



Summer 2021

Stroke News

For everyone affected by stroke

Stroke
Association

"Without the Stroke Association's research, I may not be here"

Ronnie and Dr Emily share their stories to save research

This issue:

- The stroke survivors shaping treatment and care
- How to get help with health costs
- Breaking the silence around sex after stroke

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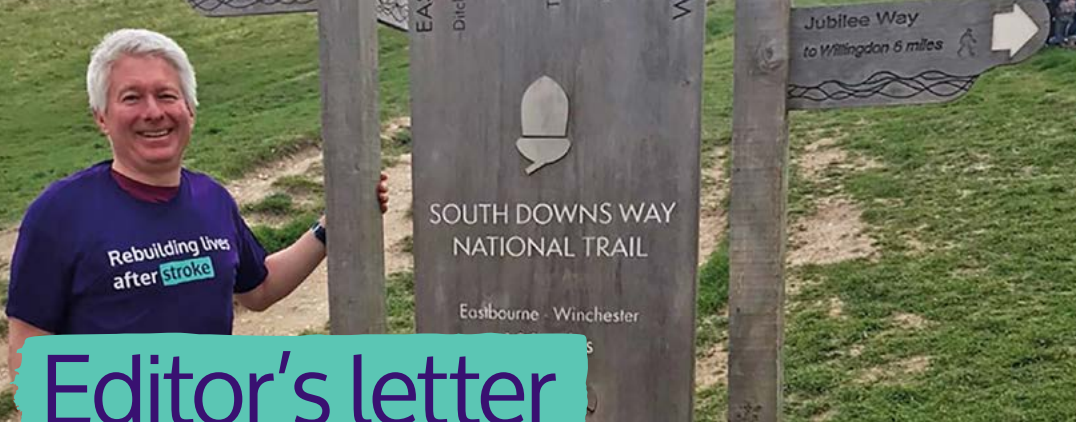
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Editor's letter

I'm delighted to be editing Stroke News while Christine is on maternity leave with her gorgeous baby boy, James.

Our cover star Ronnie (page 8) made an incredible recovery from his stroke thanks to a life-changing thrombectomy. But the pandemic means the research we fund to develop treatments like this is under threat. Dr Emily Sena (page 12) explains why stroke research is so important and what you can do to help us save it.

Stroke care and treatment continues to be affected, too. On page 24 Laura from our Stroke Helpline explains what you can do if you're not getting the rehab you need.

I've loved meeting some truly inspirational young people who are helping others affected by stroke. Molly and Lucy (page 33) raised an amazing £12,000 after their mum Sally had a stroke, and Ethan (page 30) raises awareness of the impact on families when a child has a stroke.

I hope you enjoy this issue and please keep sharing your stories with us.



Nathalie Colvey, Editor

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Over to you

My stroke came out of nowhere. I was at work enjoying a cuppa and a chat with a customer and friend when I remember feeling very unwell. The next moment, I was on the floor, unable to move my leg. Fortunately for me, my friend knew what was happening and immediately phoned for an ambulance.

Four years on I still have balance issues, and tiredness remains a big problem.

You have to be positive though, don't be beaten by the bad days. Nice and slowly wins this race.

I was initially reluctant to make adaptations to the house and garden but now that the adaptations have been made, they have restored some of my independence.

I highly recommend gardening as it's so therapeutic and it gives me something to focus on. I truly believe it has helped with my recovery. Even if you're not green-fingered, there's something very calming about being in nature.

My wife, daughter and sisters have been a rock for me. I owe them so much.

Andrew Broughton

Stroke Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

Find your local services, clubs and groups: **stroke.org.uk/support**

Join our online community: **mystrokeguide.com**

Find information about stroke: **stroke.org.uk/publications**



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From our Chief Executive

After all the upheaval of the last 15 months, we're cautiously starting to look to the future.

The challenges we're facing as a charity because of the pandemic are profound, with funds hit hard and our research budget halved. But we are still here to help you rebuild your life after stroke.

If you've got any questions about stroke, need advice for yourself or a loved one, or want to find out how we can support you, call our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100** or visit **stroke.org.uk** and **mystrokeguide.com**.

Our pioneering researchers are at the forefront of the fight to develop new treatments that will help more people to not only survive stroke but go on to live their best lives. Without this research, we wouldn't have life-changing treatments like thrombectomy. Thrombectomy not only saves lives but also means that stroke survivors have a much better chance of long-term disabling effects like



paralysis or communication difficulties being reduced or avoided altogether.

But the devastating financial impact of the pandemic means stroke research is under threat, and we need your help to save it. On page 12 you can meet Dr Emily Sena, just one of our inspirational stroke researchers. And you can find out how you can help us to get research back on track.

I wish you all the very best,

Juliet Bouverie OBE

"Without the Stroke Association's research, I may not be here"

When dad-of-three Ronnie had a stroke on Christmas Eve 2018, he thought it was the end. But thanks to stroke research, a "miraculous" emergency treatment meant he was able to rebuild his life.

"I was on a treadmill at the gym and I started getting a pain about an inch above my right eye and then became quite confused and disorientated," says Ronnie. "It turned out I was having a stroke.

"I was losing more and more of the feeling on my left side. I absolutely felt like I was dying. I was making peace with that and I chose to die peacefully."

Ronnie was rushed to his local hospital in Lincoln, then transferred to Nottingham for a thrombectomy, a groundbreaking

treatment which involves mechanically removing the clot from the brain.

"The thrombectomy was miraculous. It's a very surreal, frightening experience but at the same time quite a special feeling to go in there paralysed on my entire left side, and then during the operation feel that come back to me, and leave the operating table fully able to move my left side within a matter of 20 minutes.



"The doctor told me that without the thrombectomy I could have died, and I almost certainly would have been left paralysed."



"It felt like I'd been given a second chance to live and see my children grow up. To play with my children, to carry on running and enjoying the great outdoors. It's enabled me to become re-inspired by life and how special it is.

"It's tragic that not everyone who needs a thrombectomy can have one. We need more emergency treatments for stroke."

The Stroke Association has invested more than £56 million in stroke research projects over the last 30 years, including the pioneering study by Professor Keith Muir at the University of Glasgow which supported the introduction of thrombectomy in the UK in 2016.



Research helps stroke survivors like Ronnie rebuild their lives, but the pandemic has cut our research budget in half. Help us save stroke research at stroke.org.uk/rebuildinglives.



But with the pandemic hitting our funds hard, stroke research is at risk.

Ronnie says: "Research into new stroke treatments has just been life-changing for me. Without it, it would have been a completely different outcome."

Why doesn't everyone get thrombectomy?

Thrombectomy removes the clot from the brain using a mechanical device. It can reduce the brain damage and greatly increases stroke survivors' chances of being able to make a better recovery.

Not everyone who has a stroke can have a thrombectomy. For example they must:



Have a stroke caused by a blood clot in a large artery in the brain.



Get the procedure within six hours of their stroke.



Be able to access a specialist stroke centre with professionals trained in the procedure.

Around 9,000 stroke patients across the UK could benefit each year. We still need new treatments to make sure more people survive stroke and go on to lead the best life they can. This means we need research.

The fight to find new treatments

Stroke research takes time and money. With coronavirus (Covid-19) locking down labs, halting face-to-face contact and hitting our funds hard, developing life-changing new treatments is more challenging than ever.

One of many researchers who's been affected is Dr Emily Sena. We're funding her work at the University of Edinburgh to make it easier to find new emergency treatments for stroke. She was three years into her five-year study when the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

"At first I thought the impact would be limited," she says. "The type of research my team and I are doing lends itself well to working from home with a decent laptop and internet connection.

But the pandemic has had a devastating effect on almost all aspects of scientific research."

Emily's research involves using cutting-edge computer technology and machine learning to improve the way early-stage stroke research is performed and reported, so that later-stage trials can be planned and run more successfully.

This will save time and money. It will make it easier to develop life-changing new therapies such as thrombectomy.



"Our research was paused for three months, and we had to divert some of our time and expertise to Covid-19 research to help with the pandemic," says Emily. "It was tough to maintain our creative thinking and innovation through lockdowns and limited social interaction."

The funding crisis caused by the pandemic has dealt the biggest blow. With a substantial drop in income, the Stroke Association has had to halve its research budget, making it much harder for studies like Emily's to get off the ground.

"The most difficult thing is funding our research. People are still having great ideas, but without time and money, it's very difficult to move our research forward."

Dr Emily Sena, researcher funded by the Stroke Association



Despite the disruptions, Emily's work continues to take us closer to breakthroughs in treatment and care. For example, the team have developed algorithms that automatically provide up-to-date information on the quality of pre-clinical laboratory trials, which can lay the foundation for successful testing of new treatments in humans.

"Results from early-stage research aren't always as reliable or consistent as they should be," she explains. "By improving this, we can make sure that the treatments that go on to be tested in humans are the ones most likely to help stroke survivors rebuild their lives."

Emily is optimistic about the future, if we can get stroke research back on track.

"We've seen with research into Covid-19 that when the research community comes together with enough dedicated time and money, we can find new treatments so quickly. It's possible for more stroke survivors to rebuild their lives and have better recoveries, but it requires substantial investment in research."

Together we can save research and help more people affected by stroke rebuild their lives. If you can, please donate at stroke.org.uk/saveresearch.

Save research. Rebuild lives.

Research helps stroke survivors to rebuild their lives, but the pandemic has hit research hard. Together, we can save the stroke research that could lead to breakthroughs in treatment and care.

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A powerful voice for stroke survivors

Stroke survivors and carers play a vital role in making sure governments and health decision-makers are prioritising what matters to them and their communities. We call this "involvement" – people with lived experience helping to shape decisions that affect them at a local or national level.

Involvement comes in many shapes and sizes, from sitting on your local hospital boards to responding to local and

national consultations on key issues. Within the NHS, it's often referred to as Patient and Public Involvement (PPI).

Jean Sherrington, 76 from Blackpool, became an advocate for people affected by stroke after her daughter Paula had a stroke in 2009.

"While Paula was well cared for in hospital, I could see there were many small things that could and should be improved.

"Following her discharge to her own home, everything she needed to access become a fight. Therapy, equipment, care plans, all brought problems.

"I was her voice and used it to ensure that doors were opened. However, those who didn't have someone to provide that voice would be struggling for services they needed."

Jean was invited by Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust to be part of its newly formed Stroke Improvement Board, ensuring stroke survivors have a say in the development of services and treatments. She's now a Patient and Public Voice Representative in the Trust's Integrated Stroke Delivery Network (ISDN). The ISDN aims to provide a joined-up approach to stroke care, from emergency treatment to long-term community support.

You don't need a medical background to make an important contribution to stroke care. "We're all 'experts by experience'," says Jean, who had two strokes herself in 2011 and 2013.

Jean is a Patient and Public Voice Representative



"What we share is a passion to see stroke treatment and care working well for everyone who is affected by stroke.

"People affected by stroke can bring insight that others don't have. Now their voices are not just heard but listened to and regarded as important when making decisions! That is wonderful. The impact of our voices will ensure the very best treatment and care for us all."



To find out how you can get involved in PPI, contact our Campaigns Team at campaigns@stroke.org.uk.

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Someone to turn to

The pandemic has made us rethink our Stroke Club support in Scotland. Thanks to an award from the National Lottery Community Fund, we worked with stroke survivors and carers to develop an online Stroke Café where people affected by stroke across Scotland can share their stories and experiences.

Heather Melville-Hume explains how the café gave her a vital connection to other people when her husband died just months after she had a stroke.

"I was only 43 when I had my stroke two and a half years ago. In an instant, my independent life changed as I knew it.

In the weeks following my stroke I was wholly reliant on nursing support to do the most basic of tasks. I was unable to walk confidently, or use my lower right arm or hand. My independence had been snatched away from me. And the fatigue that came after my stroke was overwhelming. Everything felt like a huge mountain to climb.

Heather is a regular at the Scotland online Stroke Café



My fiancé George and I decided to tie the knot three months after I left hospital. It gave me something to aim for after my stroke. And it was an amazing and beautiful time. But I can only describe it as earth-shattering when George died suddenly following a cycling accident eight



weeks after our wedding. Nobody around me had been widowed at such a young age and there was no-one I knew my age dealing with the impact and effects of a stroke. I was in a very lonely place.

I heard about the Stroke Café via social media. I felt low in confidence at the time, so I was anxious about joining online and talking to people, never mind opening up to them. But something made me do it.

People were just talking normally about everyday things, and it was very relaxed with a warm welcome by the volunteers involved. After a while people started to talk about what sort of a week they'd had.

Hearing about other people's stroke experiences and how they had coped made me realise I was not alone, that every stroke comes with its challenges, but there is hope."



Our Stroke Clubs and Cafés across the UK have continued to run online during the pandemic, offering advice, activities and companionship to anyone affected by stroke. To join one of our cafes in Scotland email scotland@stroke.org.uk, or visit stroke.org.uk/clubs to find a club or group near you.

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A friendly voice

Each year, our Helpline offers support, information and a listening ear to thousands of people affected by stroke.

Vicki Bray is one of our friendly Helpline team. "All kinds of people contact us, from stroke survivors and their families and friends, to NHS professionals, and employers supporting a stroke survivor to return to work," she says. "A lot of our calls are stroke survivors who may have had their stroke months or even years ago and need some reassurance or a listening ear."

"Many callers say they don't know where to start when calling for the first time, and

that's OK. We understand that you may just need to talk through what's happened to you. If there's a question that we can't help you with directly, we will point you in the direction of someone who can."



Call our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100**,

email **helpline@stroke.org.uk** or write to us at

Stroke Helpline, Stroke Association, 1 Sterling Business Park,
Salhouse Road, Brackmills, Northampton, NN4 7EX.

Getting the right care

The coronavirus pandemic has put the UK's health services under huge strain and sadly some stroke survivors haven't been getting the support with their recovery they need. Communication issues with hospital teams or not being offered enough rehabilitation can be frustrating and disrupt your recovery.

Laura Read from our Stroke Helpline explains what steps you can take if you're not getting the care you need.

What care should I get after a stroke?

The Royal College of Practitioners published the latest edition of their National Clinical Guideline for Stroke in October 2016. This document outlines the 'gold standard' of care someone should receive right through from admittance to discharge from hospital and follow-up support. You can read it online at strokeaudit.org/guideline. However, we know that under-pressure services in some areas are struggling to meet all the guidelines, leading to a postcode lottery of care.

Six months after you leave hospital, you should have a check-up to see how you're getting on. It's your GP who coordinates your care after you've been discharged, so if you're due a check-up and you haven't been contacted, get in touch with your surgery.

Who can I go to if I have concerns about my hospital care?

Your first step would be to speak to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) in the hospital. PALS are there to mediate between medical staff and family members, to help resolve any problems

someone might be having. You can find your nearest PALS office on the NHS website [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk), ask at your GP or hospital, or phone NHS 111.

What if I'm still not happy?

If your issues still haven't been resolved, you can look at making a formal complaint. You can write, email or speak to someone at the organisation, or if you prefer you can contact the organisation which funds your service. This could be NHS England or your local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) or Health Board.

If you need help with making a complaint, the NHS Complaints Advocacy programme, delivered by Voiceability, can help with this.



You can find out more at voiceability.org or call them on **0330 303 1660**. You can also contact your local Healthwatch for further advice.



A reassuring lifeline for stroke survivors

After a stroke, getting back to your favourite hobbies can be an important part of your recovery. But you and your loved ones might worry about what might happen if you become ill when you're by yourself.

Using a personal alarm can give peace of mind to stroke survivors and their family and friends. Alarms usually consist of a pendant which is worn around the wrist or neck, and a base unit which plugs into a telephone socket. In an emergency, you can press the button on the pendant which connects you to the emergency response team. If you need assistance, they will call your contacts or the emergency services to arrange help.

After keen walker and gardener Tony Budd, 87 from Norwich, had a transient ischaemic attack (TIA or mini-stroke) in 2016, using

a personal alarm gave him the confidence to carry on enjoying an active lifestyle.

"I live by myself, so it was important that I had a way to call for help if I couldn't get to a phone to call 999," he says. "It makes me feel much safer, and my family know I can call for help if I need it."

Some alarms, like the Lifeline24 GO, use the mobile phone network to contact the response team, and GPS (global positioning system) technology to pinpoint your location – so you can use them on the go. Tony's alarm also has a built-in fall detector.

Now Tony can continue walking the Norfolk Coastal Path and tending to his beloved allotment with peace of mind: "My alarm gives me the confidence to keep doing the things I love, knowing help will be on the way if I need it."



"My personal alarm gives me the confidence to keep doing the things I love."

Our partners Lifeline24 are donating £40 to the Stroke Association for every personal alarm and monitoring service ordered via our website, plus you'll get a £10 discount.

Visit stroke.org.uk/lifeline24 to find out more.

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Working as one team

In a year in which healthcare staff across the UK have gone the extra mile, the team at the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Stroke Service are doing even more to support those affected by stroke.

The busy service supports over 650 stroke survivors a year, with NHS and Stroke Association staff working together to help people rebuild their lives after stroke.

In May the stroke team launched "1Stroke1Mile1Pound" – a challenge to walk, run, or cycle 7,400 miles in aid of the Stroke Association. That's one mile for every stroke that occurs in Wales every year.

"I wanted to highlight the incredible work the Stroke Association do with our patients and show them how much we appreciate their support by giving something back," says NHS stroke physiotherapist James Hinder,



The stroke team at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

who organised the challenge. "This shows that when we come together as a collective, achieving small goal after small goal, we can do something incredible."



Bernard Perry

Bernard Perry, 60, who has been supported by the service since 2017.

Over 50 people including doctors, therapists, housekeepers, nurses, stroke survivors and their friends and families signed up, including

"I was at work fitting a kitchen when I felt something wasn't right," he says. "I started to lose feeling in my left leg and this numbness travelled up my side. I remembered the FAST campaign and thought I might be having a stroke so I asked to be taken to the hospital. They told me I'd had a transient ischaemic attack (TIA or mini-stroke). A few days later my symptoms returned – this time it was a stroke."



James Hinder and his colleague Alice Watt

Bernard spent seven weeks on the stroke unit at University Hospital Llandough and still has mobility problems on his left side. He's a regular at the hospital's Wednesday walking group and is using the fitness app Strava to record his miles for the 1Stroke1Mile1Pound challenge.

"I also go to a walking football group so that's added to my total miles," he says. "I haven't set myself a goal, I'm just doing as much as I can."

The team have smashed their original target of £1 per mile, raising an amazing £26,700 which will help us continue to rebuild lives after stroke.



With your support we can help stroke survivors rebuild their lives. To get involved in one of our fundraising events or find out how to organise your own, visit stroke.org.uk/fundraising.

Young Stroke Ambassadors

Ethan Hoyle, 18 from London, was a toddler when his stroke changed the lives of his whole family in an instant. Now he's using his experiences to help other families rebuild their lives after stroke.



"I was only 15 months old when I had my stroke, so I don't remember it. But my mum says we were enjoying a sunny day out when I started crying and just wouldn't stop. She thought I had probably got too hot and tired so she took me home and put me to bed. The next morning

my left side was drooping and my parents took me to A&E. I was rushed by ambulance to Great Ormond Street Hospital where I spent a week.

After my stroke I couldn't even sit up, and I stopped talking for several months. Even after lots of physio and daily exercises with my mum, I still couldn't fully use my left hand or leg.

The stroke had a significant impact on all my family. At school I found it difficult to join in because I couldn't play football. I also had a lot of emotional issues. I was frustrated at being different which resulted in frequent outbursts of anger.

Over time I grew to understand that I was still capable of all things my peers could do but that it may just take me longer and need adaptation. The main challenges



for me were simple things easily taken for granted, for example learning to tie my shoelaces, buttoning a shirt, riding a bike or even using cutlery.

There is a misconception that strokes only happen to older people when one in four strokes happen to people under 65. I walk with a limp and sometimes people ask what caused it. I think most expect me to say a bad tackle while playing football or an accident, and they're taken aback when I mention my stroke.

I've just finished my A levels and I'm hoping to study history at university. I wanted to become an Ambassador for the Stroke Association to help raise awareness of childhood stroke. By sharing my own experiences I aim to help other families through this stressful period and give young stroke survivors hope for the future."

Our Young Stroke Ambassadors use their personal experiences to raise awareness of childhood stroke and its impact on families.



Learn more about childhood stroke at stroke.org.uk/childhood-stroke or visit stroke.org.uk/volunteering to find out how you can help us rebuild lives after stroke.

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"Mum's stronger than anyone we know"

When Sally Antrobus, 45 from Plymouth, had a stroke in December 2020, her daughters Molly, 18, and Lucy, 15, found their world turned upside down.

"Mum has always been so fit and healthy – this came as a complete shock to us all," says Molly.

Sally was left with mobility problems which meant the whole family had to adapt to a new way of life. "We had to look after Mum," says Molly. "We all had to chip in with the cooking and cleaning and everything around the house.

"It's been stressful, but we make sure we talk to each other so nobody feels alone."

With the support of her family and intensive physio, Sally is continuing to recover. "She has been a real inspiration," says Molly. "Mum's really shown us she's stronger than anyone we know."

Inspired by their mum's determination, in April Molly and Lucy cycled 45 miles – a mile for each year of Sally's age – and raised an incredible £12,000 for the Stroke Association.



If you've been affected by stroke and need support, contact our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100** or helpline@stroke.org.uk. Find out about taking on your own fundraising challenge at stroke.org.uk/fundraising.

Breaking the silence around sex after stroke

When you have a stroke, every area of your life can be affected – and that includes your most intimate relationships.

Whatever your gender or sexuality, stroke can cause problems with your relationships and sex life.

57% 

of stroke survivors said their sex life had changed since their stroke.

1/3 

One third are too afraid to have sex at all.

Stroke Association survey, 2020

It's not just physical issues like tiredness and poor mobility that can make it tricky to rebuild an intimate relationship with your partner after your stroke, or get the confidence to start dating again. You might feel low or depressed, or find that you're struggling to communicate.

If your partner has to care for you, this can also affect how you see each other. But that doesn't mean you have to give up on sex. Talking about how you feel is a good place to start.



"For many people our intimate relationships are a key part of what life is all about," says Stroke Association trainer and qualified psychotherapist Doug Youngson. "Intimacy, whether sexual or otherwise, makes us feel loved and human



and is linked to our wellbeing and sense of self.

"We often find it really difficult to talk to our own partners about how we feel. We don't want to upset them or we might worry that they won't understand. But if we share our feelings we can be on the same team. Facing shared challenges together can strengthen our relationships."

Intimacy is about more than what happens (or doesn't) in the bedroom. There are lots of ways you can stay close as a couple, explains Doug.

"Intimacy is about sharing yourself and trusting another person. You could read to your partner, prepare a meal together or just cuddle up on the sofa."

As part of your post-stroke care, your Stroke Coordinator, GP or nurse should ask if you have any concerns about sex after stroke, but don't be afraid to ask if you need more help. Many stroke survivors and their partners do ask for support with relationships or sex. Single people often have questions about dating again.



"Speak to your doctor or anyone on the stroke team you feel comfortable talking to," suggests Doug. "If they are not able to help, ask if they can put you in touch with someone who can. One option could be counselling or sex and relationships therapy. This can help by providing a safe space where you can explore what stroke means for your

relationship and ways to rebuild sex and intimacy.

"Some people decide that sex is less important to them than other forms of intimacy and that's absolutely fine. Rebuilding a satisfying sex life is possible but it can take some persistence. Don't be put off if things don't work perfectly at first."



You can find more information and practical tips about sex and intimate relationships after stroke at stroke.org.uk/sex-and-relationships.

Graham Martin, 68 from Sunderland, had an ischaemic stroke (clot in the brain) early one morning in 2018.

"All of a sudden I lost half of my vision and couldn't walk properly. By 9.30am, I was in hospital having emergency treatment for stroke.

When I was discharged from hospital six days later, I was left with weakness in my right arm and leg. My thinking was affected, as was my ability to express myself. Worst of all was the fatigue, which put paid to my sex drive for over a year.

As a specialist social worker, I had previously given talks on sexuality and disability. Now it was my turn to 'walk the walk'!

My partner and I found that humour was a great help and healer during that period.



We stayed close by facing the challenges together, so that far from drifting apart, our relationship became stronger.

I also went to my GP for help with the physical side of things. I know that some people might feel shy or embarrassed about this, but I found that the support available was good and it helped me to rekindle my sex life.

Stroke may be a challenge to our self-image, but the concepts of 'disability' and 'sexuality' are not mutually exclusive! Our sexuality is an important part of who we are, and you have a right to lead as full a life as possible."

Homeward bound

Congratulations to Haydn Canter, the winner of our 2021 Christmas card competition with his beautiful design 'Homeward Bound' inspired by the stunning Welsh countryside.

Haydn, 66, was working from home on a sunny afternoon seven years ago when he suddenly felt a pop in his head followed by a bubbling sensation. His stroke left him with severe problems with the left side of his body.

"This was the start of a massive life-changing situation," he remembers. "Everything changed in an instant."

After three months in hospital, Haydn was able to come home and set himself a goal: to become himself again. Rediscovering his love of painting played an important role in his recovery.

"I used to paint with my left hand, so I didn't think I would ever paint again," says Haydn.

"When I joined a local stroke group, the group leader challenged me to try painting with my right hand.

"I was lucky as I knew most techniques, but getting my right hand to do as it was told wasn't easy."

Haydn enjoys inspiring his local stroke group members with his love of painting. He also supports other stroke survivors in the stroke rehabilitation centre at University Hospital Llandough in Cardiff, encouraging them to paint as part of their recovery.

"Like anything creative, art can give you an excellent boost – which is exactly what it has given me," he says.

"My painting was inspired by a local beauty spot in a park where we used to go to enjoy a snack with our dog. The rest comes from my love of winter."



Our festive range of cards, including Haydn's design, are available to order from 9 August when our shop launches. Visit stroke.org.uk/Christmas or call **0300 330 0740**.

If you'd like to get creative and submit your design for the 2022 Christmas card competition, visit stroke.org.uk/cardcomp22.

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Miles of smiles to support stroke survivors

Betty Roberts, President of the Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland, explains why the women's organisation has chosen to support us as its President's Charity for 2021-22.



"My mum had a stroke when she was 97. She was left paralysed down her left side – particularly tough as she was left-handed. Carers came for three short visits a day, leaving her on her own for long periods as my dad had died a few years previously.

Land's End to John O'Groats, and from the most northerly tip of Ireland to the most southerly.

Thankfully, volunteers and staff from the Stroke Association were on the phone offering her advice and practical help. They visited too, pre-Covid. At a time when she felt most alone, the Stroke Association was there for her.

In my local club, where the average age is 80, we're aiming to walk half a mile each – which just happens to be the return distance from the car park to a very nice tea shop we know."

Our 11,500 members will be supporting the Stroke Association by walking the distance from

To find out more and get involved email
innerwheel@stroke.org.uk.

My Stroke Guide

Stroke can change your life in an instant, but recovery is possible. My Stroke Guide gives you free online access to trusted support and information 24/7, and connects you to others affected by stroke.

Log on to **mystrokeguide.com**

Stroke
Association



Travel safely this summer

With holidays starting to get back on track, our partners AllClear Travel Insurance share some top tips for safe travels this summer.

Do your research before you go.

Wherever you're going, make sure you know what coronavirus (Covid-19) safety measures are in place, whether you'll need to show proof of a Covid-19 vaccine or negative test, and where the nearest medical services are. It will give you the peace of mind that your trip will be both safe and enjoyable.

Plan to get safely from A to B.

If you're travelling by car, make sure you've checked things like your tyre pressure, oil level and windscreen wipers. Don't forget

to take regular breaks if you're driving a long way. If you're using public transport, remember to maintain social distancing where possible. If you need wheelchair assistance, contact the train station, coach station or airport before you go.

Having travel insurance is more important than ever.

After a year of cancelled holidays for many people, travel insurance should be one of the first things on your checklist – and that includes for UK holidays. Before going on holiday check that your policy includes Covid-19 cover.

Finally, declare all medical conditions – It's essential your insurance provider understands your medical situation in order to provide comprehensive cover.

Know what to do in a medical emergency.

If you're travelling abroad, in the unlikely event that your trip is disrupted by an illness or medical emergency, be prepared with the knowledge of how to tackle the situation. Make sure you know your insurer's number for emergency medical assistance. You can call 112 for emergency help in any European country.

Don't forget the little things.

The great British weather means it's a good idea to take waterproofs as well as sunglasses and suncream. Make sure you have a full supply of facemasks and antibacterial hand sanitiser. If you're taking breaks in your journey, think about taking food and drink with you to minimise unnecessary social contact.

Find more information about going on holiday after a stroke at stroke.org.uk/holidays.

AllClear will give up to 20% of your premium to the Stroke Association when you purchase a policy.



To find out more about their travel

insurance policies, go to stroke.org.uk/travel-insurance or call 0808 168 8733.

*The Stroke Association Trading Limited is an Introducer Appointed Representative of AllClear Insurance Services Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN311244.

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Get help with health costs

When you're rebuilding your life after a stroke, the cost of paying for your medication can be an extra worry. But you may be able to get help with prescription payments.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland prescriptions are free, and in England, they're free to people who are aged 60 and over, under 16, or 16 to 18 and in full-time education. If you get certain benefits like Universal Credit they're also free.

NHS Low Income Scheme

Even if you're not getting qualifying benefits you might still be able to get help with prescriptions and other health costs like dental treatment, glasses and some health-related travel costs through the NHS Low Income Scheme.



If your savings, investments or property (not including your main home) are worth less than £16,000 then depending on your circumstances you may be entitled to full or partial help. If you live permanently in a care home and are aged 60 and under, the limit is £23,250.

Ask your doctor, optician or dentist for a form called HC1. If you need help making a claim or need to speak to an adviser, call the NHS Low Income Scheme helpline on **0300 330 1343**. They can help you fill in the form over the telephone and then post it out for you to sign. You can also download a form from **nhs.uk**.

Prescription prepayment certificates

If you can't get help through the NHS Low Income Scheme, a prescription prepayment certificate (PPC) might be another way to save money. A PPC covers the costs of all your prescriptions, no matter how many items you

have. The prescription charge in England is £9.35 per item. A PPC costs £30.25 for three months, or £108.10 for 12 months.

So if you need two prescribed medicines each month you could save more than £25 in three months with the three-month PPC, or more than £115 a year with the 12-month PPC.

You can pay for a PPC online at **nhsbsa.nhs.uk** or by calling the PPC helpline on **0300 330 1341**. You can pay by debit or credit card, or spread the cost with a Direct Debit. Or you can pay in full at a pharmacy that's registered to sell PPCs.



If you need advice on applying for benefits or filling in forms, visit the Citizens Advice website at **citizensadvice.org.uk**. You can find out more about the benefits and financial help available after a stroke at **stroke.org.uk/financial-support**.

Puzzles

Puzzles can be a fun way to exercise your mind and improve concentration, understanding and memory.

Word search

M R A W B H O B H
C I N C I P A C H
B E Z A G R A O S
K U Q F B E L A U
N S C E B I B B M
O N C K D G E T M
Q U U A E N O A E
E D Y S Y T R H R
I C E C R E A M J

Barbecue	Ice cream
Beach	Picnic
Bucket	Summer
Hat	Sun
Holiday	Warm

Across

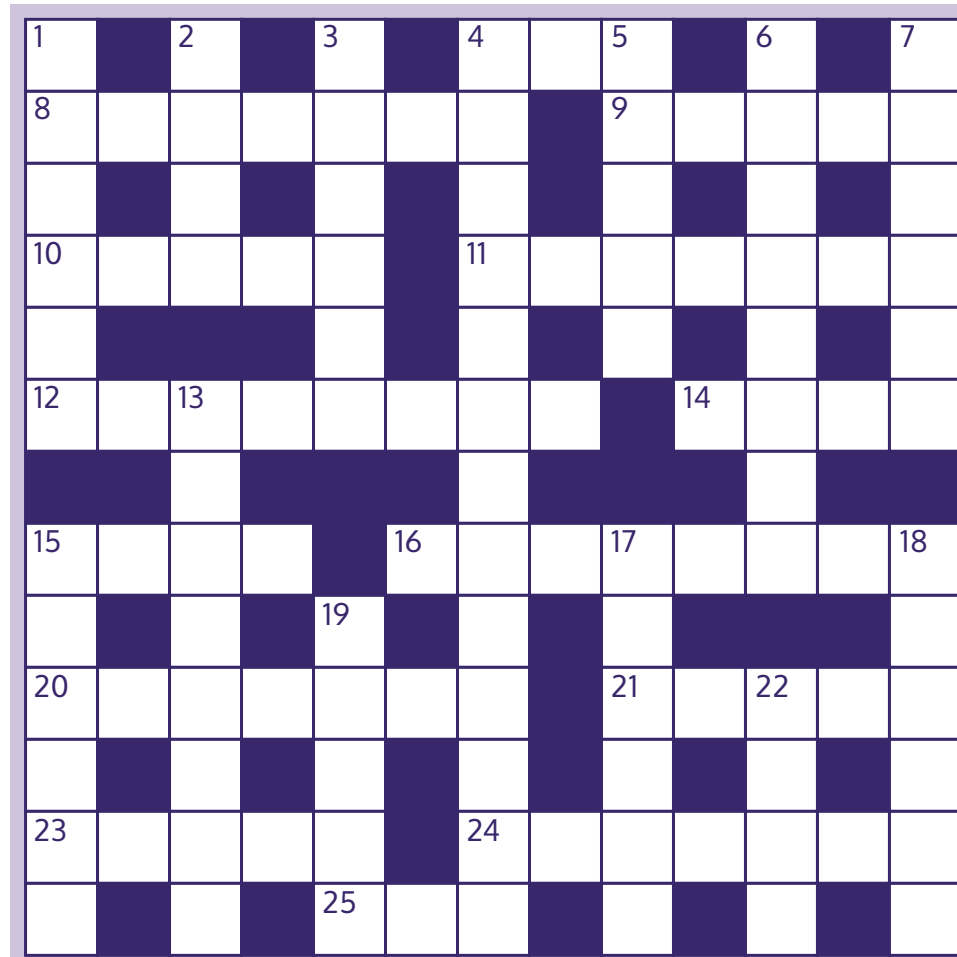
- 4 In addition (3)
- 8 Concierto de Aranjuez composer (7)
- 9 Town by Bournemouth (5)
- 10 Gas in fire extinguishers (5)
- 11 Pilot (7)
- 12 Lack of oneness (8)
- 14 Hard physical work (4)
- 15 Rule; influence (4)
- 16 Without a join (8)
- 20 Chemically weaken (7)
- 21 Imposing, magnificent (5)
- 23 Racecourse (5)
- 24 Shellfish, marine fish (7)
- 25 Unconscious; revealed (3)

Lottery

For your chance to win £1,000 every week, play the Stroke Association Charity Lottery. Find out more at lottery.stroke.org.uk.

Down

- 1 Showy plant (6)
- 2 Worshipped image (4)
- 3 Register as unemployed (4,2)
- 4 Without exaggeration (2,3,3,5)
- 5 Relating to the eye (5)
- 6 Text at page end (8)
- 7 Fuel (6)
- 13 Irish national emblem (8)
- 15 Seeking companionship (6)
- 17 Start of the week (6)
- 18 Car mph/kph indicator (6)
- 19 Phrase on coat of arms (5)
- 22 Kick; start (a computer) (4)



With thanks to The Times/News Syndication who granted us rights to this crossword.

Solutions
see page 50

Rebuilding lives after stroke

Our charity supports people to live the best life they can after stroke. But rebuilding lives is a team effort and we need your help. A huge thank you to everyone who's gone the extra mile to fundraise, volunteer and campaign with us. Your support means we can reach even more people who need us.

Faith and Raina Dumbreck

Sisters Faith (10) and Raina (8), from Cornwall, raised £1,024 by walking a marathon in April in memory of their beloved Grandma Diane, who passed away from a stroke in January. Faith says: "Grandma was awesome and deserves £1,000 to go to her cause!"



Lottie and Kim Warner

For Lottie, 26, and Kim, 28 from Dorset, 2020 was a year of huge upheaval when their dad Mike and Kim's fiancé Rich had a stroke within a few months of each other. In May 2021 the sisters trekked 100km in two days along the Jurassic Coast, from Poole to Bridport, raising over £2,500



for the Stroke Association. Lottie is also going to volunteer in our Communication Support service.



Find out how you can get involved and support us on p50 or make a donation at stroke.org.uk/donating.

How does your donation help?



£10 could help us provide group support to stroke survivors, giving them confidence for their recovery.



£25 could help someone find hope through a call to our Helpline, giving them the emotional support to begin rebuilding their life.



£50 could help fund critical research that facilitates life-changing discoveries to help support people rebuilding life after stroke.



Walk with Will

After Will Brooks had a stroke in 2020, his colleagues at tech firm FluidOne raised over £5,000 in their 'Walk with Will' challenge – a virtual walk covering an amazing total of 12,800 miles, more than the distance from their London HQ to Sydney, Australia!



Volunteer spotlight

Helen Graham is a Stroke Ambassador and Here For You telephone volunteer in County Armagh.

"When I had a stroke in 2015 I knew literally nothing about stroke, so now I try to raise awareness. I've given presentations about stroke at my local school and church. The first few times were daunting, because my stroke had completely shattered my confidence. But facing the demon helped to chase it away."

"As a volunteer at the Here For You service I talk to other stroke survivors who are just finding their feet after stroke. It's so rewarding to share my experiences with others who might need support."

To find out how you can volunteer, visit stroke.org.uk/yoursupport.

Join Team Stroke

Although many face-to-face events are on hold for the moment, there are still lots of ways you can get involved and fundraise at home:

Spin for Stroke

Here's a great challenge for cyclists! Simply decide where, when and how far you want to cycle – to the shops, out on the trail, or in the comfort of your front room. Sign up at stroke.org.uk/spin.

Stream for Stroke

Host a tournament with family, friends or other gamers around the world, or test your stamina with a livestream marathon. Find out more at stroke.org.uk/stream.

For more events and ways to get involved in our work, see stroke.org.uk.

Crossword solution

Across: 4 Too; 8 Rodrigo; 9 Poole; 10 Halon; 11 Aviator; 12 Disunity; 14 Toil; 15 Sway; 16 Seamless; 20 Corrode; 21 Noble; 23 Ascot; 24 Seafood; 25 Out

Down: 1 Orchid; 2 Idol; 3 Sign on; 4 To say the least; 5 Optic; 6 Footnote; 7 Petrol; 13 Shamrock; 15 Social; 17 Monday; 18 Speedo; 19 Motto; 22 Boot

M	R	A	W	B	H	O	B	H
C	I	N	C	I	P	A	C	H
B	E	Z	A	G	R	A	O	S
K	U	Q	F	B	E	L	A	U
N	S	C	E	B	I	B	B	M
O	N	C	K	D	G	E	T	M
Q	U	U	A	E	N	O	A	E
E	D	Y	S	Y	T	R	H	R
I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M	J



Virtual Half Marathon

Are you looking for a new running challenge? Run or walk 13 miles your way, in your own time and help raise vital funds for stroke survivors. Find out more at stroke.org.uk/virtualhalf.

Christmas shop opens 9 August

Buy Christmas cards, including the design by our competition winner Haydn (p38). Visit stroke.org.uk/Christmas or call 0300 3300 740.

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