue for next years Christmas Lunch which will be Friday 11th December, put the date in your diary.

What's coming up for you to enjoy

Wednesday 8th January – A&S Animal Encounters
A&S Animal Encounters will be coming along with their animals to say Hello to us and teach us all about them. What better way to start off the New Year than with some animals?

Bikeability Wales
During the new year we are going to be taking names of those that want to go to Bikeability in Dunvant. We have been awarded a £500 Magic Little Grant to spend there. So, get ready to put your names down and join in.

BikeAbility Wales
the inclusive cycling charity

Monday 20th January 7pm - Grand Sultan Curry Night Fundraiser
We are having another all you can eat buffet style Curry night at the award winning Grand Sultan in Margam Port Talbot. Enjoy their stunning dishes, venue and hospitality at just £13.50 per person of which £5 goes straight back to our lovely group. What could be better than eating, enjoying and raising funds? See Paul as booking and payment in advance is essential.

Four Winds Lunch - 5th February 1pm
Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the last carvery we had here. So, join us for lunch after group for a carvery at the Four Winds for 1pm. See Steve for bookings. Members that have attended 8 out of the past 12 meetings will qualify for a free meal or it is a cost of just £6.95 per person

Nataly Churchill

Another mind-blowing night was had at our evening of psychic mediumship from Nataly Churchill at Aberavon Beach Hotel in November. This event raised our group a jaw dropping £732!! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed as usual and we have another chance for you to come along on 18th February. £8 per person – See Emma

Thursday 12th March – Techniquest Cardiff
For British Science Week we will be visiting Techniquest in Cardiff. This will most probably be followed by a few hours round Cardiff Bay. We haven't got all the details confirmed yet, we will let you know as soon as they are. Members that have attended 8 out of the past 12 meetings will qualify for this free event. Non qualifying members are welcome but will have to pay.

Sunday 29th March 1pm Shanghai Chef Chinese Lunch Fundraiser Penlan Swansea.
Due to popular demand we are having another 'All you can eat Chinese buffet'. It's just £13.50 per person of which £3.50 goes back to our group. See Steve as booking & payment in advance is essential.

We're for life after stroke

Dates for Your Diary:

8th January – A&S Animals
15th Jan – Captain David Jones
Monday 20th – Grand Sultan Curry Night Fundraiser £13.50pp – See Paul
22nd Jan – Rhian Gadd Healthy Eating
29th Jan – Make Our Own Bird Feeders
5th Feb – Talk Ann Marie Thomas
5th Feb – Carvery Lunch @ Bryncoch Inn FREE See Steve
12th Feb – Name that Tune
Tuesday 18th February – Nataly Churchill Fundraiser £8pp – See Emma
19th Feb (Half Term) Loopy Lews Magician
26th Feb – Felting St Davids Day Dragon Rachel Prince 2 Inspire You
4th March – Spring Planting with Mel
11th March –– NEST – Information Talk
Thursday 12th March –Senydd – Lunch & Techniquest Cardiff - See Emma
18th March – Rapidough
Sunday 29th March – Shanghai Chef Chinese Fundraiser £13.50pp - See Steve
25th March – Woodworking

New website: nptsg.org.uk

facebook.com/neathporttalbotstrokegroup
Email – info@nptsg.org.uk
Twitter: @nptsgstroke
Instagram: nptstrokegroup
Phone: 0330 088 4719