



November
2021

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www.cardiac-rehab.org www.facebook.com/NGCRAC

TICKER NEWS

Official newsletter of the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity



GREAT NEWS!

You have told us that you are feeling much fitter since re-joining your community classes. Offering hope for your future.

Thank You - Gary Hicks, Out Going Chair

It's been just over three months now since our classes reopened in mid-July and I think it's fair to say that generally the signs of recovery following the covid lockdown seem encouraging. It's been exciting to see our members returning to their classes and I am pleased that everyone has welcomed our newly appointed class tutors. Thankfully they have settled in well and are providing rich and varied exercise regimes and I believe their success is one of the major factors behind a steadily rising increase in class attendances. The number of attendances in September was the highest since we restarted our classes.

This will be my last contribution to the ticker news as I resigned my position as chair at Annual General Meeting on the 26th October. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our members for the way in which they have supported the charity not only during my time as a trustee but more importantly during the last few years in my role as chair of the board of trustees.

I cannot sign off however, without acknowledging the outstanding contributions of each and every one of the trustees both current and former. They give freely of their time with little recognition. I would also like to thank those individuals who continue to provide their never-ending support to the fundraising committee. Without all of their input the charity simply would not exist. I wish everyone all the best for the future.

Gary

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P.S.

I'm always looking for new material for our newsletter. What about writing us a letter about your experience of having a heart problem or anything you think would be of interest? I look forward to hearing from you.

Jacky

cardiacarecommunity@outlook.com

New Chair - Jacky Miles M.B.E., PhD., R.G.N.

I am in a privileged position to be taking over from Gary as Chair. Gary has worked hard during the last two years in steering the charity through a very difficult time and deserves a big thank you from all of us. We have a strong team of trustee's who with your support will ensure we do the best to make 2022 a success.

Trustees

Gareth Davies - Deputy Chair

Tony Lowery - Secretary

Greg Overs - Treasurer

Nigel Dancer - Tutor manager

James Jones - I.T. and Marketing

Please refer to our website for more information on the Trustees, a report of the AGM and constitution.
www.cardiac-rehab.org

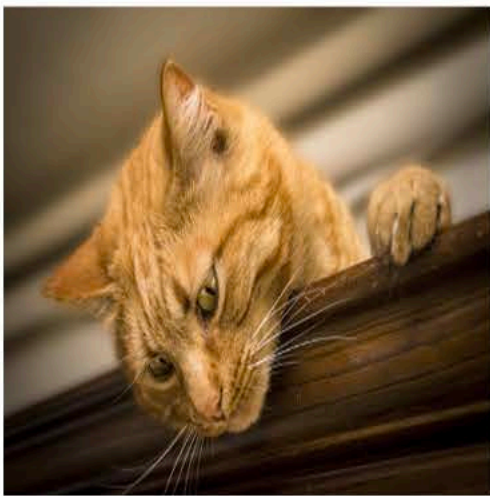


Gareth, Nigel, James, Jacky, Tony, Greg.

WANTED A NEW TRUSTEE TO EVEN UP THE SCORE!

Be part of a friendly charity that really understands what its like to have heart disease for people in our community and how vital long term exercise is to keep healthy. I'd love to hear from you **Jacky**
07484658319

FOR PET LOVERS! - Tim Cross (Monmouth Class)



Maybe Tigger looks like this!



Zara

'I am writing in response to Zara's column in the last 'TICKER NEWS' as I thought the cardiac rehab world should know who really runs things around here.

I'm tigger, although I'm so important I usually spell my name with a capital T, Tigger. I live on a wall in Monmouth from where I survey the neighbourhood and check that all is in order. I am as fierce and brave as a tiger which is where I get my name and I am as lovable as a bouncy character in a well known children's story. In short, I'm a cat. I don't have a picture of myself as I haven't yet learned to use a camera but I'm stripey, furry and well-built although I heard some of the rather hooliganistic local kittens use the words 'fat' and 'lazy' in the same sentence when they caught sight of me. Today's youngsters have it easy and should show me more respect!

If I am on the wall at the right time, I often see a black, rather handsome but quite self-important dog pulling a gentleman along on a lead (why are humans allowed out unless they are pulled by a dog?). This must be Zara who wrote in the last edition of TICKER NEWS.

I usually sleep in one of the houses on Zara's street (although I can always get a good meal by wondering around looking cute).

If anyone who lives near Zara is reading this, I like fish – provided it's good quality – none of this pre-packaged rubbish for me! – We cats have standards! Just leave it by the back door with a blanket for me to rest on! Zara, keep tugging your ward along. I'll keep an eye out for you and cheer you on!

The same for all other local dogs: Take your 'owners' for frequent walks. It does them the world of good'.

Tigger x

Support Us Your Local Cardiac Charity/ Get Fit / Inspire Others



Donations and bequests from March 2021

Thank you so much for your support. All the money we receive goes to keeping your classes going.

Regular monthly donations: Cafgye, June O'Brian, G Jarret, E Hemson, CR Meek;

Donations: Mr Collins, Mrs CR Davies, R A Booth, H Downey, LK Davies, P Griffiths.

Classes: Abertillery and Ebbw Vale.

A special thank you to two people: Rob Arnold, Caretaker of Wyndham Vowels Community Hall, who has been awarded a Community Chest Grant. The grant will offset our hall hire charges for a year! And Mary Wakeling who works tirelessly to drum up funds in Monmouth.

Behind the scenes - passionate about the cause

An important part of the work of our charity is to raise funds; to put it simply without this additional money we would not be able to survive. As a result of Covid restrictions, our fundraising income for 2021 at £10,702 is down 50% from the previous year. Our classes cost £26,042.

Despite the many challenges we have all faced over the last eighteen months we have small group of volunteers who continue to plan and organise events, keep the web site up-to-date and promote our service.

The group includes myself Jacky Miles, Kath Cleveland (membership secretary, Gareth Davies (trustee), Andrea Davies, James Jones (trustee), Suzanne Indge (Nurse Specialist), Tracey Lewis (secretary), Helen Sanchez (ex community class tutor) and Tony Lowery (trustee). We are sad to lose Tracey's secretarial support at the end of October as she now concentrates on working for the Anuerin Bevan University Health Board cardiac rehab team. A big thank you to Tracey who has been a loyal supporter to the charity for several years.

Do you value what we do? Have some spare time? Want to be part of a friendly team? Then take a leap and join us. For a successful 2022 we need you.

The more of us there are the easier it is! Contact me on cardiaccarecommunity@outlook.com

Coming up!

JUMBLEBEE - Our Pop Up Shop - is on its way. Donated by our supporters we have an excellent range of goods at bargain prices

Christmas Draw - our main fundraiser so please buy as many tickets as you can!

Alan Williams Social Evening of Music and Fun - 18th March, Nantyglo Rugby Club SOLD OUT

ELVIS is back in town next Spring! - date to be confirmed



SQUARE ONE - John Mason (Monmouth Class)

Lots of years back my folks kept asking what I was going to do when I left school. As for me, I was too busy with rugby football to think about such things, so I asked my dad if he had any ideas. His background was in mining: tunnelling in the Somme in World War 1 and as a mine surveyor afterwards. Wouldn't advise a career in the coal industry nowadays, he told me, but had I thought about further education? 'Give you more time to think about career opportunities and what you might enjoy doing to earn a living. There's a 'but,' he said, 'we can't afford university fees unless you get a scholarship.'



So I was on the London train, on my way to an interview at the university. No idea what to expect. When I arrived, I was shown into a room and greeted by a lady in a hairy tweed costume, smiling in welcome. She introduced her two colleagues as professors, both nodded without looking up from the documents they were reading. One of the men had long straggly grey hair, with a leather patch on the sleeve of his jacket which was coming adrift. 'Hope your journey to town went well,' she said. 'Tell me, what have you been doing in your last term at school?'

Didn't expect that, my mind raced in search of a response. Couldn't tell them all I thought about was rugby football, just about 24/7. Then I remembered in English class we had to choose a subject on which to write a thesis. Left it to the last minute, of course, then my mind was a complete blank. A school mate whose dad was in the wine trade suggested writing about French vineyards.

'I have been writing a thesis,' I said, spirits lifting.

'Excellent, do tell us the subject.' Three faces turned towards me

'The vineyards of France.' That should do it, I thought.

Turning to the man with patched jacket, she said 'George, that's one of your subjects I believe.'

Professor Patch looked up. 'Name eight of the communes of Burgundy.'

I could only mutter that my studies had covered the champagne area so far, Burgundy was next.

In the silence that followed, the look on all three faces was the same.

BACK TO SQUARE ONE!

PS unfortunately John is currently unable to attend class, we wish him well and hope he returns very soon.



MEMBERSHIP AND THE 200 CLUB A reminder on the importance of renewing or joining both the Membership and the '200 Club'. They are a vital part of our regular income. As a member you get a reduced class fee and in joining the '200 Club' you may be lucky and win a cash prize!

Joining forms are available on www.cardiac-rehab.org or from your class Tutor. We have 106 '200 Club' members, let's try and increase it to 150 members in 2022. The next draw is on the first weekend in December

CLASS TIMETABLE



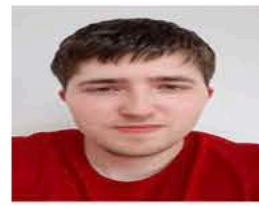
Tom

0779137788



Zavi

07845798655



Callum

07491398877



Alun

Tom, Tues, Wyndham Vowles Community Centre Abertillery NP13 1P, 11.45 - 12.45

Tom, Tues, Usk Memorial Hall NP15 1LH, 14.00 - 15.00

Callum, Wed, Orpheus Hall Tredegar NP22 4LF, 10.30 - 11.30

Callum, Wed, Ebbw Vale Catholic Church NP23 6JQ, 12.00 - 13.00

Callum, Wed, The Band Hall Blaenavon NP4 9NH, 14.00 - 15.00

Callum, Wed, Winchestown OAP Hall NP23 4BD, 16.00 - 17.00

Zavia, Thurs, Llanfoist Community Hall NP7 9LP, 12.00 - 13.00

Zavia, Thurs, Wyndham Vowles Abertillery NP13 1PJ, 14.00 - 15.00

Callum, Thurs, Monmouth Leisure Centre NP25 3DP, 12.15 - 13.15

Tom/ Callum, Sat, Llanfoist Community Hall NP7 9LP, 09.00 - 10.00

Tom/ Callum, Sat, Llanfoist Community Hall NP7 9LP, 10.00 - 11.00



It's me again talking about my favourite subject CHOLESTEROL

Suzanne Indge - Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurse Specialist

There is a "new kid on the block" called Lipoprotein(a) or better known as LP(a). It is an independent risk factor for atherosclerosis which runs in some families and not related to lifestyle. It can be linked to heart disease, strokes, heart failure and aortic valve disease. It is like having a Velcro patch put onto the LDL cholesterol (LDL being the harmful type of cholesterol).

LP(a) is not measured in primary care but we are testing patients in secondary care if they have:

- premature cardiovascular disease – under the age of 60
- a family history of premature cardiovascular disease
- family history of elevated LP(a)
- familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH)
- those with recurrent cardiovascular disease despite optimum medical treatment.

So what's the good news?

All patients identified with raised LP(a) are referred to the specialist cholesterol clinic with the aim of better control of LDL cholesterol (below 1.4). They are all offered advice and support.

Research is underway to develop a treatment to target high LP(a) levels, an injection is being trialled which, to date, demonstrates a 90 % reduction. Until we have an effective treatment for LP(a) we continue to focus on reducing other risk factors for atherosclerosis.

Further information can be found on Heart UK website including an e mail cholesterol helpline
<https://www.heartuk.org.uk/genetic-conditions/high-lipoproteina>

Staying Bright as the Weather Darkens – Winter Health

Tom Stone Community Tutor

As the nights start to draw in and the days get shorter we can find our routines getting disrupted by the dark and our spirits getting dampened by the weather. For some people the effect is profound and presents in the form of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), causing depression and often disrupted sleep patterns and needs to be treated by a registered health care professional.



For a large portion of us we may find our energy levels reduce and our routines being disrupted by the poor weather. We are going to look at 5 ways to help stay healthy and active this autumn and winter.

1. **Eating for Winter.** When the temperature dips we often look for higher fat comfort foods. Fill up this winter on foods high in Vit D. Vit D deficiency can lead to a loss of bone density that is a leading cause of osteoporosis. One of the main ways our bodies produce Vit D is through sunlight, so try to get out for a walk when the sun is shining. Eat foods high in Vit D, such as fatty fish, mushrooms, egg yolks and red meat.
2. **Keeping a Routine.** Ever feel more tired in the winter than the summer? Your body produces a hormone called melatonin, that helps with sleep. It's production is induced by darkness and in winter months it's production can affect our circadian rhythm (internal clock). By keeping a daily routine of sleep and activity, we can help to keep our internal clock ticking as it should and help prevent disruption and fatigue.
3. **Staying Active.** In the summer months it is often easy to stay active as we are more inclined to go for walks and enjoy the outdoors. Don't let the weather be an excuse not to exercise and keep moving. Moderate exercise is good for us all but it also produces endorphins which increase mood and make us feel happy. So keep coming to classes and find a new way to stay active, whether joining a walking group or doing a home work out routine, such as wall presses or sit to stands.
4. **Keep in Touch.** During the winter months the temptation can be to close off to the World and stay indoors. We all want to feel wanted or to know somebody is thinking about us. Be the one to make the first move, if you haven't heard from somebody for a while pick up the phone. Hosting coffee mornings can be a great way to stay in touch and help with routine.
5. **Be Adventurous.** Occupying time can be harder during winter, finding something to focus on can be great for mood and self-worth. Give yourself a challenge this winter, maybe it is time to try to learn a new language or paint a portrait.

Look forward to seeing you in one of my classes - Tom

Information and Advice

This is a new addition to Ticker News where we aim to give you information on a heart condition. We start with atrial fibrillation (information adapted from Arrhythmia Alliance www.heartrhythmalliance.org).

Atrial fibrillation

What is atrial fibrillation?

Atrial fibrillation (many people use the term AF) is an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia). It is when the upper chambers of the heart (atria) beat irregularly. As the atria control the the normal (sinus) rhythm of the heart you will find your pulse becomes irregular. AF is the most common arrhythmia, affecting four in every 100 people over the age of 65.

The irregular heart rhythm causes blood to pool and this may result in a blood clot being carried to the tiny blood vessels in the brain resulting in a stroke. To reduce this risk it is important a doctor assesses your risk factors and whether to start you on appropriate medication.



Causes

AF has several causes such as lung disease, disease of the heart valves, high blood pressure, heart failure, an over active thyroid, too much alcohol, stress and smoking. But there may not be an obvious reason as to why it has developed.

You may find that once you have developed AF it will return to normal sinus rhythm after a short period of time. Or it may alternate between the two rhythms and this is called paroxysmal AF.

Symptoms

You may not feel any symptoms when the heart rate changes from sinus rhythm to AF and that's why it is often picked up by a doctor or nurse when you attend a clinic for other reasons. AF may cause you to experience palpitations (a fast heart rate), shortness of breath or chest pain.

Treatment

This falls into two groups;

Heart rate control using medication to slow the speed of the pulse such as a beta blocker, or calcium channel blocker.

Or you may require Cardioversion where rhythm control is tried with the aim of returning the heart to sinus rhythm. This can be done either by medication or using an electrical current under general anaesthetic.

Future Health

Regular moderate exercise is a good way to decrease your risk of heart disease. It helps to regulate biological rhythms, improves mood and sleeping patterns. As always consult an appropriate health professional before undertaking an exercise programme.

A Brief History of Porridge - Tony Lowery

All my life there have been two staples that have never changed, whisky and porridge. Why is this you may ask? Well, the answer is simple, having been born in Scotland and having a Scottish mother it is obvious that this would be the case.

As a wee child, my brother and myself expected two things when going to school on cold frosty mornings in the North. A bowl of porridge made in the traditional way and a nip of whisky to keep the cold away. By traditional I mean oats, water and a pinch of salt. The whole family partook in this food source. My father would have a bowl after he had finished his shift, he took his with marmalade. My Brother and I preferred a sprinkling of sugar. Being more mature and having a southern wife, how I eat my porridge has changed we now make it with milk, my mother I should say is horrified by this.



What is really interesting about Oats is that they are amongst the healthiest grains on the planet. They are gluten free and a great source of vitamins and minerals, they are also cheap. Studies have shown that they have many health benefits. These include weight loss, lower blood sugar levels and a reduced risk of heart disease.

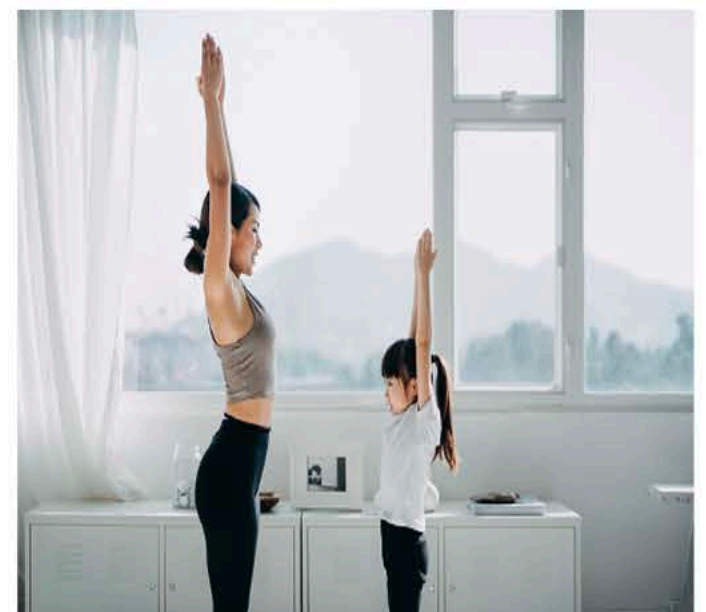
What makes oats so special is that they contain a powerful soluble fiber called Beta-Glucan. This has numerous benefits. It helps reduce cholesterol levels and blood sugar levels, promotes healthy gut bacteria and increases feelings of fullness. The science here is interesting and would make an interesting article for future editions of this news letter. Another interesting fact about porridge is that it can help relieve the symptoms of constipation. Elderly people often experience this condition, with frequent irregular bowel movements that are difficult to pass. Laxatives are normally prescribed, while they are effective, they can be associated with reduced quality of life. Studies have shown that eating oats can help reduce constipation and therefore reduce the need for laxatives.

P.S The simplest most effective way of introducing oats into your life is the old-fashioned way. A half cup of rolled oats, 1 cup of water and a pinch of salt. Combine in a pan and bring to a boil. I prefer a low heat, the longer the time to boil the better the porridge you will get. If you want to be adventurous, add some fruit or some yoghurt. The worlds your oyster with porridge.

I have to sign off now, I might start the day with porridge, but I normally finish with a whisky. And as we always say with a whisky, "Slainte mhathe" or good heath to you.

A Note About Flexibility - Zavia Penn Community Tutor

Flexibility is an important component of fitness and helps to improve the range of motion at the joints. This is beneficial for exercise performance, posture, balance, injury prevention and pain reduction. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends flexibility work at least 2-3 times a week, or ideally every day. Stretches should be held for around 15s and performed 4 times each for maximum benefit. Enjoy some relaxing deep breaths whilst stretching and make sure you don't hold your breath. Stretching should not be painful, however, stretches should be pushed to the point of slight discomfort. Stretching should be performed when the muscles and joints are already warm, such as following an exercise session or walking.



I look forward to introducing you to a basic stretching session in our next edition. *Zavi*