

Dear Member

I do hope you enjoy reading the August issue of *Ticker News*. As you'll see, we have lots going on, and feature some amazing people who are raising money for us by taking on personal challenges.

The past couple of years have been challenging for us, too, with a big increase in hall hire costs. So from 1st September we're reluctantly raising the cost of our classes to £6 – with a **reduced rate of £5 for members**.

The good news is that your annual membership fee will remain at £10.

As well as discounted classes, your membership entitles you to other benefits, including this newsletter, regular fitness assessments and, as detailed on page 2, a **not-to-be-missed opportunity** to attend a **free CPR training session**.

As long-time Tredegar class member **Mike Morgan**, founder of Gwent Defibbers, reveals in his inspiring story (see page 2), CPR – cardiopulmonary resuscitation – is a real life saver.

If you're currently unable to attend classes, we do hope you continue your membership and can return soon. And if you're worried about returning to classes, please don't hesitate to contact your Cardiac Rehab Exercise Instructor. Or you can call me on 07484 658319 or email info@cardiac-rehab.org.uk. Every pound we raise goes towards providing cardiac rehab support for people like you, who are living with heart conditions.

Exercise and, of course, a healthy diet are an important part of successful rehab. But research shows that **regular social interaction** also plays a key role in helping people recover from a heart event. So, we're currently looking at how we can fund the extra hall hire time needed to provide more of this for our members.

And finally, we have a **vacancy for a Trustee** and need someone with commitment and enthusiasm. If this sound like you, or you know someone who might be interested, please contact our Secretary Tony Lowery, who will be happy to answer any queries – tel: 097856 692148 or email: office@cardiac-rehab.org.uk

Wishing you all the very best,



Jacky Miles, MBE
(Chairperson)

TICKER NEWS

Official newsletter of the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity



CPR could help you save a life

Cardiac arrest can happen to anyone, but if you know how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) you can double their chance of survival

When a person's heart stops beating, they are in cardiac arrest. It means their heart cannot pump blood to the rest of the body, including the brain and lungs. So without swift treatment, they'll die within minutes. CPR is an emergency procedure that can help keep blood flowing through the body using chest compressions to mimic how the heart pumps.

The first thing to understand is that cardiac arrest is not the same as a heart attack. A heart attack happens when blood flow to the heart is blocked. A person having a heart attack will still be able to talk and breathe and doesn't need CPR. But they do need to get to the nearest Accident & Emergency hospital right away, because heart attack increases the risk of cardiac arrest.

With cardiac arrest however, the person will collapse and stop breathing or just

5 steps to help an adult in cardiac arrest

1. Check for a response. Firmly shake the person's shoulders and loudly ask if they're okay.

2. Call 999. If the person is unconscious and not breathing, or not breathing normally, start CPR.

3. If there's someone with you, ask them to find a defibrillator. The British Heart Foundation's DefibFinder App (defibfinder.uk)

is a great way to locate your nearest.

4. Start chest compressions. Place the heel of your hand in the centre of their chest and press down smoothly and firmly at a rate of 2 per second. Try pushing to the beat of *Stayin' Alive* by the Bee Gees.

5. Use a defibrillator as soon as you can. Follow its instructions carefully while you continue to give CPR.

be gasping. And they'll be unresponsive – even if you shake or shout at them.

In the UK more than 30,000 cardiac arrests happen outside of hospitals each year, with fewer than 1 in 10 people surviving. Giving CPR in the first few minutes and using a defibrillator can

more than double someone's chance of survival.

You don't need formal training or a special certificate to perform CPR, but you do need to know what to do. If cardiac arrest happens to someone near you, don't be afraid – be prepared!

Turn the page for Mike's cardiac arrest story – and your chance to attend a FREE CPR training session ▶

Advance Notice – Annual General Meeting

Please join us at 1:45pm on Tuesday 14 November for our Annual General Meeting at the Nevill Hall Education Centre, Abergavenny NP7 9EX.

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr Nishat Siddiqi, consultant cardiologist at The Grange and Nevill Hall Hospitals. Dr Siddiqi has a special interest in heart failure and will be speaking about new advances in cardiology.



Please RSVP by Monday 6 November 2023: email office@cardiac-rehab.org.uk or call 07856 692148.

“CPR saved my life”

Tredegar class member Mike Morgan, founder of Gwent Defibbers, tells how he survived a cardiac arrest

In early August 2004 I was working in Caernarfon, North Wales when I started to feel strange while visiting a busy shopping centre. A passing paramedic saw me collapse, realised I was in cardiac arrest and gave me CPR using a defibrillator. I came to in Ysbyty Gwynedd Bangor. I was confused and couldn't believe what had happened!

The hospital contacted my wife Lynne and told her my heart had stopped twice, so I wasn't allowed to drive myself home to Tredegar. Unbelievably they discharged me the next day without any tests.

Two weeks later, I saw a cardiologist at Nevill Hall Hospital and, following an echocardiogram, was diagnosed with heart failure due to cardiomyopathy. This is where the walls of the heart chambers have become stretched, thickened, or stiff.

I was transferred urgently to the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff to have an ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator) fitted. But first I had to have a painfully inflamed cyst removed from my back. The wound took six weeks to heal and I spent the whole time in hospital on complete bed rest. They finally fitted the ICD on 21 September.

Lynne and I could not believe that suddenly I had gone from being well and

independent to losing my job, having to move to a small bungalow and relying on people to drive us everywhere. In January the following year I started to suffer from blackouts and was diagnosed with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). I was only 58, and it was a very difficult period in our lives.

A few months later, we started going to the cardiac rehab programme at Nevill Hall, but I couldn't attend all the sessions as I was still unable to drive. Luckily we heard about the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation and Aftercare Charity's community-based classes, and we've been going to the Tredegar class for almost 18 years now!

In 2009, after taking an “Expert Patient” course, I realised there was a real need to provide ongoing emotional support and education for people with, or waiting for, an ICD. So not long after, Gwent Defibbers was born.

I always get asked if my device has gone off and the short answer is yes! Several years ago it delivered 4 shocks in a row. It saved my life: what more can I say?

Thankfully I got my driving licence back in 2013. I've also had my ICD replaced with a more advanced CRT-D (cardiac resynchronisation therapy with



defibrillator). This device helps my heart's lower chambers – the ventricles – work in tandem, and thanks to that, my heart muscle function is nearly back to normal, and I feel very well.

I'm 77 now, and still very busy with Gwent Defibbers, and the new Wales-wide network, Defibbers Cymru. I volunteer, teach CPR and help raise funds to place a network of emergency defibrillators in local towns. I never imagined this is what I'd be doing in my retirement, but it's led to some interesting experiences, including a garden party at Buckingham Palace. And 6 years ago I helped save a woman's life using my CPR skills. It's funny how life turns out! 📌

▶ To find out more about Gwent Defibbers, go to gwentdefibbers.wordpress.com or contact Mike on 01495 711658, email: mike.morgan0@gmail.com.



Book your free CPR training

We've teamed up with Mike Morgan and Gwent Defibbers to offer practical CPR training – for you and your family. You'll learn how to give CPR safely and effectively using specially designed CPR dummies.

The training is free (donations are welcome!) and there's a limit of 20 people per session. Choose from:

- 12 September (2-4pm) – St John Ambulance Hall, Abergavenny NP7 5SG
- 12 October (2-4pm) – All Saints Catholic Church, Ebbw Vale NP23 6JQ

▶ To book your place call Jacky Miles on 07484 658319 or email info@cardiac-rehab.org.uk.



CLASS FEES TO RISE FROM SEPTEMBER

Due to a big jump in hall hire costs over the past 18 months, we've had to make the difficult decision to increase class fees.

So starting from 1 September, we'll be charging £5/class for members, and

£6/class for non-members. This is the first price rise for us since 2018, and we hope you agree that even with the increase our classes are still very good value for money. Our annual membership fee remains at £10.

As a charity we subsidise the cost of classes – currently by around 50% – mostly through fundraising. That allows us to keep our charges low relative to commercial fitness classes, which cost around £10/session now.

Potato Challenge results

Veteran Gilwern gardener **Bryan Jones**, 94, took top honours for the second year running at the weigh-in on 24 June at the **Abergavenny Garden Centre**. Bryan (pictured right, receiving his £10 gift voucher prize from *Suzanne Indge*) recorded an impressive 1.47kg harvest.

And proving that lots of experience isn't always necessary, 2-year-old **Hallie Davies** from Monmouth (our fundraising champs Andrea and Gareth Davies' granddaughter) won the Children's class with her 1.28kg haul.

The new Funniest Spud category proved popular too. Here's the winners list in full:

HEAVIEST HARVEST	ADULTS	CHILDREN
1 st place	Bryan Jones , Gilwern (1.47kg)	Hallie Davies , Monmouth (1.28kg)
Runner up	Shiela Booth , Abergavenny (1.06kg)	Lily Jacques , Monmouth (0.49kg)
FUNNIEST SPUD	ADULTS	CHILDREN
1 st place	Richard Booth , Abergavenny	Archie Davies , Monmouth
Runner up	Jenny Morgan , Abergavenny	Poppy Harper , Raglan

A massive thank you to Abergavenny Garden Centre manager **Gavin Trinder** and his team for their very generous support, including sponsorship, hosting the weigh-in and supplying the prizes. And to everyone who took part and helped run the challenge. Together you've helped us raise over **£700**.

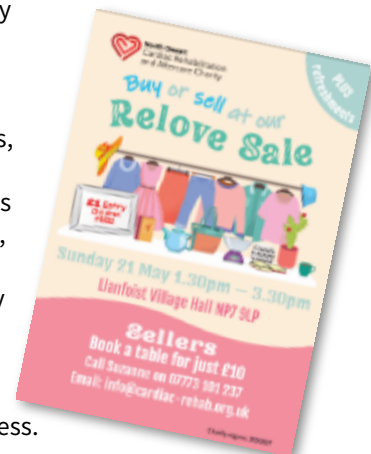


Relove Sale raises £800

There were bargains aplenty at our **Relove Sale** at the Llanfoist Village Hall back in May, with everything from gorgeous fashion items and quality homewares to children's books, clothes and toys.

Add to that tempting refreshments, with cakes generously donated by Sidoli Desserts, the excellent prizes **Ashella Hale** sourced for the raffle, and **Nigel and Den Dancer's** plant stall, and the final fundraising tally came to just over **£800**.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the afternoon a success.



Sponsors dig deep for Sarah's Inca Trail Challenge

Cardiac nurse specialist **Sarah Howard** is back safely from Peru, having conquered extreme altitude, icy mountain passes and steamy rainforests during her Inca Trail trek.

"It was way better than anything I'd imagined," says Sarah, who took on the rugged 4-day walk as a fundraiser for us.

"It's probably the most challenging thing I've ever done, and there were times when I really had to dig deep."

We're delighted that Sarah's supporters have dug deep, too, smashing her £1,000 target with a fabulous **£1,236** in donations. Thank you to everyone who sponsored her.

► *If there's a challenge you'd like to take on as a fundraiser for us, please get in touch! Call Jacky on 07484 658319 or email info@cardiac-rehab.org.uk.*



FOR TIM, A WORD FROM ZARA*

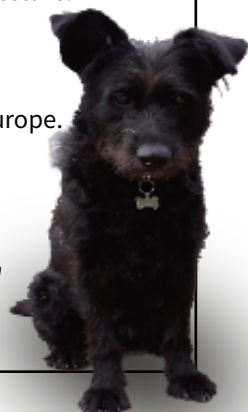
By *John Mason*

The Boss's face crumpled as he put down the phone. "Tim has died," he said, and after a while he was able to talk about him.

I remember Tim used to have a buddy called Tigger, but cats aren't my thing. The Boss said Tim always had a polite interest in the fortunes of others at the Cardiac Rehab classes, ready with a kind word or gesture.

He and the Boss had shared differing experiences of years spent working in the former Iron-Curtain countries of Eastern Europe. And the Boss loved Tim's jokes. One of the good guys. He will be missed a lot.

**In fond memory of Tim Cross, a Trustee of our charity and long-term member of our Monmouth Class. John has written for our Newsletter in the past and we send him our very best wishes.*



Dates for the diary...

Ashella's Skirrid Challenge

Sept

1-30

Our fundraising genius **Ashella Hale** is always brimming with creative ways for us to raise money.

But her latest idea is a more personal challenge. Ashella, who's a trained primary school teacher and mum to son Hendrix, aged 6, is planning to climb the Skirrid every day in September – come rain hail or shine. And for added

motivation she's aiming to raise £1,000 in sponsorship for us.

"My late grandfather was extremely young when he underwent a triple heart bypass, and my family are genetically at a higher risk of heart disease, high cholesterol, heart attacks and strokes, so fundraising for cardiac rehab is a subject close to my heart – excuse the pun!"

Ashella expects the daily climb to the 486m summit will take her around an



hour. "I've heard professional walkers say the Skirrid is tougher than either the Brengel or the Sugar Loaf. And I guess after I've been up it 30 times I'll know!"

▶ To sponsor Ashella, go to her *Just Giving* page: <https://tinyurl.com/2v2kmdz> or scan this QR code.



Helen and Kath go the extra mile for us

Oct

1-31

County Hospital cardiac nurse specialists **Helen O'Leary** and **Kath Whitehorn** are taking the plunge for us in October with a sponsored

"Mile-a-Day" swim challenge. The colleagues will be donning their togs and goggles 7 days a week for a brisk 64 lengths of Cwmbran's Nuffield Gym pool.

The pair usually swim first thing, getting to the pool when the doors open at 6:15am. "Swimming a kilometre is easy," says Helen. "It takes about half an hour. But doing the extra distance and still making it to work on time is definitely going to be a challenge – especially on those dark and chilly October mornings!"

▶ To sponsor Helen and Kath's swim challenge, go to their *Just Giving* page: <https://tinyurl.com/mte69au3> or scan this QR code.



Oct

4

CHESTERS WINE NIGHT

Chesters wine bar in Cross Street, Abergavenny, is hosting a special wine night for us, with a tutored tasting matching five delicious wines with food.

Voted #1 independent wine merchant in Wales for 2 years running, Chesters is a brilliant venue, with cosy indoor tables, a gorgeous garden, great music

and a fantastically knowledgeable host – plus, of course, fabulous wine and food. And we'll be running a raffle and quiz!

Tickets, including buffet, cost £35 each and there are just 30 places available.

▶ To book, call **Jacky Miles** on 07484 658319 or email info@cardiac-rehab.org.uk.



CHESTERS
WINE MERCHANTS

Mary's Monmouth Coffee Morning

Held 4 times a year, from 10am-midday at the beautiful Monmouth Priory, these fundraising Coffee Morning are organised by long-time member **Mary Wakeling**.

But there's a whole team of members and friends who help make them a resounding success. So take a bow **Louise Cooper** and her young niece **Lily Jacques**, **Pauline Griffiths**, **Margaret Slaughter**, **Sue Moss**, **Diane Sillman**, **George Kingsbury**, **Albert Thomas**, **Bob Handley**, **Diane Renfree** and

Maureen Davey, who all help out, whether it's baking cakes, setting up, serving customers or donating items to sell.

Thanks, too, to regular supporters including **John Mason** and **Ken Haynes**, who at 94 is the oldest member of the Monmouth class and drives from Tintern to attend.

Oct

21

Coming soon! Our Autumn Raffle

Our **Autumn Raffle** is brimming with fabulous prizes, including a 6-month online yoga and fitness membership package, worth £300.

Generously donated by **Christian Henwood**, of the **Daily Practice** yoga studio (dailypractice.me), the "Ultimate Warrior" membership offers one lucky person unlimited online access to studio classes, with a choice of sessions to suit all levels of

fitness and ability. And because you can choose live-streamed or pre-recorded on-demand classes, you can do whatever class you feel like, at a time that suits you.

Watch out for details of our other prizes and how you can buy tickets...

