

StrokeNews

WINTER 2013 Volume 31.3

Arthur's hobby rehab

Money matters

Smart ways to manage your finances

Never too late

How Thomas found a new career – at 59

Easy living

Make your home stroke-friendly

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News
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Welcome...

If you've recently experienced a stroke, you may believe that life will never be as good again. Yet we often hear from survivors who felt exactly that way but went on to achieve things they'd never dreamed about before. So in this issue we thought we'd share a few of these inspiring stories with you.

Turn to page 18 to read how stroke survivor Thomas Bartley launched a totally new career at 59, and on page 14, discover how a stroke inspired Carol Westron to set up a co-operative and publish her first novel.

If you've retired, a hobby can provide a wonderful focus and even aid your recovery, as our cover star Arthur Pickering explains on page 8. Take a look at his amazing 4ft 6in model of one of the world's biggest ferries, made from scratch, using materials such as wire, wood, brass and plastic.

Of course, a stroke can affect many aspects of your life. On page 16, we look at ways to make managing your finances easier, while on page 22 we suggest home adaptations that could aid daily living.

One person who can give you practical help after a stroke is an occupational therapist (OT). Read our interview with OT Emma Ralph (page 23), who has won an award for her work in helping to develop stroke rehabilitation services.

Winter is definitely here now so we hope this issue keeps you entertained and inspired on those dark, cold nights.

Happy reading!

Madeleine Bailey
Acting editor, *Stroke News*

Volunteer spotlight

Terry Chilcott

Former Treasurer of the Manx Stroke Foundation (MSF), Terry Chilcott, 79, has been awarded a British Empire Medal in the 2013 Queen's Birthday Honours list for his work for stroke services on the Isle of Man.

"I was surprised and delighted, plus it's a great honour for the Foundation," says Terry (right, with wife June), who was one of its first members.

Having experienced a stroke himself at the age of 53, Terry got involved with the MSF shortly after its formation in 1997. "When we started, we had very little money but

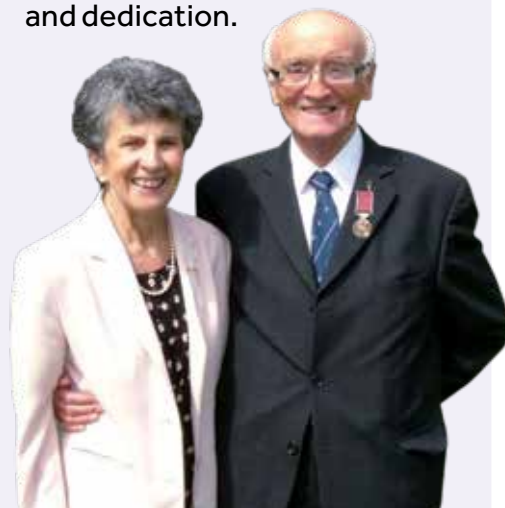
now we're quite a substantial charity," remembers Terry, who spent 15 years as Treasurer.

During this time, the MSF has donated more than £50,000 to the island's Noble's Hospital for equipment and more than £15,000 for aids and services to help people who have been affected by stroke. It has also contributed to research funded by the Stroke Association.

In addition, it runs a Stroke Club, providing a lifeline for more than 100 stroke survivors and carers on the island. Although no longer Treasurer, Terry continues to dedicate

his time and energy to the MSF. "It's been good therapy for me and has helped to keep my brain active," he says.

Well done, Terry, and thank you for all your hard work and dedication.



Dear Stroke News

A big thank-you

I thought I would take time out today to say a personal thank-you.

I'm halfway through the first of four counselling courses, which is on cognitive behavioural therapy. In your spring issue, there are no fewer than three articles that will help me in my reflective research and reading alongside my course, two of which are perfect for this week's lesson on depression. So thanks to the team for their research and to readers for sharing their experiences.

Keep up the good work.

Annie Manning

Mini stroke warning

My wife has just picked up a copy of your excellent magazine and I feel a few words about my experience might help someone in the future.

In January 2009, while on holiday, I had what I now know was my first transient ischaemic attack (TIA). According to my wife, my driving became erratic and fast, not that I noticed, and my speech was slurred. That night over dinner, our friends said I was odd and wanted me to see a doctor. But the next day I felt fine.

In spring 2010, the same thing happened but not as badly. Yet again, I didn't bother with a doctor. Then on 1 June that year, I had a stroke, ending up in hospital for eight weeks.

If I had taken advice and seen a doctor earlier, would the stroke have happened at all? We won't ever know for sure but if in doubt, I'd tell anyone with strange symptoms to consult their doctor. I hope this story will help someone else.

Robert Dods-Brown

Music in rehabilitation

I'd like to share a remarkable story with you. Between 2000 and 2008, I had five heart attacks, which left me with heart damage and unstable angina. Four years ago, I had a 'stroke event', which left me with left-sided weakness, aphasia and memory problems, followed by another heart attack 18 months ago.

In October 2012, a musician friend of mine stuck a guitar in my hands and told me we were going to get the fingers in my left hand moving again. I wasn't hopeful. Miraculously though, a year later I have become a licensed street performer and have been invited to go on stage with one of the USA's premier Blues artists, JP Soars, in order to help promote music in rehabilitation for stroke survivors.

As a result of all this, I've gone from contemplating my own decline and lessening abilities to having hopes for the future and a passion to take me there. My life is, simply, transformed.

Ronnie Pan



Hot topics

Your experience of TIA/mini stroke

Over the coming months, we'd like to find out more about how mini strokes have affected everyday lives, how you first knew you were having them, what action you took, the treatment and support you received and whether it met your needs.



Please write to us with your name, address and contact number at:

Campaigns Team
Stroke Association
Stroke Association House
240 City Road
London, EC1V 2PR

or you can email us:
campaigns@stroke.org.uk



Take Action on Stroke

May 2014 is our next Action on Stroke month and the theme is 'TIA – not just a funny turn'. Each year, over 50,000 people in the UK have a transient ischaemic attack (TIA), also known as a mini stroke.

If you've ever had a TIA, we hope you'll fill in our survey. It will help us raise awareness of TIA as a medical emergency and get

a better understanding of the impact of TIAs on people's lives.

The symptoms are similar to those of a full-blown stroke but the difference is that they only last for a short time, anything from a few minutes up to 24 hours.

Many people dismiss the signs as just a 'funny turn', but a TIA

is a vital warning that a major stroke may be on the way. It's estimated that 10,000 lives a year could be saved if people received emergency treatment.

To fill in the survey, go to **stroke.org.uk/tiasurvey** or to receive a copy by post, write to Campaigns Team, Stroke Association, 240 City Road, London EC1V 2PR.

Know your rights

Being a carer is demanding and can affect everything, including your finances. According to charity Carers UK, every year £843 million worth of benefits go unclaimed by carers who don't realise they are entitled to them. It's Carers' Rights Day on 29 November 2013

so if you're a carer, now is the time to check what support – financial or otherwise – you may be entitled to.

This may include benefits, help with the provision of personal care and meals to your loved one, a grant for

home adaptations or aids, and respite care so that you can have a short break.

To find out more, visit **stroke.org.uk/carersguide** for our factsheet *Stroke: A carer's guide* or call **0303 3033 100**.



That's the number of times your stroke risk is increased if you smoke 20 cigarettes a day!

Yet just five years after giving up, your risk will be the same as if you'd never smoked at all. So if you're a smoker, this is one New Year's resolution worth persevering with.

And the good news is that there's more help available than ever before, from free counselling to telephone and email support, motivational texts and more.

Call the NHS Smokefree Helpline on **0800 022 4332** or visit **smokefree.nhs.uk**



Don't forget your flu jab



If you haven't had your flu jab yet, it's not too late. While flu usually just means a miserable week, it can cause potentially serious complications such as pneumonia in the elderly or anyone with an underlying health problem. If you're over 65, have a chronic condition, live in residential care or are a

carer, you're entitled to a free NHS flu jab. It will significantly lower your risk of catching flu and mean that symptoms will be less severe if you do get it.

Don't qualify for a freebie? Ask at your local pharmacy – many now offer private flu jabs for a small fee.

In brief

Dates for your diary



In March, our Step out for Stroke events will begin all over the UK. Step out for Stroke is an annual series of sponsored walks

that are fun for the whole family. Each event has its own course and is suitable for all walking abilities. To get updates or to share your experience of last year's events, check out stroke.org.uk/stepout

Aphasia help

More than 367,000 stroke survivors in the UK have aphasia – a condition that affects reading, writing and speech, and can be caused by stroke. We've put together *Aphasia etiquette*, a three-minute online video designed to raise awareness of how to improve communication. If you have aphasia, there is also a postcard you can give to your GP or people you come into contact with to explain aphasia etiquette. Visit stroke.org.uk/aphasia

Get equipped

Want to know about all the latest products and services that can help you or a loved one continue to live independently? With the help of the Disabled Living Foundation, we've set up *Equip Stroke*, an online portal giving easy access to personalised advice on daily living for stroke survivors, their families and carers. Visit stroke.org.uk/dailyliving

Life After Stroke Awards 2014

Do you know someone affected by stroke who's truly inspirational? Then nominate them for our 2014 awards and help them get the recognition they deserve.

All over the UK, there are people who show amazing courage, determination and compassion on a daily basis in an effort to overcome the debilitating effects of stroke. We want you to help us find them. Whether that person is a stroke survivor, carer or volunteer, let them know just how remarkable they are by nominating them for a Life After Stroke Award 2014.

These annual national awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of stroke survivors, their families and carers. They also recognise the compassion and unfailing commitment of people and

organisations to help rebuild the lives of those who have been affected by stroke.

Categories include courage, artistic achievement, stroke group, carer, professional, fundraiser, and volunteer. Winners will receive an expenses-paid trip to London for the ceremony, which will take place in June 2014.

Charlotte Neve, aged eight, won the Children and Young People's Courage Award in 2013 after recovering from locked-in syndrome following multiple strokes in 2012. Charlotte's mother Leila says:



2013 winner Charlotte with mum Leila

"This award means so much to Charlotte and to me. I am truly amazed every day by her recovery. Charlotte has been so brave and I am so proud of her. Despite facing many disabilities, she hasn't let them get the better of her and she gives everything her very best shot. She is an inspiration to us all."

Nominations open on 29 November 2013 and close on 28 February 2014 and can be accepted from the UK only. To access nomination forms or to find out more details on each award category, visit www.stroke.org.uk/lasa or call **0207 566 1540**.

Northern Ireland Life After Stroke Awards 2014

Do you know an unsung stroke hero or heroine in Northern Ireland? As with our UK awards,

he or she could be a stroke survivor, a carer, a professional or a volunteer. Our annual Northern Ireland Life After Stroke Awards will take place in May 2014 in Belfast, and the shortlisted nominees will also

be put forward for our UK Life After Stroke Awards, which will take place in London in June 2014. Find out more or nominate someone you know at stroke.org.uk/nilasa or call **028 9050 8020**.

A model recovery

Almost eight years ago, a stroke left Arthur Pickering, now 65, unable to walk or talk. But with a little encouragement and a lot of patience, he resumed a treasured hobby, which he credits with speeding his recovery.

Arthur Pickering was 58 when he fell down the stairs one evening, banged his head on a radiator, and had a stroke. The next thing he knew was waking up in an ambulance 16 hours later, wondering what had happened.

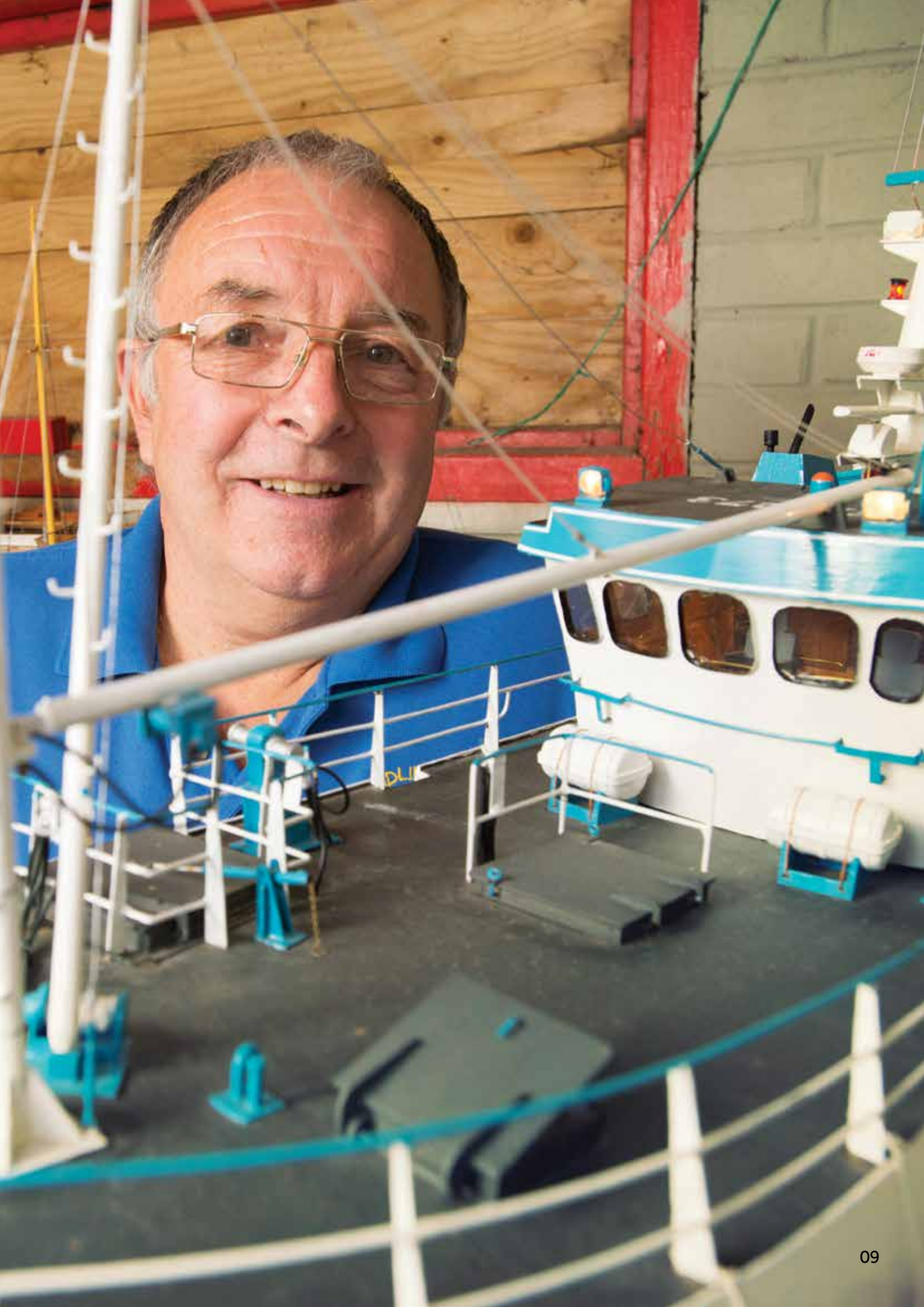
"The last thing I remembered was having a cup of tea with my neighbour at 5.30 the previous afternoon," says Arthur, from Driffeld, East Riding of Yorkshire. Arthur lived alone and it wasn't until the following morning that help had arrived in the form of his ex-wife Karen, who raised the alarm.

The stroke was severe, leaving him without the use of his right arm or leg. It also affected his sight and hearing and he wasn't able to speak at all.

"For a while, I thought I was going to have to live the rest of my life in a care home," he remembers. But 10 weeks later, he was able to move back home, with the help of carers who visited twice a day, and Karen who did all his shopping.

Arthur's stroke rehabilitation included physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy, but he still wasn't anywhere near able enough to return to his job as an agricultural mechanic. ▶







"I had very little speech and couldn't read or write or climb the stairs. I was walking with a pronounced limp and my right arm was useless. I was spending most of my time watching TV and felt bored and extremely depressed," he recalls.

It was his friend David who suggested Arthur should start making model boats again, a hobby he'd begun at the age of six. A founder member of the Bridlington Model Boat Society, Arthur had made dozens of models, both for himself and other boat enthusiasts.

"David suggested the Pride of Hull P&O superferry, which he knew would keep me pretty busy," says Arthur. "I was convinced I wouldn't be able to do it, as I could only use one hand, but David was adamant."

At first it was slow and frustrating. "I kept saying to Dave, 'I can't do it any more'. But then I became determined and would sit at night squeezing a tennis ball in my right hand while I watched TV. This gradually

helped me to grip objects again," he explains.

Almost a year later, the 4ft 6in, remote control-operated model was complete. It's just one-hundredth the size of the real version – one of the biggest ferries in the world.

The detail is, by any standards, incredible. The anchor, loading-bay door and lifeboats can all be lowered and raised, the radar antennae revolve and the funnel actually pumps out smoke. There are even navigation, cabin and deck lights, and everything can be operated at the press of a switch. The whole thing was made from scratch, from materials such as wood, brass and plastic. He even put together the handrails with individual pieces of wire.

Launched on the Bridlington Model Boat Society's open day in 2007, the Pride won a trophy for best boat of the day and went on to win first prize at the

Blackpool Model Boat Show the same year. "It was fantastic to win – I felt extremely proud," says Arthur, who attributes much of his rehabilitation to the Pride. He spent up to eight hours a day in his garden shed working on the boat, which he refers to as a 'labour of love'. "It gave me a goal and improved my physical and mental wellbeing," he says.

Arthur's sight and hearing are no longer affected, he can walk unaided to the shops and after four years he got his driving licence back, which he'd lost after the stroke. "I was over the moon. I'd been four years without driving, which was terrible, having been a mechanic," he says.

Right now, he is working on an 8ft version of the Royal Britannia Yacht, which he started six months ago. Arthur's advice to anyone in a similar position to his eight years ago is to find a goal and persevere: "Don't just sit there – get on with it!" he says.

"It was fantastic to win – I felt extremely proud."

What will your legacy be?



The thought of making a Will may be daunting, but it's easier than you think. Plus it's a great way to continue to help your favourite charities. Our Legacy Giving Manager Azizah Aziz explains.

When is a good time to write my Will?

If you've never made a Will then now is a good time. Over half of the people in the UK haven't done so, which means that when they die their money isn't automatically distributed in the way that they would wish. At best, dying without a Will causes delays, stress and unnecessary costs for loved ones. At worst, it means that some of your loved ones, friends or the charities you support may miss out. Plus, you may need or want to re-make your Will after certain life events such as marriage, divorce or the birth of a child or grandchild.

I already support the Stroke Association. Why should I leave a gift in my Will?

Any kind of help is very valuable and a legacy gift is just an extra-special way to support a cause close to your heart. Gifts left in Wills help us to plan ahead so we can fund the most innovative stroke research. Legacy gifts make up nearly half of all our donations, helping to save and change lives.

How can I leave a gift in my Will?

A qualified solicitor can help you write a Will – just get a quote from two or three in your area. For your gift to be valid, you need to include the Stroke Association's

full name, address and charity number. We have produced a free guide, *Leaving a gift in your Will*. For your copy, see how to contact us, below.

I've already made a Will. How can I include a gift to the Stroke Association?

You can simply add a codicil to your Will. A codicil is an addition or alteration to your Will that lets you add extra gifts or adjust the amounts of the ones you've already made. Ask your solicitor for advice.

To find out more about leaving a gift in your Will, call Azizah on 020 7566 1505, or email: legacy@stroke.org.uk



Could an arthritis drug help reduce disability after a stroke?

Clinical trials are about to begin to discover whether a drug that's currently used to treat some types of arthritis may reduce brain damage resulting from a stroke.

University of Manchester scientists are investigating whether a drug called IL-1Ra, known to reduce inflammation, could also decrease the brain damage that causes disability after a stroke.

Inflammation is part of our natural defence mechanism, designed to protect us from further harm, as when tissue swells to protect a broken bone or we produce antibodies to fight off a virus such as the flu. However, after a stroke, brain cells become inflamed, and this causes further damage.

Blocking inflammation with IL-1Ra, a drug already used to treat some conditions, has been shown to reduce stroke damage and further inflammation in previous laboratory studies.

Now, with funding from the Stroke Association, Professor Pippa Tyrrell and her colleagues at the University of Manchester will assess whether IL-1Ra could reduce inflammation and brain

damage in people who have had an ischaemic stroke, the most common type. In the study, which is due to start in December 2013, the drug will be given by an injection under the skin twice a day for three days. The levels of inflammation will then be compared between those people receiving IL-1Ra and those receiving a placebo, or dummy, injection.

"If we can show that IL-1Ra given by a simple skin injection reduces the amount of inflammation in the blood after a stroke, we will be able to progress to a larger, more definitive clinical trial to find out if it reduces levels of disability," explains Professor Tyrrell.

"This is a novel approach to stroke treatment and will be able to be given, where appropriate, alongside clot-busting treatments. It will take around six to eight years to obtain a definitive answer but if the Stroke Association study is positive, we hope to be able to progress to a large clinical trial in around three years."

Help save lives

Each year in the UK, there are around 150,000 strokes and one in five is fatal. You can help change this.

Stroke research is severely underfunded. For every cancer patient living in the UK, £295 per year is spent on cancer research. For stroke research, the amount is just £22 per patient. This year we need you to support our Annual Research Appeal to help give the go-ahead to critical projects, which have the potential to save and transform lives.

One example of the life-saving work being carried out, thanks to support from our generous donors, is a project trialling a mechanical clot-removal technique led by Professor Keith Muir at the University of Glasgow.

Eight out of 10 strokes happen when a blockage causes the blood supply to a person's brain to

be cut off. The longer the blood flow remains cut off, the worse the damage, potentially leading to disability or death. However, by feeding a flexible plastic tube through the blood vessels in the blocked artery and pushing a tiny wire mesh, called a stent, into the blood clot, it can be removed and the blood flow to the brain restored.

Professor Muir's research has the potential to save thousands of lives, and to ensure that fewer people have serious disabilities as a result of stroke. This research is only possible because of kind donations from people like you – and it simply must continue. Please give a gift today to support life-saving research.



Professor Keith Muir

Yes, I will help give the go-ahead to vital new stroke research

1

Gift details

I will give ☐ £10 ☐ £20 OR my own choice of £_____

2

Donation details

I enclose a cheque payable to Stroke Association OR

Please debit my ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ CAF Charity Card ☐ Maestro

Card No (Maestro only)

Expiry date /

3

Signature/s:

Date:

4

Title: _____ Initials: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please enter your telephone number and email address if you would be happy to receive information about the Stroke Association's work.

5

Gift Aid status

This increases the value of your gift at no extra cost to you. To enable us to claim the tax already paid on your donation, please tick below. This will mean that if you are able to give £10, Gift Aid would add a further £2.50.

☐ I am a UK taxpayer and would like the Stroke Association to treat all donations I have made in the past four years, and all donations I make hereafter, as Gift Aid donations. I understand that I must have paid an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that all charities reclaim on my donations in any given year. I understand that taxes such as VAT and council tax do not qualify.

☐ Sorry, I am not a UK taxpayer, and therefore cannot take part in Gift Aid.

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Simply complete your details above, detach, and return with your donation to: Freepost RRZA-KCEU-UKSB, Stroke Association, 1 Sterling Business Park, Salthouse Road, Northampton NN4 7EX. Thank you.

You can also give online: stroke.org.uk/donate or over the phone: **01604 687777**.

Stroke Association would like to keep you informed about the work we are helping to make possible. If you would prefer us not to hold your information, please contact us. We will sometimes allow other organisations whose aims are in sympathy with our own to contact our supporters. If you do not wish to hear from these organisations, please tick this box ☐

Taking **ba**

Less than two years ago, Carol Westron felt her life had collapsed after having a stroke. Yet within 18 months she'd started her own company and published her first novel.

It was just after midnight on New Year's Day 2012 and Carol Westron was in prime position to watch the firework display over Portsmouth Harbour. But she didn't feel much like celebrating – 18 hours earlier she'd had a stroke in her sleep.

"When I woke up, my right arm was numb. At first, I thought it was from lying on it but when I tried to grasp my hot water bottle to refill it, I couldn't. Then I looked in the mirror and saw that my face had 'dropped' on the right side. I knew what it meant right away," she remembers. "I went into my daughter Jo's room and tried to say, 'I think I've had a stroke,' but it came out as a meaningless slur."

Jo called an ambulance, which arrived quickly and took Carol to hospital. By that evening,

her right arm and face were still paralysed but her ability to speak had slightly improved. "It was the loss of speech that was most frightening – I felt trapped in my own body," she says.

Carol, then 60, had recently taken voluntary redundancy from teaching in adult education. A successful short story writer, she'd planned to spend more time writing and to find an agent for her crime novels. She'd also planned to help care for and home-tutor her autistic grandson, Adam, then eight, while Jo began a full-time degree course.

"I felt bereaved. All our plans for the future were finished. As I watched the fireworks, I was crying, but I promised myself that if I got through this, I'd have a party next New Year."

To Carol's relief, her speech came back quite quickly, and after a while she regained full use of her right arm apart from some slight residual weakness. Nearly two years on, the right side of her face is still paralysed, her balance is affected and she's often tired, but overall her recovery has been pretty good.

"Family and friends were wonderfully supportive and, with their encouragement, I pushed myself back into the world. Seven weeks after the stroke, I attended a writing conference and, with some trepidation, led one of the discussion groups.

"After that, it was just a matter of getting on with it, taking one step at a time and doing something even if I felt scared. It was good to discover that the old skills hadn't disappeared," she says.

ck power

Nine months after the stroke, she found part-time work teaching creative writing in Hampshire libraries and took up the offer of becoming the moderator of a panel of crime writers called the Deadly Dames.

Jo had deferred her degree for a year but long before her return to university, Carol felt able to look after Adam alone and even take him out for the day.

"I still wake up and instinctively check that everything works as I can't trust my body any more. Another side effect of the stroke is that I tend to over-plan things, but I've also developed some common-sense coping strategies. For instance, I can smile but not for long, so if I'm having a photo taken, I ask the

person taking it to say, 'one, two, three, smile' at the right point. I've also given up high heels because my balance is poor and I wipe the numb side of my mouth frequently when eating in case I'm 'wearing' my food," she says.

On New Year's Day 2013, Carol threw the party she'd promised herself in hospital. "Over that past year, I'd achieved so much more than I'd thought possible. And that evening I put the idea to some of my writing friends that we set up as a small, independent, co-operative publisher," she remembers.

They agreed and in July Carol's first crime novel *The Terminal Velocity of Cats* was published. She has a full schedule

of promotional events for the next few months and is pleased that the book is doing well on Amazon. As Carol explains, "I'm lucky to have recovered so well but I was very determined, not to say stubborn. It was the stroke that inspired me to self-publish. I decided I was going to take control of my own future where I could and this was my way of taking back power."

"I promised myself that if I got through this, I'd have a party next New Year."



Money matters

How to manage your finances after a stroke

A stroke can happen to anyone and the after-effects can impact on your ability to manage your money. However, setting careful plans in place now could save you and your family stress later.

If you were suddenly unable to remember passwords or PIN numbers, or even write your name, how would you access your bank account? If you couldn't make decisions any more, who would look after your money, and how would your dependants manage?

Being admitted to hospital or developing speech or cognitive difficulties can make controlling finances difficult for many stroke survivors. However, forward planning will allow you to focus on recovery rather than money worries. Here are some options:

Joint accounts or standing orders

If you can make decisions about your finances but need someone to help you carry them out, you could give a trusted person access to your money by opening a joint account with them. Alternatively, you could set up a standing order so money from your account can go into theirs.

An Ordinary Power of Attorney

This is a legal arrangement that gives someone of your choice, such as a relative or friend, the

power to handle your financial affairs if you can make decisions. However, it stops being valid if you lose your mental capacity.

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

This is a legal arrangement that will allow a person of your choice to make financial decisions on your behalf even if you lose mental capacity. However, you must have mental capacity when you make the LPA.

Court of Protection

If you haven't made an LPA and you lose the mental ability to manage your money, the Court of Protection can appoint a Deputy to act on your behalf for all financial and property affairs. However, it can take longer and is more expensive than making an LPA and you won't be able to choose your Deputy.

Department of Works and Pensions appointee

If you have lost the capacity to make decisions about your finances, the Department of Works and Pensions can appoint someone to receive your benefits or pension on

your behalf so they can use the money to pay your household bills and buy food and personal items. Powers are not as extensive as for the Court of Protection Deputy.

For more information, contact the Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100**.



Talking shop

One year ago, the Stroke Association Support charity shop, the first of its kind, opened in Sheffield, selling everything from furniture and electrical items to clothes, accessories, toys and DVDs. We catch up with founder Tracey Newman-Hinchliffe and volunteer Michael Harmes.

SN: What motivated you to set up the shop?

Tracey: "When my father died of a stroke, my family and I decided to do anything we could to reduce the risk of others going through such a sudden and tragic loss. I'd worked for many years in charity retail so decided to set up Stroke Association Support in order to raise money for services and treatments that will help improve survival and rehabilitation rates. We also raise awareness of the condition by distributing Stroke Association information."

SN: How has your first year been?

Michael: "It's been fantastic. Customer response has been amazing and our stock has really grown. The support we've had from people affected by stroke in particular has been tremendous. A lot of people come in to tell us what they've experienced and they bring things because they want this specific cause to benefit, rather than just wanting to get rid of stuff."

Tracey: "We've had a really good turnout at events such as our launch and Sip for Stroke, plus some great support from Hallamshire Hospital Stroke Unit staff, who took shoppers' blood pressure and gave them information."

SN: Are there any highlights from this past year?

Michael: "I took a call from a customer who explained that her mother had died and one of her last wishes was that her possessions be given to the Stroke Association. The family ended up bringing in two vans full of stuff – tables and chairs, clothes, everything!"



SN: Any future plans?

Tracey: "Donations have been so good that we are looking to expand locally next year. Originally, I didn't think we would be in a position to do this for several years to come."

SN: What has the shop brought to your life?

Michael: "It's been hard work but very rewarding, especially when customers are pleased. When we get back bags of donated stock from a leaflet and bag drop, that makes me really happy because we're achieving our objectives."

If you live locally and would like to donate items, call 0114 273 1400 or just pop in to the shop at 1-7 Charles Street, Sheffield S1 2HS, just behind John Lewis.



"I've renewed my life and I'm enjoying every minute of it."

It's never too late

Thomas Bartley wasn't expecting to make a career change after 40 years as a driver. But a sudden stroke prompted him to take a new direction – now he says it's the best decision he's ever made.

Like most people at 59, Thomas Bartley wasn't planning to start a new career. After all, he'd spent the best part of 40 years behind a wheel, having driven buses, lorries and vans for a living. Then a stroke set a life-changing chain of events in motion.

"After seven months recovering, I knew I needed a job with less stress than driving," he explains. The job Thomas chose was a personal healthcare assistant for a community care agency, helping to support people with learning disabilities.

"I thought of healthcare because years ago I'd worked briefly as a hospital care assistant to top up my income," he remembers. "I took to it immediately. It's a

great feeling to know that you're making someone's life easier."

One year into the job, Thomas was offered the chance to study for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ2) in Health and Social Care. "Going back to studying after more than 45 years was daunting, but the staff at St Helen's College on Merseyside were fantastic," he says.

Delighted to pass his NVQ, a year later Thomas embarked on a Diploma in Health and Social Care and an Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care, both of which he successfully completed in 2012. But that wasn't an end to his achievements. St Helen's College nominated him for the 2013

Liverpool City Region Apprentice Awards at which he won runner-up of the over-25 section. "It was such a thrill to be included. I was the oldest apprentice by far on the night," he says.

"Retraining has been the best decision I've ever made – since getting married and having children, of course! My family has been the main factor in my recovery," adds Thomas, who is married to Marjorie and has two children and three grandchildren.

After a hip replacement during the summer, he is now back at work, doing the job he loves. "It's never too late to learn and I'm proud of my achievement. I've renewed my life and am enjoying every minute of it."

Life-saving jewellery

MedicAlert and the Stroke Association are proud to offer you a **£5 discount on your first item of medical identification jewellery.**

Perfect for anyone with vital health information to impart, a MedicAlert necklace, watch or bracelet will help you get the right treatment in an emergency.

The MedicAlert symbol on each item of jewellery contains the essential information medical professionals need to know quickly, plus they will be able to access more detailed medical records stored on a secure database. This can be done from anywhere in the world via an emergency phone line, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We can also converse in over 100 languages, providing that extra reassurance if you're abroad.

Over the past 50 years, MedicAlert has helped more than 300,000 UK people to live a safer life. Member Sue Wyeth says: "I know that in an emergency MedicAlert will help me to get the treatment I need. This could mean the difference between life and death. It's an easy choice!"



For peace of mind, sign up for an annual MedicAlert membership by direct debit and enjoy a **£5 discount** on your first item of jewellery. Call **0800 581 420**, quoting '**Stroke Association**', or for more information, visit **medicalert.org.uk**



Protection for your family's future

None of us knows what the future may hold, but there are many reasons for considering taking out life cover with Stroke Association Insurance Services.

You may want to look into protecting payments for important bills, or to make sure that your loved ones remain financially secure should your circumstances change. Or perhaps you already have an existing life insurance policy with another provider and would like to talk to us about adding to your level of cover?

For more information, speak to our experienced and understanding team. If you're a stroke survivor and your stroke was more than six months ago*, they can go through an application with you or take your details in order to come back to you later.

And if you purchase a policy, you'll also be supporting the Stroke Association – we donate 20% of our commission to the charity at no additional cost to you.



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Call us on **01603 828 396** or visit **stroke.org.uk/insurance** for more information about life cover and other insurance products.

* For a fair assessment, underwriters cannot provide a quotation until six months after your stroke.

Back to work

After a stroke at 55, Eric Sinclair feared he would never work again. Nine years on, he's back running his business and has even written a book about his experience.

Eric Sinclair knew nothing about strokes until he woke up one morning in 2004, unable to move his left side. "I was alone in a hotel room in Norway as I was visiting my son, Iain, who lived there. I struggled to my mobile phone and, with my one working hand, managed to dial emergency services."

After two weeks on a specialist stroke ward in Oslo, Eric was transferred to an Aberdeen hospital, where he stayed for four months before returning home to his wife Jo.

But the long-term consequences were as much of a shock as the stroke itself. "It wasn't just the effect on my body but my whole life," he remembers.

Being self-employed, Eric's income dried up immediately and there was a big question mark over whether he could ever return to running his business, providing courses for secondary school management teams.

He had to learn to walk again and had no use of his left hand. For months, his voice was weak – certainly too weak to give talks – and, like many stroke survivors,

his concentration was poor and his energy levels low.


Worse still, after being discharged, Eric discovered that there was very little in the way of physiotherapy on the NHS, so he used his savings for private sessions. "My NHS physiotherapy stopped when I needed it most and I felt abandoned," he says.

He stayed positive by walking with his dog, Hamish, and writing a book about his experience called *Man, Dog, Stroke: Musings of a Deeside Whippet and His Master* (visit mandogstroke.com), kindly donating profits to the Stroke Association.

Eighteen months after the stroke, he began slowly rebuilding his business and nine years on, he works part-time. Eric has had to accept a reduced income and learn to pace himself to cope with the chronic exhaustion resulting from the stroke.

He also volunteers for the Stroke Association in Scotland, which he's found helpful. "The lack of help after leaving hospital was frustrating, which is why I support the Stroke Association's campaigns for improved stroke

services. It's fantastic that it offers survivors such meaningful involvement in its work. Confidence is the first thing you lose after a stroke and it's the first thing you have to regain," he says.



"It wasn't just the effect on my body but my whole life."

Our booklet *Stroke in younger adults* contains information on getting back to work. Visit us at stroke.org.uk/youngeradults or call 0303 3033 100 for more information.

Mistaken for being drunk

Having a stroke is frightening enough but as survivor Eleanor McCallion knows, when symptoms are mistaken for drunkenness, urgently needed medical treatment is delayed.



One day in March 2011, Eleanor McCallion, then 27, drove off to her local market in Belfast, where she ran a bag stall. But she soon started to feel unwell.

"I suddenly felt sick and dizzy, as though I had a hangover. I managed to park but when I got out, my balance went and I fell," she remembers.

Ambulance staff, who also had a stall there, came to help but to Eleanor's amazement, they thought she was drunk. "After they'd given me oxygen, the first thing one of them said to me was, 'Have you been drinking? Have you been taking drugs?' Part of me felt angry and another part thought, 'Are you mad?'"

But despite her protestations, she overheard a nurse on the phone, asking her mum to take her home because she was drunk. "Luckily, Mum knew this couldn't be true because she'd been with me all morning and told the staff

this. They then put my symptoms down to a fluke," she says.

Eleanor went home but an hour later she was violently sick and couldn't walk so her dad dialled 999. "I ended up in intensive care for seven weeks but can't remember a thing," says Eleanor. It had taken 11 hours and several tests for Eleanor to be diagnosed with a brain stem stroke, caused by a clot. Doctors warned her parents that she may have had just hours left to live.

"I didn't have the classic stroke symptoms such as a weakness on one side or slurred speech until later and because of my age, alcohol, drugs and pregnancy were the first things the medics thought of," she says.

Sadly, at the Stroke Association, we know that this isn't the

only time stroke symptoms have been mistaken for drunkenness. With any stroke, the faster medical treatment can be accessed, the better the chances of survival and recovery. Fortunately, a combination of blood-thinning drugs and surgery saved Eleanor's life and weeks later she was moved to a brain injury unit, where she re-learned to walk.

Now she lives independently and, earlier this year, raised £1,400 for the Stroke Association, walking nine miles of the Belfast City marathon with her frame. "I would like to thank the teams at the Royal Hospital in Belfast and the Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital," says Eleanor, who has set up a Celebration Fund to continue raising money for the Stroke Association.

Please give generously to Eleanor's Stroke Association Celebration Fund at stroke.celebrationfunds.com/Eleanor



5 steps to adapting your home

After a stroke, everyday tasks can be a challenge and your home may start to feel more like an army assault course than a comfort zone. Here's how some simple adaptations may make life easier.

1

Look at the layout

If walking is difficult, ask a relative or friend to remove potential trip hazards. However, it's also good to have strategically placed, sturdy furniture to lean against when you need to rest. Keep objects you use a lot, such as reading glasses, remote controls or pens, on a side table near your usual chair.

2

Keep warm

Cold temperatures increase risk of stroke, so make sure your heating system is regularly serviced. Consider fitting draught-proofing and insulating your loft. For information on home improvement grants or help with heating, insulation or fuel bills, download the Government's advice leaflet *Keep Warm Keep Well* at dh.gov.uk/publications or contact your local Citizens Advice. For details on the Government's Green Deal scheme, visit gov.uk and type 'green deal' into the search box.

3

Stay in control

Problems bending down, stretching up or gripping objects? Light switches can be lowered or sockets raised, and many DIY shops sell plug handles or pulls. There are also touch-sensitive lamps and motion-sensitive lights that will come on when you walk past, as well as remote-control lighting.

4

Be safe

Stroke can affect balance, increasing risk of falls. A second handrail on the stairs, grab rails around the house as well as electronic bath seats, hoists and stair lifts may be helpful. Make sure that floors are free from loose rugs or frayed carpets and lighting is good. Also, steps and ramps can make going in and out of your home easier. An occupational therapist can advise on equipment, or see our *In brief* section on page seven for details of *Equip Stroke*, our new online service.

5

Get technical

An increasing number of highly technical devices allow people with severe mobility problems to live independently. They include sensors that detect floods or extreme temperatures and raise the alarm. Or there are pressure sensors that will detect if a vulnerable person has fallen or simply not got up in the morning, alerting a carer or call centre. Your health or social care professionals may be able to advise you.

For a free publication, *Making your home a better place to live after a stroke*, contact our charity partner Care & Repair England at www.careandrepair-england.org.uk

Rising star

Occupational therapist Emma Ralph, 27, leads the Merthyr Tydfil Reablement team at Keir Hardie Health Park in Wales. Earlier this year, she won a national award for her work in stroke rehabilitation services.

SN: Tell us about the award.

Emma: I won 'Highly commended' in the Rising Star category of the Advancing Healthcare Awards, which recognise achievements among health professionals. I was nominated for my work in helping to develop a new service model for stroke patients. It was a real privilege but also a shock to win – as far as I'm concerned I'm just doing my job and I'm lucky to work in a great team.

SN: How is the new stroke model helping people?

Emma: By improving links with community-based rehabilitation services, stroke patients can be discharged from hospital earlier than previously. We still give them the same level of support they'd be getting in hospital but it takes place in their home, which they prefer.

SN: What inspired you to be an occupational therapist?

Emma: Fate. When I was in the sixth form, I was hoping to do work experience in teaching history but I was given a place in an occupational therapy department instead by mistake. I had no idea what it was about but it was too late to change. Within a year, I'd successfully applied to get on to an occupational therapy programme at Cardiff University. Thank goodness for this mistake because I love my job!

SN: How does occupational therapy help stroke survivors?

Emma: When a person has a stroke, it can feel overwhelming because so much can change, including their ability to do simple tasks such as washing, dressing, walking or making tea. We have a dynamic team that

works to provide a cohesive therapy package for each survivor, focusing on what is most important to that individual and helping them to stay motivated.

SN: What are the most important parts of recovery after a stroke?

Emma: It's important that the survivor's family and friends understand how drastically that person's life changes when they return home. So we talk about the potential risks that may be present and how the person will need time to adapt to their surroundings again. We make sure the stroke survivor is listening to their body, too. We want to set ambitious goals, but we have to be realistic about what is achievable in a certain time frame.

What's on ac

Have fun and take action on stroke – there's something for everyone!

Runs



Santa Run 5km

Richmond Park
London

7 December

☎ 020 7940 1359

@events@stroke.org.uk

Adidas Silverstone Half Marathon

2 March

☎ 0115 871 2472

@debra.rawlings@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run 5km/ 10km/ 15km

Heaton Park, Manchester

2 March

☎ 07961 246 395

@resolution@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run, 5km/ 10km

Warwick Castle

2 March

☎ 01527 903 501

@Westmidsfundraising@stroke.org.uk

Bath Half Marathon

2 March

☎ 0117 911 5471

@southwestfundraising@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run 5km/ 10km

Cramond Foreshore, Edinburgh

2 March

☎ 0131 555 7252

@resolution@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run 5km/ 10km

Bellahouston Park, Glasgow

9 March

☎ 0131 555 7252

@resolution@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run 5km/ 10km/ 15km

Clapham Common, London

9 March

☎ 020 7940 1359

@events@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run 5km/ 10km/ 15km

Delamere Forest, Cheshire

9 March

☎ 0161 742 7484

@resolution@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run 5km/ 10km

Stanley Park, Blackpool

16 March

☎ 0161 742 7467

@resolution@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run 5km/ 10km

Dundee

16 March

☎ 0131 555 7252

@resolution@stroke.org.uk

Resolution Run Half Marathon

Richmond Park, London

30 March

☎ 020 7940 1359

@events@stroke.org.uk

Paris Marathon

6 April

☎ 07961 246 395

@northwestfundraising@stroke.org.uk

Greater Manchester Marathon

6 April

☎ 0161 742 7467

@rebecca.owen@stroke.org.uk

London Marathon

13 April

☎ 020 7940 1359

@londonmarathon@stroke.org.uk

Belfast City Marathon

5 May

☎ 028 9050 8053

@eventsni@stroke.org.uk

Walks



Glasswalk

Cambridge Grafton Centre

18 January

☎ 01284 749 650

@eastenglandfundraising@stroke.org.uk

Valentine's Firewalk

Bury St Edmunds Rugby Club

16 February

☎ 01284 749 650

@valentinesfirewalk@stroke.org.uk

Rides



London to Paris Bike Ride,
Birmingham Run and more
exhilarating challenges

Dates throughout the year

Various UK venues

☎ 01527 903 501

@nancy.lillington@stroke.org.uk

Something different

Christmas Fayre

Life After Stroke Centre,
Bromsgrove, Worcs

7 December

☎ 01527 903 501

@Westmidsfundraising@stroke.org.uk



ross the UK

Christmas Carol Concert Mince pie/mulled wine reception

Life After Stroke Centre,
Bromsgrove, Worcs

Service at St John's Church,
Bromsgrove

11 December

☎ 01527 903 501

@ Westmidsfundraising@stroke.org.uk

Christmas Carol Service

Holy Trinity Church in
Sloane Square, London

13 December

☎ 020 7940 1347

@ charlotte.wahlich@stroke.org.uk

Firewalk Challenge

Baltic Square, Gateshead
Quayside, Tyne and Wear

20 March

☎ 0191 492 6191

@ firewalk@stroke.org.uk

Jumps & abseils

Colchester Shop & Drop Abseil

Colchester Town Hall

26 January

☎ 01284 749 650

@ eastenglandfundraising@stroke.org.uk

The Ultimate Skydive

Northern Ireland

Dates all year round

☎ 028 9050 8053

@ eventsni@stroke.org.uk



Tandem Skydive

Brackley Airfield,
Northamptonshire

15 March

☎ 01527 903 501

@ Westmidsfundraising@stroke.org.uk

Sip for Stroke



Why not get together
with friends and organise
a Sip for Stroke party?

Call **0207 566 1525**, email
sipforstroke@stroke.org.uk
or visit **stroke.org.uk/sip** to find
out about events in your area.



The Stroke
Association
is a charity. We rely
on your support

Text **STROKE 5** to **70300**
to donate £5. **ALL** of
your donation goes to the
Stroke Association. Find out
how your support helps at
stroke.org.uk/savelives

Stroke stars

Since losing their mother, Molly Macgowan, to a sudden stroke in 2008, Kirsty Macgowan and Shirley Paterson, from Stirling in Scotland, have taken on several fundraising events in her memory, with their most gruelling challenge taking place at the start of August 2013.

They organised Saddle up for Stroke, a 520km cycle over four days, stopping off at Scottish towns and villages that spelt out the word STROKE. Beginning in Stranraer on 1 August, they stopped at Thornhill, Rosyth, Oldmeldrum and Keith before finishing at Elgin on 4 August.

Shirley says: "We wanted to come up with something a bit different and spent months plotting the route, which wasn't easy. It was certainly



a challenge but it was all for a very important cause."

Fortunately the wind and sun were mostly in their favour and there was only one puncture in total.

Kirsty adds: "We want to thank everyone who supported, sponsored or joined us on the cycle. It really encouraged us and made the journey worthwhile."

The ladies have raised more than £6,500 to date and hope to eventually raise £20,000 for their mum's Remembrance Fund.



Finding a care home

Choosing the right care home for yourself or someone close to you can be challenging. Here's how to find the information that will help you make the best decisions.

Q Social services have agreed to fund my mum's care. Can she choose her care home?

A Your mum can request a specific care home, provided that it meets her needs, has space and doesn't cost more than social services would usually pay. The care provider must also be willing to agree to the terms of the local authority's contract.

If there's no place available at her first choice, she could be put on a waiting list, although this may mean she has to go elsewhere in the meantime. And if her preferred home costs more than the council is willing to pay, it is possible for a relative or friend to top up the difference.

Q Will I have to sell our home to pay for my husband's residential care?

A If your husband's stay in residential care is temporary, your home won't be included in any financial assessment. And even in the case of more permanent care, a family home is still disregarded as long as a spouse, partner, or relative aged 60 or over lives in the property. The same rule also applies

to relatives under 60, who are incapacitated due to illness or disability, or children under 16.

Q Where can I find the most recent inspection report for the homes?

A Every care provider has to be registered, monitored and regularly inspected by a regulatory body. Different bodies are responsible for inspections in various parts of the UK.

The regulatory body in your area will be able to provide you with information about the care homes you're considering. These include the Care Quality Commission in England (cqc.org.uk), Care Inspectorate in Scotland (scswis.com), Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (wales.gov.uk/cssiwsuite/newcssiw) and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in Northern Ireland (rqia.org.uk).

More information is available in our factsheet *Accommodation after stroke*. Call our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100 or visit stroke.org.uk/accommodation