

March 2022

TICKER NEWS

Official newsletter of the North Gwent Cardiac
Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity



Dear Members

A huge welcome to our Spring newsletter. As you will see from our Events Calendar, we have plenty going on in March and April. Now that restrictions are lifting, we have chosen events we hope you will enjoy doing on your own or with friends and family. Join us in creating your own fabulous Easter Wreath whilst sipping complimentary Prosecco! For all the gardeners amongst you - young and old - we have a Potato Growing Challenge with a Grand Reveal in June. Why not pop into Monmouth,

Mary Wakelin will be delighted to see you at her next coffee morning in April. April is going out with a bang with a Music Quiz and Disco at the Tredegar Arms hosted by the infamous BGfm DJ Milo!

I'm sorry to say that since Covid 19 the number of people attending our classes, especially in Blaenau Gwent, has plummeted. This is especially worrying as people living in Blaenau are 1.5 times more likely to die prematurely from cardiovascular disease than anywhere else in Wales. That is why we must do all we can to

encourage people to continue with their rehab. At the risk of preaching to the converted people who attend cardiac rehab, exercise regularly and follow a healthy diet are less likely to feel anxious, visit their GP and go into hospital. WIN, WIN ALL ROUND!

Thank you so much to Tim Cross for an insight into how he manages his health and and to John Mason for sharing with us a story about his father.

Take care.
Jacky Miles PhD MBE RGN Chair

Hearts and Flowers

Since retiring from the cardiac rehabilitation service at Nevill Hall hospital in January 2022, I have attended a floristry course in Hereford College, which I have enjoyed immensely. We have covered the subjects of hand tied bouquets, meadow flower displays, table centre displays and flowers in a vase. I previously attended a Xmas wreath making demonstration, which is my favourite to date. I am now happy to share my experience with you all at an Easter wreath making demonstration, to fundraise for the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation Charity.

Come and spend some time with me designing and creating your Easter wreath. The cost is £30 per person for which you will receive a wreath and foliage, glass of fizz and a piece of Easter cake. I will provide you with a list of suggestions to bring with you to adorn your lovely wreath.

I look forward to seeing you and helping your creativity flow.

Suzanne Indge



THE IRON SAPPER

Two to tango, but only one man to fill a Sandbag - By John Mason.



The Test Run Filling and putting on the sack



Half a minute later, job done

My father Harry Mason was trained as a mining engineer. He never spoke of his experience in World War 1, but in 1915 it had developed into a major struggle above ground and below. People with a mining background were needed to join the Royal Engineers as tunnellers.

Dad was posted to 178 Tunnelling Company RE on the Somme where the fighting raged. The problem was that simultaneously each side drove a shaft under opposition ground, racing to be first to set off the explosive charge.

After six months underground he was hospitalised in Manchester following carbon monoxide gas poisoning from an underground explosion. He recovered and married his nurse, only to lose her 6 months on to the Spanish Flu pandemic

25 years on, Dad's WW1 experience led him to invent the Iron Sapper. This was in the early stages of WW2 and he saw the need for a sandbagging tool a tool designed as an open ended tubular shaped shovel. The curved steel sides were joined by two

central bar handles and Dad told us (I was 6 or 7 yrs old at the time) that it worked on the matchbox principle. One end was pushed into a pile of sand, a hessian bag was placed over the other and the device upended. One scoop filled the sandbag. It was a one man operation (see photos) and as a lad I can remember Dad sitting in the garden with his stopwatch while 2 men from the village filled one hundred sand bags. It took them just one hour.

80 years does the Iron Sapper have a use? In today's fast moving military world, probably not. My son, after many years serving with the Paras would stick with his trusted spade which digs a fast hole when needed and slips neatly down the back of your Bergen when not.

Made out of polycarbonate, perhaps the Iron Sapper (Poly Sapper?) could find a use in today's world? On the civilian side, DEFRA or Welsh Water could use a version of the Iron Sapper for rapid production of sandbags for use in flood conditions.

Health Assessments for a Healthier You!

On Saturday 8th January, we launched our first Health Assessments at Llanfoist Village Hall to great success.

This first launch was a trial run and consisted of fifteen members from our Llanfoist classes. The members moved through various stations that allowed the instructors to gain measurements giving an overview of general health. We feel that letting our members know how well they are doing and the small adjustments they may wish to make to increase well-being is a great new initiative.

The members who took part have given positive feedback and we look forward to opening this service to all members of North Gwent Cardiac in the near future.

Tom Stone, Fitness Instructor



STRUGGLING TO BE VIRTUOUS, NOT FEELING GUILTY WHEN I'M NOT

- Tim Cross



These are some of my personal approaches to heart health and how I try to deal with the times I do what I feel like doing rather than what I planned to do.

We were told in Phase 3 with respect to exercise: 'Do what you planned to do, not what you feel like doing'. This was to prevent us doing too much when we felt good and then not enough when we did not feel so good and ending up demotivated and not having built the habit of regular exercise.

I believe that we all know the advice we've been given on cardiac rehab: - eat healthily, get more exercise, be social. And we all try to follow it – at least to some extent.

Sometimes, it's easy to be virtuous: most of the time, it's a bit of a struggle.

- And we've all been tempted by the Augustinian prayer 'Lord make me virtuous... but not yet!'

I thought I'd share some of the difficulties I've had in leading a healthy lifestyle – bearing in mind that life is for living and not just surviving.

Eat healthily - There are not many people when presented with a Christmas dinner who eat just the brussels sprouts and parsnips while declining the turkey, crispy, fluffed potatoes roasted in duck fat with all the trimmings and then add a token brussels sprout 'for health'.

I try not to be too hard on myself. But I try and make sure that bad habits are the exception and not the rule. And, if I'm indulging, I consciously enjoy it rather than making it routine.

Take exercise - On some days, I don't feel like exercising. It may be cold, or I feel tired, or I have other things to do, or I had a late night the previous night or I just want a 'duvet day'.

I do an easy set of exercises which starts with walking on the spot and gradually builds up to a 45 minute exercise routine (we learned it in Phase 3) as the home exercises.

I leave the door of the house and walk for a few yards. Once I've started, it's not so bad and I can usually carry on for a bit.

If, for some reason, I don't do either of the above, I take a 'day off'

Be social - Some social activities can feel more of a burden than a pleasure. Sometimes I want to spend the evening watching TV rather than meeting friends for dinner and, particularly in these COVID times, I have been reluctant to meet others. I've been tempted to cancel or just not turn up for social engagements because I don't want to. This may be partly because of habit and partly because of genuine fears of infection.

Sometimes, I permit myself a day of isolation and not doing things

Don't feel guilty!! - And, most importantly, when I've eaten unhealthily for a day or two, when I've missed exercise, when I've avoided social contact, I try not to feel guilty about it but try not to make it a habit.

¹ This is a paraphrase of what St Augustine wrote in approx. 400 CE – and there are many disputes about how the remark should be interpreted and whether it was written as a joke. I am using it here to illustrate that there have been prominent backsliders for thousands of years.

Ultimate Music Night

Hi y'all; I worked as a Phase3 and 4 Fitness Instructor from 1998 – 2017 and to raise much needed funds I am organising a music quiz followed by a disco on Friday 29th April at the recently refurbished Tredegar Arms Hotel (in Tredegar).

P.S. I've still got my old de-fib with a very corroded battery; this will be on the dance floor in case of an emergency during the excitement!!

Phil Miles – Milo



Tickets are just £10 each, 100% will go to this charity.

You can message me on Facebook or ring my wife Jacky or myself on 01873 831705.

Flexibility No 2

- Zavia Penn, Fitness Instructor

REMEMBER Stretching should be performed when the muscles and joints are already warm, such as following an exercise session or walking. Below are some stretches that you can incorporate into your routine:

Calf stretch:

1. Stand near a wall with one foot in front of the other, front knee slightly bent.
2. Keep your back knee straight, your heel on the ground, and lean toward the wall.
3. Both feet should point forwards. Repeat on the other side.

Quad stretch:

1. Stand on your left leg, one knee touching the other. You can hold a chair or the wall to keep you steady if needed.
2. Hold your right foot, using your right hand, and pull it towards your bottom. Repeat on the other side.

Seated hamstring stretch:

1. Sit on the edge of a chair, straighten one leg in front of the body with the heel on the floor.
2. Avoid rounding the lower back make sure you fold forward at the hip. Straighten the spine by sitting tall and gently roll the pelvis forward. Repeat on the other side.

Cross body shoulder stretch:

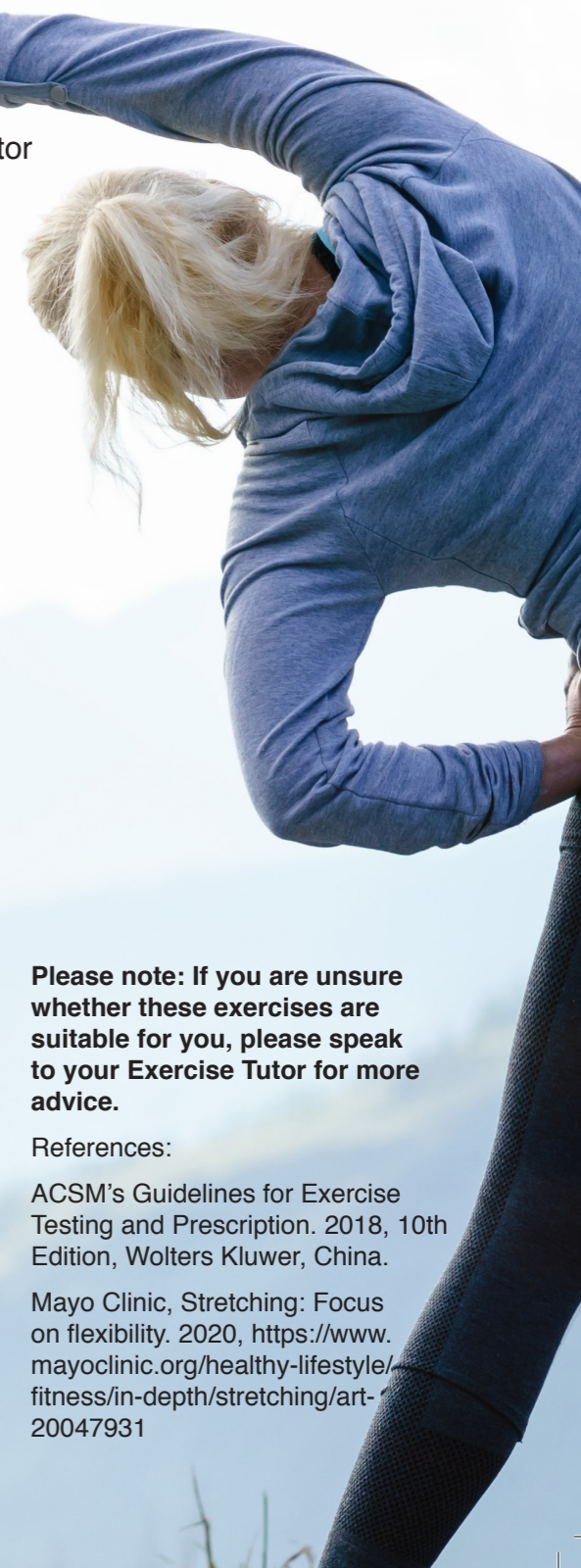
1. Stretch the right arm out straight and bring it across the body, so that the hand points to the floor on the other side of the left leg.
2. Hook the left forearm under the right arm, supporting the right arm above the elbow.
3. Use the left forearm to pull the right arm further in and across the body, stretching the back of the right shoulder.

Chest stretch:

1. Interlock your fingers, bend your elbows and raise your arms above your head.
2. Gently squeeze your shoulder blades together and move your elbows and hands backward.
3. Vary the height of your hands to emphasize shoulders and/or chest (hands behind head, hands on top of head, hand a few inches above head).

Hip stretch:

1. Start with feet hip-width apart, then take a big step out to the left.
2. Keeping a proud chest, bend the left knee and shift weight into the left side, carefully lowering until you can feel a stretch in the groin/ inner thigh. Repeat on the other side.



Please note: If you are unsure whether these exercises are suitable for you, please speak to your Exercise Tutor for more advice.

References:

ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription. 2018, 10th Edition, Wolters Kluwer, China.

Mayo Clinic, Stretching: Focus on flexibility. 2020, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/stretching/art-20047931>