Winter Newsletter
January 2023

Happy New Year everyone!!

We hope you all had a lovely Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

It was such a lovely build up to Christmas at group last month. We enjoyed Christmas crafts at group, a Christmas celebration group, Christmas Lunch and the icing on the cake was definitely Luminate, that put us all in the Christmas spirit.

We have a jam-packed new year to enjoy together, with all our weekly group meetings planned and many social events too. Some we have firm dates for and others need a little fine tuning, as soon as we have firm dates we will let you know. We do hope that you will be joining us in all the things we have planned.

Over the years Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group has gained strong working relationships with many other voluntary organisations that provide social support in our community. One of our strongest bonds is to the Stroke Association. Here is one of the support services they run with awesome volunteers from our group.

Stroke Support Peer Group: NPT Hospital

In 2019 the first Peer Group in Wales started locally in Singleton Hospital Swansea supporting the patients on Ward 7 who were undertaking their rehab after a stroke. This went well until the service stopped because of the restrictions imposed because of Covid. The Support Group was able to carry on in a limited way via Zoom technology. Since then the stroke rehab services for Swansea Bay Health Board are transferring to Neath Port Talbot Hospital and it has been possible recently to re-introduce the face to face service with the active support of the ward clinical, nursing and therapies staff.

Amanda and Dave of the Stroke Association and five volunteer members from the original team-Richard and Maureen Casagrande, Jon Evans, Gareth Palmer and Huw Williams.

The patients are identified by the ward staff to Amanda and Dave and then have the opportunity to meet with the Support Group in the coffee bar on a Thursday afternoon over a cuppa. During that session the aims are

- To provide support to the patients (and relatives, carers, partners etc)
- To provide assurance by sharing our experience of strokes
- To help patients by offering encouragement, reassurance and a listening ear
- To help prepare for discharge and by giving examples that "there is life after a stroke"

Mind you if the patients are interested in a variety of other subjects and want to talk about the return of Warren Gatland, or
who should have won Strictly? or
has Jon or Maureen got the nicest dog?
that's ok if it means the patient is engaged and feels confident to talk that is an important step forward in their rehabilitation. We are there to help guide them through the maze of life after stroke and how to get the most out of it.
It looks as if this scheme will really take off again in 2023! Huw Williams

What we have been up to…

Race Night

At last, on the 22nd October, we met together for our first social evening. It seemed like a lifetime since we were all able to meet together for a social gathering. It was wonderful. We also used the evening as a fundraiser for our great group.
The evening was held in the 12 Knights public house in Margam. Over 60 of us met to have a meal and 8 horse races! You could purchase horses and jockeys as well as place a bet on the actual video races. 12 Knights looked after us very well and all the meals were delivered in a timely fashion.
It was so lovely all being together and lots of fun was had by all. Overall we were able to raise over £1,000, which will help us to continue with our fantastic programme of events and activities. Maureen

World Stroke Day

On Friday, the 28th of October, we held our second World Stroke Day information event, where we had over 35 stroke specific exhibitors. The event was well publicised by using leaflets, social media and the radio and we had many people through the door on the day. We had people from Bike Ability, NPT Mind, Blood Pressure Testing, Driving Assessment Service, Hwyl, Neath Library, to name but a few.

We also had five speakers on the day we had our very own Mike Pursey talking about his stroke recovery, and his climbing of Pen Y Fan, then we had Dr Abankwa who spoke about stroke services in Swansea Bay health board, we had Tracey from NPT Mind, who told us about a project that we are trying to put together in partnership and the success of a previous project. We had Richard Pawsey, talking about Stroke recovery and how we should never give up. Finally we had Matt O'Grady from the Stroke Association, talking to us about the lobbying that the Stroke Association are doing in Wales and how it has helped get a better priority for ambulance services for stroke survivors. It was great to have such a varied array of speakers, and I think people found it very interesting throughout the day. I know a lot of exhibitors came to me at the end of the day and said they learnt an awful lot about Stroke by listening to the speakers and going around different exhibitors.

Since World Stroke Day we have had about 15 new members mostly attributed to World Stroke Day and we see this as a great success as not only did we provide valuable information for stroke survivors throughout South Wales we also had people in our local community, engage with our group and hopefully get the support and help that our group provides.

During the day we had visits from Porthcawl Stroke Group, Bridgend Stroke Group, Seven Sisters Stroke Group, Ammanford Stroke Group as well as many stroke survivors from the local area. It was lovely to see so many people and even better that some are now getting the support that they have been needing.

We couldn't have put the event on without the help of our wonderful volunteers for World Stroke Day that worked so hard to make the event such a success. Our thanks go out to everybody involved in making the day go so smoothly. Many of the exhibitors complimented us on how well run the day was and how they had been nothing like this in the area for many years and it is the best event that they had ever been to, that is testament to how hard the volunteers worked on the day. Thank you all so much.

We look forward to World Stroke Day 2023 and with your help, aim to make it a jewel in the crown of Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group. Paul

Christmas Celebration & Buffet

What a delightful buffet we had in group with a fabulous free and abundant spread for us all to enjoy. (Even artichokes!) (The sausage rolls, and pasties were simply the best).

Chris (Shuffling Shoes) supplied our Christmas tunes to get us all in the Christmas spirit. The Mayor of Briton Ferry was there to help serve and serve we did. Each table laden with goodies (and a few goody bags were taken home too) and our wonderful and priceless volunteers did us proud. A huge thank you to them all.

And what about the silly Christmas games that everyone got involved in? What a laugh they were. Well done everyone for being such good sports.

Christmas is a time to celebrate. And we do need to celebrate that we are all still here, we have survived and to be grateful for all we have, even if it's not much. Life is different… but group is there to show that, life goes on and although different it can be fabulous! What a lovely group of friends we are and as a group we are family.

We hope our group supports you as survivors and your family and loved ones and we always try to do that in style like our Wednesday groups and on our last meeting of the year. We hope you all had a fabulous time and hope that you had a lovely safe and festive holiday, and you are ready to do it all again in 2023! Helena

Christmas Lunch

On the 16th December we held our Christmas lunch at the Manor Park Country House Hotel, Clydach. Our traditional Christmas lunch was wonderful. Plenty of food and platters were quickly refilled if requested. We were joined at the lunch by the Mayor and Mayoress of Neath Port Talbot and the Mayor of Briton Ferry. We were entertained by Woolfey, with songs both old and new and he also took requests.

We had another fabulous raffle with lots of prizes. Rob Head not only won, for the 2nd time, 'guess the number of Brussel sprouts' he also won the first prize of the raffle – a hamper. A lucky day for Rob.

We were fully booked for the lunch but unfortunately during the week we had 25 cancellations (16 on the day) due to the dreaded Covid and other lurgies going around. This meant our table plans were changed over 10 times during the few days leading up to the lunch, which unfortunately led us to having to pay for these meals in full.

Phew, it sure is a huge amount of work to organise these events.

A great afternoon was had by all.
Maureen

Christmas Hamper Raffle

Christmas Hamper Raffle

Our Christmas Hamper Raffle was a huge success. You were all so incredibly generous with your donations of food and drink, we were truly humbled by you all. Out of all your donations we were able to create 7 hampers of which 5 went to group members or guests at our Christmas Lunch. We also had an additional 7 prizes ranging from meal vouchers at a local restaurant to a chocolate bundle and prosecco and Toblerone prizes.

Chris the DJ of Shuffling Shoes drew all the winners at our Christmas Celebration Group and all 10 were contacted on the day and their prizes were either delivered or collected. We are so pleased to tell you that the 1st prize hamper with over 90 items and a meat voucher was won by our very own Julie Crowther. Her partner bought the winning raffle ticket at our World Stroke Day event.

Last year we introduced a new feature on our website that allows us to buy tickets for events and the ability to buy Raffle tickets online. What a great success that was. 3 of our Christmas Hamper Raffle Prize winners were through tickets bought online. Its so easy to do. You simply select the quantity and enter your card details. Our Paul Thompson bought some tickets online to 'try it out' and it won him Hamper number 3!

Overall, we made well over £1500 in cash sales and nearly £200 in online sales. What an achievement that was. Well done everyone, you are AWESOME!!! Emma

Luminate

“The spectacular, illuminated trail, full of wonder and intrigue, to delight and enthral your senses.” This did not disappoint!

As darkness descended, we (those who could) all joined together for an enchanting journey, as we weaved a captivating light trail through the stunning, historic gardens of Margam Country Park and Castle. We immersed ourselves in a mesmerising mile long walk, with stunning lighting installations and fabulous interactive elements. The lights, the fairies (my favourite) the light show on the castle and then the food wagons with sumptuous burgers, brilliant pizzas and hot pork rolls all served with a smiles and Christmas cheer and shared with our NPTSG family and friends in a lovely evening (no rain). The Grinch would have melted in this fabulous evening’s atmosphere.

To top it all off the open pit fires and toasting marshmallows (some experiencing this for the first time), it was truly magical. Please can we go again next year? Helena

Other things we have been up to…

Mayors charity Christmas concert 2022

The trustees were invited to join the Mayor Robert Wood for his annual charity Christmas concert. It was an honour to be invited and we thoroughly enjoyed watching all the local talent that was on display, there were dance groups and singers there were even musicians and a band and the finale was a Christmas singalong which was very festive with everybody back on stage. Snow was falling and everybody was singing, happy and laughing. It was an absolute pleasure to attend and we felt so lucky to have been invited as the Mayors guests, as we are one of his chosen charities of the year. Paul

Community Christmas Tree Festival

Margam Park are held their annual Community Christmas Tree Festival for everyone to enjoy.
We along with 47 other community groups had a tree on display. The purpose of our tree was to raise awareness of stroke and preventative measures we can all take to avoid stroke.
Our lovely tree was decorated by hand and all the decorations were made by our very own Helena and Phil Gammond.
Thank you both so much, we do hope that it encouraged some visitors to check their blood pressure. Helena

Other news…

Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group have several ways that we operate. The easiest thing to see what we do are our weekly group meetings. We also hold varying social activities from meals out, day trips and fundraising evenings but that is not all we are.

From the very start of our group in 2014 we knew how important having an online presence was, so we joined Facebook, mainly because this is now how the huge majority of us live our lives and more importantly it was free. Through Facebook we can easily share all our upcoming events and photographs of what we get up to in weekly group and when we are out and about. This medium also helps us to fundraise and raise our public image and reach stroke survivors and their loved ones in our community that have yet to access help or support.

Approximately 5 years ago we made the decision to have a website and now this website has served its purpose and has become very dated. At the time we had this website built we had limited funds and had to create the content ourselves which was very time consuming…and we are no web designers. During the past 2 years we have budgeted for a new website and are working with a wonderful and talented media team 'Dynamic'.

It is vital in this day and age of progressing technology that we stay current and visible. We are also introducing new ways of selling tickets for our events online, so it lessens the load on our trustees. By selling things online we will have an electronic paper trail and it also saves us from the burden of collecting and keeping cash which is a worry in itself and a huge responsibility.

The new website build has been going in the background since November. We have had a few hiccups with Covid and Christmas but are excited that during January 2023 it will be launched. We can't wait to share with you our new website and helping you to get online with us. Emma

https://www.nptsg.org.uk https://wwwfacebook.com/neathporttalbotsrokegroup

What we have coming up for you to enjoy…

Chinese Night 16th January 6.30pm

On Monday, the 16th of January at 6:30 pm. We are holding a Chinese night at the New Garden Chinese restaurant in Aberkenfig. The price of this event is £17.50 and will include a set meal as detailed in the picture above.

Anybody can attend this event. Please invite your friends and family as the more the merrier, we do not have a limit to the amount of people that we can take, we will also be doing a raffle on the night to raise funds for our Stroke Group.

This is the first time we have been to New Garden as a group, however, from previous experience, the food is fantastic and we always get a warm welcome. We hope that we can make this a successful night and everybody has a lovely time.

To book your place simply open your camera on your phone and scan the QR code above. A link will appear on your screen, click this link and it will take you to a page on our website that allows you to buy tickets online. Please don't be put off by the thought of online banking. This is so much simpler; all you need to do is select the quantity of tickets you want and then enter your card details. If you are struggling to do this, please see Emma, Maureen or Paul.

If you have food allergies or are vegetarian just let Emma know and you will be catered for separately. Just to let you know, there will be no fish in any of the above choices.

Lunch @ Brewers Fayre 8th February 1pm

After group at 1pm on the 8th February we will be enjoying a meal at Brewers Fayre in Swansea (near Asda).

As soon as we have the menus from the restaurant we will be taking your pre-orders.

Guided Coach Tour from the Gower to Aberavon (Date in March To Be Confirmed)

We will be running a guided coach tour along a beautiful route through the Gower all the way to Aberavon. We will also be stopping for lunch

Annie from Wales will be our guide and she will be educating us along the way. As soon as we have all the details confirmed we will let you know.

Nataly Churchill Psychic Medium Evening Mon 13th March 7pm Twelve Knights Port Talbot

Nataly Churchill Psychic Evening

Mon 13th March 7pm
Twelve Knights,
Margam, Port Talbot

Tickets £10
Phone Emma
07456 451073

At long last we can return to hosting amazing evenings with the incredible and mind-blowing psychic medium Nataly Churchill.

Tell your friends and family that she is back.

If you have never experienced an evening with her…please do. She delivers the most jaw dropping messages from loved ones that have passed.

See Emma for more information.

List of Events 2023

Upcoming Events

January 4	Talk - Lundy - Heaven on Earth
January 11	Laughter Yoga
January 16	Chinese Evening @ New Garden Aberkenfig £17.50 - See Emma
January 18	African Drumming
January 25	Making Bird Feeders
February 1	Art Collage Workshop
February 8	Talk - What Does She do in That Shed?
February 8	Free Lunch @ Brewers Fayre
February 15	Gentle Movement To Music
February 22	Willow Weaving
March 1	Blankety Blank with Susan D
March 8	Talk - The History of Nursery Rhymes
March TBC	Guided Coach Tour From The Gower to Aberavon & Lunch
March 13	Nataly Churchill Psychic Medium Evening @ 12 Knights 7pm
March 15	Debra John Performance
March 22	Talk - Death in Swansea in the Victorian Age
March 29	Rock Painting for Jersey Park
April 5	Easter Activities & Hot Cross Buns
April 5	Walk @ Jersey Park to Hide Painted Rocks for Children to Find
April 12	Easter Games Taskmaster Style

Contact Us

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