



# TICKER NEWS

Official newsletter of the North Gwent Cardiac  
Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity



## 25 years of exercise & friendship

With a quarter century of classes behind them, members **Arthur Murphy** and **Malcolm Bright** can justly claim that cardiac rehab exercise really does work!

**A**bergavenny's Arthur Murphy was just 48 when he started with symptoms of angina back in 1999. Luckily for him, a friend invited him along to one of our cardiac rehab exercise classes, and the instructor advised him to see his GP without delay. That got him "in the system", and he subsequently joined our classes as a regular member.

"It was a definite turning point," says Arthur. "Thanks to what I learned at classes, I gave up smoking and re-assessed other areas of my life, too. I'm 73 now, and my angina has been under control for years. I may be retired, but I never get chance to sit around: I'm too busy doing other things, including volunteer litter picking with Keep Abergavenny Tidy."

Malcolm Bright, who lives in Blaenavon, joined our classes soon after Arthur. At 62 he'd suffered a heart attack, with a tricky blockage that could not be solved with bypass surgery. Instead, his consultant recommended a series of lifestyle changes.

"I changed my diet and made exercise much more of a priority," says Malcolm, now 87. "So it was natural that I moved on to Phase 4 classes after the hospital cardiac rehab programme."



*Above: Llanfoist regulars and firm friends Malcolm Bright, left, and Arthur Murphy, right*

"I met Arthur at my first Phase 4 class back in March 2000. The instructor asked him to show me around, and that's what he's been doing ever since!"

A quarter of a century on, the pair are firm friends, meeting up at the 10am Llanfoist class each Saturday to exercise together, and chat and joke – pretty much non-stop! Malcolm also attends the Blaenavon class on Wednesdays, and makes time for an hour of exercise at home each day – "30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon: I find it easier to break it up that way."

Both agree that regular cardiac rehab exercise has been key to their recovery and ongoing good health. "But it goes

beyond exercise," says Malcolm, who is now a widower. "The classes help you stay strong and flexible, but the fellowship and support you get from other members is really important too."

"That's right," says Arthur, "it's the combination of physical and mental wellbeing that makes these classes so special."

### **! STOP PRESS !**

Since this photo was taken we've learned that Malcolm has had a fall and broken his arm! We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him back at classes very soon.

# Picture pawfect

**A**bergavenny art lovers Peter and Rose Nuttall are facing a bit of a dilemma: where to hang this fabulous portrait of Bella, their much-loved Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

The couple, who admit to having “art on every wall”, won a bespoke pet portrait by talented local artist Jude Lowery in our 2024 Autumn Prize Draw.

The resulting pen and watercolour portrait of six-year-old Bella took Jude a painstaking 40-plus hours to complete.

“It’s absolutely amazing,” says Peter, who joined the Monday Llanfoist class after a heart attack and stents procedure in 2022. “We love the way Jude’s captured Bella’s ears: it’s a real labour of love. We already have masses of art at home, so we’re going to have to move things around to make sure we hang this portrait in the right place.”

Jude, a former art teacher and the wife of our Secretary and Trustee Tony Lowery, started taking commissions when she retired seven years ago and now exhibits at the Frogmore Street Gallery in Abergavenny. “I get requests for dog portraits mostly, but I also love painting farm animals, and creating works where I add a bit of twist, to reflect the people as much as the animals.”

Charity Chair Jacky Miles MBE says: “We’re hugely grateful to Jude for donating such an amazing prize; her commissions usually start at around £250 for an unframed piece, so it really was very generous of her. And we’re delighted the prize was won by a member who loves both art and dogs! It couldn’t have worked out better.”

▶ You can see more of Jude’s work and contact her via the Gallery (open daily 10:30am-4:30pm). Or visit [frogmorestreetgallery.co.uk](http://frogmorestreetgallery.co.uk)



*Above: Llanfoist class member Peter Nuttall and dog Bella with artist Jude Lowery and her stunning pet portrait, Peter’s wife Rose and Charity Chair Jacky Miles MBE*

## On your bike!

Cycling is a great way to build more exercise into your weekly routine.

And with National Bike Week coming up (10-18 June), we thought we’d ask our Secretary and Trustee **Tony Lowery** why getting out on two wheels has become a way of life...



“ I started cycling as a means of transport back in the early 1990s. I was living in London and it was simply more convenient to cycle to work than to worry about having a car. Then when Jude (my wife) and I moved to Abergavenny, we just carried on cycling.

Many of our friends were also keen cyclists, so bike riding became the centre of our social life. We’ve had many memorable cycling holidays, too, with our bikes taking us across Europe and the United States. Our most ambitious trip was from Niagara Falls, following Lake Ontario through New York State, then on to Vermont and Maine, before heading down to Boston in Massachusetts, a journey of just under 900 miles.

Since we retired, our cycling has changed. Now we love finding paths less travelled and adventures that take us off the beaten track. Our most recent trip was a week of gravel riding in Argyll and Bute. We’ve also covered wild miles in Mid Wales and enjoyed some unlikely urban adventures in the North East, using the many miles of disused tramways in that region.

Research shows that cycling can improve your cognitive and emotional wellbeing and boost your immune system, too. In fact, one recent study found that the immune systems of regular cyclists in their 80s were comparable to those of people in their 20s or 30s.

The other thing we love about cycling is that it’s something we can do together. The memories we have and that shared experience form the basis of our long and very happy marriage.

*Left: Tony and Jude Lowery on a gravel-riding holiday in the Elan Valley*

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### Training opportunity

Do you know someone looking to further their career in health and fitness?

We're currently recruiting trainees to complete **Level 4 Specialist Exercise Instructor Training** with the British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BACPR) – the gold standard for Cardiac Rehab Exercise Instructor training.

We will pay the full BACPR course fee (£675) for up to two candidates.

Trainees will work with us on a self-employed basis while they complete their course, providing support for our existing team of Cardiac Rehab Exercise Instructors in delivering our community-based classes. Once the trainees have qualified, they'll be expected to work with us for a minimum of 12 months. Hours and salary will be negotiable.

For full detail of this opportunity, please visit our website, [cardiac-rehab.org.uk/trainee](http://cardiac-rehab.org.uk/trainee).

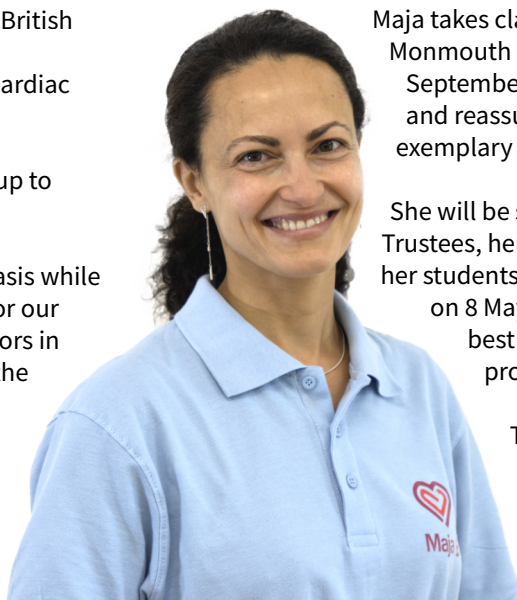
### A fond farewell to Maja

It is with real sadness that we will be saying farewell to **Maja Baraskiewicz**, one of our expert and much-valued Cardiac Rehab Exercise Instructors, next month.

Maja takes classes at Llanfoist and Monmouth and has been with us since September 2022, providing a calm and reassuring presence as an exemplary instructor and colleague.

She will be sorely missed – by the Trustees, her fellow Instructors and all her students. Maja's final class will be on 8 May, and we wish her all the best for the next phase of her professional journey.

The good news is that we have arranged cover for Maja's classes and are actively seeking a permanent replacement.



## Give us your best shot!

Capture your happy place on camera and you could be the star of our 2026 Photo Calendar Competition

**C**alling all photography enthusiasts and creative talents! We've teamed up with well-known Crickhowell photographer and Llanfoist class member **Martin Wall** to launch a brand-new photo calendar competition.

#### KEY DETAILS

**Theme:** "My Happy Place" – we're searching for 12 brilliant photos from non-professional photographers that celebrate the special spots and moments in nature that bring you joy. So whether it's a stirring photo of a dramatic Welsh seascape, an intimate close-up of an some aspect of the natural world, or simply a quiet corner of your back garden, if it was taken by you, in Wales, we'd love to see it.

**Seasonal focus:** Our judging panel will be looking for images that capture the beauty of the Welsh seasons.

**Entry fee:** None! It's completely free to enter!

**Age restrictions:** None! We welcome entries from children and adults, so all the family can take part!

Closing date for entries is **6pm on Friday 15 August 2025**. For full details, including how to submit your entry, please visit our website, [cardiac-rehab.org.uk/photo-calendar-competition/](http://cardiac-rehab.org.uk/photo-calendar-competition/)

The 12 winners – one for each month, with the overall winner featured inside and on the cover – will be announced by the end of August, with the professionally printed calendars available for pre-ordering and ready for collection or delivery in October, in plenty of time for Christmas gifting!

Proceeds from the sale of the calendars will help fund our classes and work in the community.

*Below: One of Martin Wall's gorgeous photos of Crickhowell in springtime – his very own Happy Place!*



# FUNDRAISING ROUND-UP

## School signs up to Potato Challenge

Thank you to everyone who is taking part in this year's **Potato Growing Challenge**! We hope your spuds are enjoying the warmer weather and sprouting vigorously!

This year's Challenge has seen record entries – 223 in all – with Class Members accounting for 112 kits and our persuasive fundraising team selling 111 kits through their stall at the **Abergavenny Garden Centre** and various other contacts.

We're also delighted to welcome **Llangattock Church In Wales School** to the Challenge, with all four of their classes signing up to take part.

Thanks to everyone's enthusiasm, and the Garden Centre's generous sponsorship, we've raised a spud-tastic **£1,115!**

But that's not all of course, because the most exciting part of the Challenge is still to come, with the **weigh-in and prize giving** at the Garden Centre on **12 July** from 2pm-3pm.



*Above: Trustee Nigel Dancer and Llangattock Church In Wales School headteacher Katherine Durbin with members of the School Council and their potato growing kits*



## Our “Love Your Heart” Prize Draw winners

Congratulations to the lucky winners of our “Love Your Heart” Cash Prize Draw, which was drawn back in March.

**1st prize: £300** – Archie Davies, Monmouth

**2nd prize: £150** – John Briggs, Tredegar

**3rd prize: £75** – Ellis Watts, Abertillery

Thank you to everyone who bought and/or helped us sell tickets. Your generosity means we're a solid **£1,363** further on to our annual **£12,000** fundraising target.



## TREE OF LOVE

A heartfelt thank you to marketing whiz **Josephine Indge** for creating this special Valentine's fundraiser for us back in February.

Featuring a “**Tree of Love**”, this clever online fundraiser invited people to decorate the tree with a colourful virtual heart and their personal message of love for their Valentine in return for a donation to our Charity.



## DATE FOR THE DIARY

### Make time for a new tradition

Swedish people are among the healthiest in Europe, and part of that is down to a strong cultural emphasis on shared meals and social connection. One of these social traditions is **fika** (pronounced *fee-ka*).

It's often translated as “a coffee and cake break”, but really it's much more than that, and many Swedes consider fika to be an essential part of their day – a chance to slow down, relax and appreciate life's little pleasures with friends, family or colleagues.

We're not 100% convinced that it's a good idea to indulge in sugary treats every day, but there is strong evidence that making time for social connection is essential for wellbeing.

So, to start your fika journey, why not join **Mary Wakeling** (pictured left) and other members of the Monmouth Class for coffee and home-baked treats at the beautiful **Monmouth Priory** on **Saturday 14 June** from 10am-midday?

