Winter Newsletter
December 2023

Hello everyone!!

We have had the busiest few months and we still have lots of things to look forward to on the run up to Christmas.

Our last weekly group in Briton Ferry this year is Wednesday 13th December. The hall closes early in order for them to treat the floors. The first Wednesday back in the new year is Wednesday 3rd January 2024.

2024 is the year we celebrate our 10th Anniversary, so we will be doing our very best to hold as many fun weekly groups and fantastic social events. In the planner for 2024 as well as our already advertised events, we have jotted in a trip to see Jesus Christ Superstar in Swansea Arena; a Sponsored Walk on Aberavon Beach Promenade; a Car Treasure Hunt; a few days away trip to Windsor in the Summer and a 10th Year Anniversary Comedy Night with the hilarious Phil Doyle and his daughter and another Christmas Market Trip plus much more.

You can keep up to date with all our upcoming events on our website and our Facebook page. Please bookmark our website on your phones homepage. If you want help doing this please come and see Paul, Maureen or Emma.

2024 will be the year that we move the purchase of event tickets online. This is to help our trustees. As our group is now so large and incredibly busy mistakes handling cash and taking orders is a huge worry. Purchasing tickets online will ease this process for us. Don't worry, each week we will be bringing along a laptop. Just pop and see us and we will help you do it or do it for you.

Beryl & Roger's Recovery

It's not just the person who has had a stroke who is "the survivor" it's you as well, the wife, brother, mother, girlfriend, partner, father, friend. We are all survivors. Roger and I were just an ordinary couple and we had a happy comfortable lifestyle. We have been married for 54 years and have 2 sons a grandson and 3 granddaughters. Before retirement I was a Patient Experience / Complaint Manager for an NHS Trust. Roger was an Electrical Engineer for 37 years. He decided to take early severance, then commenced a second career as a GP Practice Manager for

about 14 yrs. before retiring.
We were both active in our free time involved in a local church, a number of clubs and organisations and worked with youth. We moved to Neath 20 months ago. During 2021/22 Rogers health had started to deteriorate. He has a complex mix of conditions such as Cardiac Arrhythmia, diagnosed with second Stage Liver Failure. In March this year he suffered a stroke which seemed like the last straw. All of these conditions have an impact on each other.
Life now is very different and often a roller coaster. Taken up with weekly 1 or more hospital appointments for bloods plus physio appointments.
We are blessed but I can't pretend that I/we still grieve for what we have lost but endeavour to celebrate what we have. Honestly, life is not the same almost all of the previous interests hobbies have all disappeared. This is not the life we expected or dreamed of, there are high days and there are low day and still the odd day when I want to run away. However, I know that I am not alone.
However on a more positive note we were encouraged to Join the Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group by Dave Jones from the Stroke Association Recovery Service who we met in hospital and later visited us a home. I have to confess I was not too keen quite sceptical to be honest but he encouraged us to give it a go. He told us that "it was the group you never want to join but when you do your very glad you did".
I am so grateful to the Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group for the help support and encouragement that they give us week on week.
They work hard to provide us with practical help advice and encouragement and an opportunity to share concerns with like minded people with similar but different issues. With talks, days out, art and craft and activities designed to promote independence, stroke recovery and help people to reclaim their lives but most of all to have a laugh mostly at ourselves and of course some of the more whacky things we do. Helpful volunteers also provide us with tea, biscuits and smiles each week which is infectious and were really grateful.

The future: - who knows
But God gave us memories that we might have Roses in December.
(J M Barrie)

Try to be positive.
Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope Can set you free.
(The Shawshank Redemption) (1994)

Christmas Hamper Raffle

This year's Christmas Raffle is looking fabulous. We are offering a minimum of 6 Christmas Hampers and numerous other prizes.
All the hampers are made up of items that have been brought in by you! We are so thankful for all your wonderful efforts. Bringing in such a great variety of goods and also selling the tickets, we couldn't do this without you.
We sold a number of tickets at the World Stroke Day event. We are also selling tickets through our website. We are getting them out there!! Please pass on the various ways your friends and families can purchase tickets. All the proceeds are for our group and will allow us to put on fantastic events throughout the year

What we have been up to…

Comedy Night

Another successful evening of entertainment was had by all at the Aberavon Beach Hotel.
We had a great musical slot with a range of songs from the Singing Armadillos. They are always a joy to raise the spirits including Jason who has moved onto other roles.
There was plenty of chatter and enjoyment throughout the evening and during the hot meal. The comedian was mostly on top form with a jazzy jacket and although he may not have been to everyone's taste the majority of

survivors, family and friends who attended found him hilarious
Rob gave him a few challenges, like all good audiences should and ended up on stage with him! The raffle is always a well received highlight especially for the winners!!!

Pig Race Night

In October we enjoyed a Pig Racing Charity Fundraising event in the 12 Knights Margam. We were so busy enjoying ourselves that we didn't take any photos. What a fantastic night it was raising well over £1000.

Our race nights are so successful that we have one in the diary for 2024 already. Who knows what will be racing next year. We've had dogs, horses, pigs…what's next?

World Stroke Day Information Event

On Friday 27th October we held our annual World Stroke Day Information Event at the Aberafan Beach Hotel. We had over 45 exhibitors, five speakers and we had over 300 people through the doors. We saw lots of new faces and people that we had never met before. I would like to thank all our volunteers who worked so hard on the day, it was exhausting but very rewarding and by the end of the day, quite euphoric. It was great that we had TV coverage from ITV Wales and they did a lovely piece, which if you haven't seen it yet, is on our Facebook page. Our speakers were fantastic. We heard from Jason Haynes; Dr Abankwa; Rachel from WASP and our very own Michael Pursey. There were some excellent talks and also some very emotional ones. I cried most of the way through Michael's talk. It has been lovely to see new people come through the door as a result of World Stroke Day and that they may get the help and support that we have enjoyed for many years. People are still finding our leaflets all over Neath, Port Talbot and Swansea and we are still getting contacted which is great. We have already booked for next year's event back at the Aberafan Beach Hotel so the preparations have begun. Once again, thank you to all our volunteers and to everybody that came and supported the event on the day, you all made it a fantastic success. Thank you very much.

The Launch of NPT WASP (Wellbeing After Stroke Project)

This year's World Stroke Day event had an extra special feature…The Launch of Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project aka NPT WASP. NPT WASP is a partnership project between NPT Stroke Group and NPT Mind. It is a project that has been specifically designed to support stroke survivors, their families and carers within Neath Port Talbot. In 2021, NPT Stroke Group and NPT Mind began their work together, collaboratively designing a service for a community who share the experience of the life changing impacts of stroke, whether it be as a stroke survivor, a family member or a carer.

For each year of the service, NPT WASP aims to support:

At least 160 Stroke Survivors, 80 carers of stroke survivors and 50 adult family members of stroke survivors to better equip them to look after their own mental & emotional health. The project will also provide at least 20 statutory and third sector organisations will a service to refer stroke survivors, carers & family members to for mental health support.

The NPT WASP Team got to work in early September, meeting one another and establishing working relationships, taking part in meetings with NPT Stroke Group and NPT Mind to learn the background and development of the project, the reasons for the creation of the project and the expectations of the project for the Team.

Since early October, the NPT WASP team began reaching out to members of NPT Stroke Group who had expressed an interest in getting support from the project, assessing their

individual needs and tailoring a support plan for each individual, whether this be accessing a psycho-educational group, attending a wellbeing session or utilising the counselling service. In this short space of time, the NPT WASP team have already begun offering support to over 60 individuals that have referred into the project, which I think you'll agree is an outstanding start!

The support from the project this far has received an overwhelmingly positive response, with staff receiving feedback such as this from a stroke survivor:

"The group is at such a relaxed pace, and the team are so friendly, that I feel confident and comfortable enough to speak in front of the group"

And from a family member of a stroke survivor:

"When I walk into the group, I know I'm in a safe space to talk about what I have and still am going through"

One particular piece of feedback we received, which we feel is so important to share, was from a stroke survivor, who said:

"I hope that other people will sign up to these groups, because I've been really surprised at how useful I've found them, and I want others to feel these benefits".

If you or someone you know would like to refer into the project, or simply get more information, you can

call Rachel on 07541760872 or email rachel@nptmind.org.uk

Birmingham Christmas Market

On Thursday 16th November at 7:15am, 54 of us set off on our travels where we first stopped off for the afternoon in Stratford-upon-Avon where we visited the Christmas shop, saw the sites of Stratford and enjoyed the delights of the local Wetherspoons. We then got back on the bus and travelled to our hotel, the Britannia Coventry, where we enjoyed good food and a half price bar all night, which was very welcome. On Friday we split into two groups, some people stayed in Coventry and about 40 of us went into Birmingham where we enjoyed the Christmas markets, shopping in the bull ring and many people enjoyed the delights of the world's largest Primark. Most of us were back on the bus at 4pm as we were told to do so,

however, there's always one or sometimes two, that are a little bit late, but I won't name and shame Kay and Adele. Whoops! We then went back to the hotel where we had dinner and most of us had an early night as we were quite tired. We were up even earlier the following morning to load our bags on the bus at 7:30am with breakfast at 8am. After we left the hotel we travelled down to Cheltenham where it was race day. There were lots of sights to be seen, men in tweed jackets and ladies in their fine clothes. It was a lovely Christmas market in Cheltenham, where I believe most people bought some little gifts or trinkets. Some people bought more than others, a lot more than others! Some of us then visited the local Yates's bar where we had some liquid refreshments and food. We returned home at about 6pm, absolutely exhausted, after having a lovely trip. We hope you all enjoyed and hope you can join us again next year, the destination is yet to be decided, but once again, thank you all for coming it wouldn't be the same without you.

What we have coming up for you to enjoy…

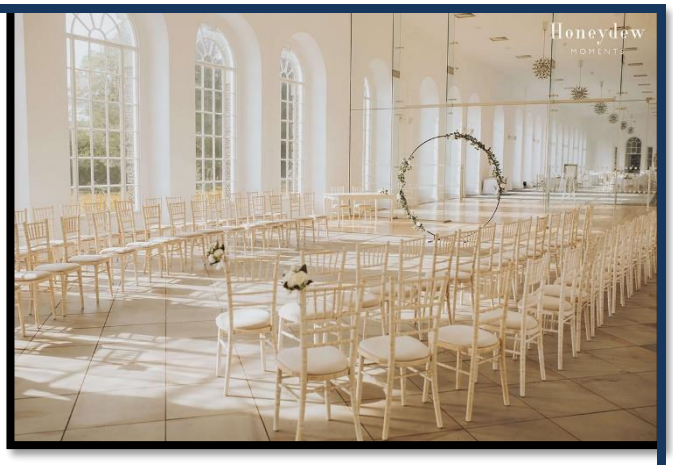
Christmas Celebration Group

We have arranged a fantastic Christmas celebration this year. It will be taking place in group on Wednesday 13th December. We will be extending the morning and we will be going on until about 2 p.m.

We will begin the day with some good fun games for everyone to enjoy. We will also be welcoming back Shuffling Shoes disco to get us in a fun Christmassy mood. Here you can have a go at karaoke and have a little jig about. We will also have a Caricature artist joining us so if you fancy having your picture done, now's your chance! All this and a sumptuous buffet for you all to enjoy.

What a wonderful day we will have to celebrate Christmas. Be there or be square!!

Christmas Lunch 14th December



This year we are pushing the boat out and having a luxurious Christmas Lunch in the stunning Orangery in Margam Park. The cost of the Christmas lunch is £37 for guests but for regular attendees of our weekly group, we are subsidising the cost to just £20 each. We will be enjoying a 3-course lunch and entertainment by Bethan Michael.

Unfortunately, we are unable to make any alterations to bookings from 22nd November as the venue require payment in advance and full table plans. Please arrive at The Orangery by 12.30pm at the very latest

Luminate 20th December

On Wednesday, the 20th of December at 5pm. We will be attending Luminate in Margam Park. This is a walk through the lights and light shows along a trail that will take us past the Orangery up to the Castle and back down again. This is an accessible trail and scooters and wheelchairs can be used. There will be stewards at certain points where they're raised cable covers to help you get over them If you're in a scooter or wheelchair. There are lights lighting the way all the way around. However please feel free to bring a torch to light up your way. Along the way you will have the opportunity to purchase hot chocolate, mulled wine, pizza, pigs in blankets, burgers, hotdogs, brownies, cakes and drinks. There will also be the opportunity to toast marshmallows on open fire pits. Please remember to wear sensible shoes and to wrap up warm. To book your tickets for this event, please see Paul.

The price for qualifying group attendees is £5 and for all other guests its £10. Please note that there will be no refunds available if you can't make it. It is a wonderful evening out that you can take at your own pace and you can spend as long as you want completing the trail. Please note that tickets are selling fast.

All ticket sales are online:

https://www.nptsg.org.uk/event/luminate/

Chinese Evening 15th January 2024

On Monday, the 15th 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 £18.50 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.

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.

All ticket sales are online:

https://www.nptsg.org.uk/event/chinese/

Nataly Churchill Evening 24th January 2024

Yet again another night with Nataly Churchill

24th January 7pm @ Aberavon Beach Hotel, Margam, Port Talbot

A lot of our attendees wonder why we hold regular Nataly Churchill Evenings and how it connects to our group.

A psychic medium certainly isn't for everyone but she has a massive following locally and sells out at every event.

Meaning that these 4 to 6 events we hold each year raise our group over £1000 each time.

Having such a large, vibrant and energetic group costs thousands to run each year so we rely heavily on fundraising events, such as these evenings.

Curry Night Fundraiser 26th February 2024

Monday 26th February 6.30pm we will be enjoying an all you can eat buffet style curry night at the stunning Grand Sultan, Margam. The cost is just £15 each of which £5 gets donated back to our group.
All tickets are online

Christmas Card Donations

If you would like to donate to our charity this year instead of sending Christmas cards please scan the QR code below to donate online or simply bring cash along to group and hand to Paul Maureen or Emma.

List of Events 2023/24

Upcoming Events

December 6	Christmas Stars
December 13	Christmas Celebration
December 14	Christmas Lunch - The Orangery
December 20	Luminate - Margam Park
January 3	Mini Olympics
January 10	Talk
January 15	Chinese Evening - The New Garden
January 17	Pebble Art
January 24	Bird Feeders with NPT WASP
January 24	Nataly Churchill - See Emma
January 31	Information Day
February 7	Art Workshop
February 14	Dog Therapy
February 21	National Chip Week Celebration
February 26	Curry Night - Grand Sultan
February 28	St Davids Day Celebration
March 6	Falls, CPR & Defibrillator Demo
March 13	Emma's Quiz
March 13	Lunch @ Brewers Fayre
March 14	Nataly Churchill - See Emma
March 20	Easter Crafts
March 27	Hot Cross Buns & Easter Hoopla
April 3	Talk
April 10	NPT WASP Mindfulness
April 17	Diamond Art
April 24	Sponsored Walk Info & Registration
May 1	Streetwise Music & Buffet
May 8	Pet Therapy
May 15	Sound Therapy with Akash
May 22	Sunflower Seeds and Bean Sowing
May 29	NPT WASP Session
June 1	Sponsored Walk TBC
June 5	Cut Flower Session

All events are subject to change.

Contact Us

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