

**Oct 1-31** **Nurses on track with swim challenge**

As we go to press, County Hospital cardiac nurse specialists Helen O’Leary and Kath Whitehorn are halfway through their month-long Mile-A-Day Swim Challenge. They’re slogging their way through 64 lengths of their local pool every day before work – and at the weekends – in their bid to raise £1,500 in sponsorship for us.

Despite some setbacks (pool closures, forgotten cossies), we’re delighted to say they’re on track and currently 56% of the way towards their fundraising target. What’s more, Helen says she’s really noticing the difference from upping the amount of daily exercise: “I feel better physically and mentally... the power of exercise never ceases to amaze me!!!”

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



**Oct 21** **Monmouth Coffee Mornings**

If you can’t make this month’s fundraising coffee morning, on 21 October, don’t worry, because we’ve got two more dates before the end of the year – 4 November and 16 December. Held at the beautiful Monmouth Priory from 10am-midday, these sociable events have raised over £150 for us so far this year.

Fancy running your own coffee morning? We can help get you started. Just call Jacky Miles on 07856 692148 or email [office@cardiac-rehab.org.uk](mailto:office@cardiac-rehab.org.uk)



**Nov 11** **SIXTIES NIGHT!**

Grab some friends, get your dancing shoes on and head to Tredegar’s Moose Hall from 7pm on 11 November for a fab dance night with popular local cover band Now & Then. They’ll be playing all your favourites from the 60’s and 70’s.

Tickets cost £20 each, including the Moose’s famously good buffet, and you can buy drinks from the pay bar.

▶ Tickets available from Class Assistant Allen Cleveland, or Jacky Miles on 07484 658319, email [info@cardiac-rehab.org.uk](mailto:info@cardiac-rehab.org.uk)



**Dec 2** **Christmas cocktail classes**

Love a good cocktail? Then join us on Saturday 2 December at The Balcony Bar in Abergavenny for a cocktail-making masterclass with local expert Ben Ward.

Tickets cost £30 and include everything you need to make three deliciously seasonal drinks, with alcohol-free options if you prefer. We’ll have nibbles too, and there’s a choice of two classes:

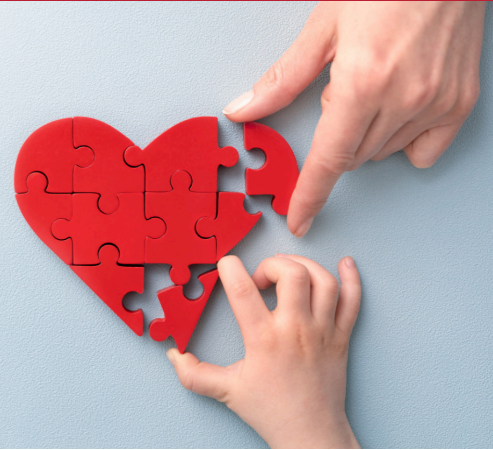
- 6:30pm-8pm
- 8pm-9:30pm

Last year’s classes were a sell-out, and great fun, so with numbers limited to 16 per class we recommend booking fast! Just call us on 07538 106353 with your choice of time and regular or alcohol-free cocktails, then simply scan this QR code to pay (you’ll need the PayPal app!).



**TICKER NEWS**

Official newsletter of the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity



**Little life savers**

Pacemakers and ICDs have revolutionised treatment for heart patients – massively improving quality of life for thousands of people each year. Jacky Miles, charity Chair, explains how they work...

**B**ack in July I attended a meeting of Abergavenny-based Gwent Defibbers, a support group for people with implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs). Guest speaker for the meeting was Dr Charles Dawson, a cardiologist with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, who gave a fascinating talk on pacemakers and ICDs.

I was there to promote our charity, but I also had a personal interest in hearing what Dr Dawson had to say, because I was booked in to have a pacemaker fitted in the following weeks.

I’ve had problems with my heart rhythm since I was 14, so while the news that I needed a pacemaker didn’t come as a complete surprise, it was still a little

unnerving. Dr Dawson explained that being fitted with a pacemaker or ICD is a safe procedure that can improve your quality of life and, for some people, be a life-saving measure: last year alone, some 50,000 patients across the UK had one of these devices implanted or replaced.

**Why do people need a pacemaker or ICD?**

The heart is a muscular pump controlled by electrical signals. If these signals become disrupted, it can lead to the following problems:

- An abnormally slow heart rate (bradycardia).
- An abnormally fast heart rate (tachycardia).
- Heart block, where there’s an irregular heart beat.

- Cardiac arrest, when the heart goes into a life-threatening rhythm.

Pacemakers and ICDs work by sending electrical impulses to the heart to restore a normal rhythm.

**How does a pacemaker work?**

A pacemaker is about the size of a matchbox and weigh 20g-50g. Inside there’s a pulse generator powered by a battery, a computer circuit, and one or more pacing leads that are fed through a vein and attached inside your heart. The heart receives electrical impulses from the leads, known as the pacing >>



**Dec 11** **Win up to £300 in our Grand Christmas Draw!**

Our Grand Christmas Draw is back for 2023, with your chance to win one of three fabulous cash prizes:

- 1st Prize – £300**
- 2nd Prize – £150**
- 3rd Prize – £75**

Tickets cost £1 each and you’ll find two books of tickets (that’s 10 tickets in total) enclosed with this newsletter. We’ve also included a handy addressed envelope to make it easy for you to send us your payment and completed

ticket stubs. Just make sure they reach us by 5pm on 11 December, ahead of the draw on 15 December. And if you’d like more tickets, just ask Class Assistant Allen Cleveland or call Kathy Cleveland on 01873 830829.



▶ **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT ISSUE: 5 JANUARY 2024**

**Nov 14** **Save the date! Pre-Christmas celebration and AGM**



Join us at 1:45pm on 14 November at the Education Centre at Nevill Hall Hospital for our Pre-Christmas celebration and AGM. Yes we’ll be serving up mince pies and hot drinks, but we’ve also secured two very interesting guest speakers.

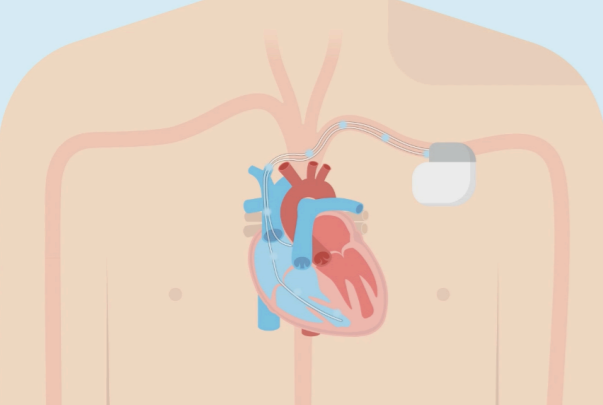
First up, local cardiac consultant Dr Nishat Siddiqi will be telling us all about the latest advances in cardiology. She’s an excellent speaker and great at explaining things in everyday language, so we know we’ll all learn a lot!

Her talk will be followed by a personal reflection from member Neil Dufty, who has a little-known condition called microvascular angina.

We’ll follow these talks with a break for festive refreshments and socialising, and hope you’ll stay on for our short AGM.

▶ To book your place, please call Tony Lowery on 07856 692148 or email [office@cardiac-rehab.org.uk](mailto:office@cardiac-rehab.org.uk)





### What is an ICD?

An ICD looks very similar to a pacemaker and is implanted in the same way, although because it can have up to four leads – one for each chamber of the heart – the procedure can take up to three hours. The device is programmed to constantly monitor your heart and, if it detects a dangerous rhythm, can

<< rate, and this can be adjusted in response to your body's needs.

The pacemaker unit is inserted under the skin, usually below the collarbone on the left side (see above). The procedure takes about an hour and is carried out in hospital under local anaesthetic.

So long as your heart is beating normally, the pacemaker will not step in, but if it senses your heart is beating too quickly or too slowly it will send signals to deliver a steady rate. Most pacemakers are “rate responsive”. This means they can sense body movement and breathing rate, which allows them to speed up the impulses when you are active.

deliver one or more of the following treatments to restore a normal beat:

- Pacing – a rapid series of low-voltage electrical impulses
- Cardioversion – one or more small electric shocks
- Defibrillation – one or more larger electric shocks

ICDs are life saving and often used as a preventive treatment for people who are at risk of cardiac arrest. They can also be used to restore a normal heartbeat in cases where the upper and lower chambers are beating out of synch. This problem can affect some people with heart failure.

► For more on pacemakers and ICDs visit the NHS website ([nhs.uk](http://nhs.uk)) or go to the British Heart Foundation ([bhf.org.uk](http://bhf.org.uk)). To contact Gwent Defibbers, call Mike Morgan on 01495 711658.

I have this kind of pacemaker and am back to all my usual activities, and can enjoy running and weight training again without worrying about my heart rate.

Illustration: Medtronic



## Welcome back Helen Sanchez!

Cardiac Rehab Exercise Instructor Tom Stone took on a new position with the Phase 3 team at Caerphilly Hospital back in September. We were pleased for him, of course, but sadly his new work commitments meant he could no longer teach the Tuesday Abertillery and Usk classes.

But every cloud has a silver lining, and we're delighted that one of our former instructors, Helen Sanchez, will be returning to lead the Tuesday classes. We know you'll all make her feel welcome.

Tom will continue to teach the two Saturday morning classes at Llanfoist, and we wish him every success with his new role.



## Ashella's peak performance

Our creative fundraiser Ashella Hale completed her September Skirrid Challenge in style, smashing her £500 target and raising a whopping £1,001 in sponsorship through her Just Giving page.

Ashella battled some extreme weather – including a few really baking days, plus gales and dense fog – to complete the challenge and came through strong. And amazingly, after all that she's already planning fresh challenges. We hear she's got The Three Peaks Trial (a testing 20-mile loop taking in the Blorenge, Sugar Loaf and Skirrid) and the Cardiff Half Marathon in her sights for next year!

## Autumn Raffle results

Our Autumn Raffle was hugely popular – and it's no wonder, considering the many great prizes on offer. Congratulations to our winners:

- **Jane Evans** – six-month online yoga package with the Daily Practice yoga studio)
- **Elaine Munn (Usk class)** – Family photo shoot at Deardon Studio, Trethomas)
- **Elizabeth Howard** – Sunday lunch for four at Abergavenny's Kings Arms Hotel)
- **Martin Wall (Llanfoist class)** – Wash and blow dry at Hair by Jasmine, Abergavenny
- **Ann Agate (Blaenavon class)** – Drinks package from Chesters Wine Merchants and the Balcony Bar, Abergavenny
- **Phil Miles** – Mystery prize from Little Green Refills, Abergavenny.



Big thanks to Ashella Hale for organising; to the prize donors for their generous contributions; and to the fundraising team and Class Assistant Allen Cleveland for selling so many tickets! And of course an equally big thank you to everyone who took part. Together you've helped us raise a whopping £840.

## IRISH MUSIC NIGHT



Get set for a fundraising evening of Irish music at the Royal Oak pub in Monmouth on Friday 24 November. Expect jigs, reels, classic Irish humour and a night of mighty good craic!

Tickets cost £10 each and include a sandwich supper. For more details, see the poster below. And to book, just give Dave Andrews a call on 01600 712194 or 07710 829625.

ROYAL OAK, HEREFORD ROAD, MONMOUTH

### 'AN IRISH NIGHT' CELTIC COLLECTORS

Playing the music of

THE CLANCY BROTHERS  
THE DUBLINERS & THE FUREYS

PLUS THE MAGICAL SOUNDS OF THE MANDOLIN,  
JIGS AND REELS AND CLASSIC IRISH HUMOUR!!!!!!

ADMISSION: £10.00 (Inc Supper)  
All proceeds to

NORTH GWENT CARDIAC REHABILITATION  
AND AFTERCARE CHARITY

Date: FRIDAY 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER. SHOW BEGINS:  
7.30pm  
TICKET HOTLINE: 01600 712194 / 07710 829625

## CPR training “a real confidence boost”

Earlier this autumn we teamed up with fellow heart charity Gwent Defibbers to host two free CPR and defibrillator training sessions in Abergavenny and Ebbw Vale. In total more than 25 people attended the information-packed two-hour sessions.

CPR, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, is a vital first aid technique used to treat cardiac arrest (when someone's heart stops). Knowing how to perform it, and how to use a defibrillator can more than double someone's chances of surviving a cardiac arrest.

The training was led by Chris Pritchard, a local paramedic with more than 30 years' experience, and Gwent Defibbers' founder Mike Morgan, who survived a cardiac arrest 19 years ago thanks to prompt CPR from a passing paramedic. Following his brush with death, Mike went on to learn CPR and six years ago used his skills to help save a woman's life after she suffered a cardiac arrest.

Chris and Mike explained how to tell the difference between a heart attack and a cardiac arrest, how and when to use CPR effectively, and how to use a public-access defibrillator to restart someone's heart.

Currently just one in 20 people survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. Course participants said they felt much more confident after the training.

“CPR is hard work,” admitted one trainee. “You do need some strength to press properly, and to keep going at the right pace – 100 presses per minute. But the training dummies provide feedback, which is really useful.

“And it was great to run through how the defibrillator worked: the fact that it talks you through every step was a real confidence boost.”



## A toast to Chesters' wine and food evening!

We had a packed house for our fundraising wine and food pairing evening at Chesters Wine Merchants in Abergavenny earlier this month, with 30 people joining in the fun.

Chester's wine aficionado Lloyd Beedell shared his wide-ranging wine knowledge, serving up a

flight of five different wines and delicious antipasti-style accompaniments. Better still, the event raised a cheers-worthy £300 to help fund our work in the community. Here's to Ashella and Jacky for organising, and to Lloyd for hosting the event – and of course to everyone who came along. We hope you all enjoyed it!