

BRIGHTON

TAKE HEART GROUP

MAGAZINE

Featured in this Issue:

BTHG News

Special Feature

The Three Peaks Challenge

Events & Activities

Quiz Night

Portsmouth Christmas Shopping

Exercise & Healthy Living

Brighton Thistle Hotel Swimming

Keep Fit Classes,

Over 50's Activity Session

Hospital spot-light

MIBI Stress Testing

Hospital dietician

Food & Drink: Recipes

Medical Pages

Ask Alison.....

Structural changes in the cardiac centre, RSCH

The Sussex Cardiac Centre is currently undergoing a small expansion of its bed pool to accommodate an increase in both elective cardiology work and cardiac surgery. Whilst no clinical ward areas will be physically moving, the bed capacity within them will be changing. The building works to accommodate this expansion have been divided into 4 phases and commenced in May 2009 with completion of phase 4 (hopefully!) in December 2009. Phase 1 is almost complete and has involved an increase in the bed pool on Albion ward. Phase 2 due to start mid August, will see the development of a dedicated and purpose built day case unit on L6a in the Millennium Building. It is anticipated that this will be ready for use in late October. Phases 3 and 4 which will run from the end of October until mid December, will involve increases in the bed capacity on Lewes ward and the Cardiac High Dependency Unit. We have made every effort to minimise the effects that the building works may have on our patients' experiences when attending the cardiac centre either for in-patient or day case procedures or operations. Staff are being fantastic in embracing this expansion and all it involves and are committed to delivering the same high quality care throughout for which I cannot praise them enough.



Ann Gibbins, Matron, Sussex Cardiac Centre.

Heart Operations in the Media

David Hildick-Smith, Consultant Cardiologist, RSCH, has hit the headlines with a pioneering minimally invasive repair of a severely leaking mitral valve for Paul Collier, 58, a retired bricklayer, from West Wittering. Paul was at risk because he was not suitable for major open surgery and found it hard to walk up stairs because he would end up breathless. He was discharged the same day and said: "I feel a bit like a guinea pig but proud to be the first in the country to have this done". (read full transcript on page 3)

Mike Lewis, Consultant Cardiac Surgeon, RSCH, has also been in the media with an aortic valve replaced by a pig's heart valve for Chris O'Brien, 73, a retired teacher, from Battle. Chris was suffering breathlessness and tiredness and underwent a 4-hour operation. RSCH carries out 100-150 such operations per year, mainly with pig's heart valves but sometimes cow's heart valves can be used. A pig's valve is similar to a human one and there is less chance of rejection. Chris O'Brien is hoping for the new valve to last 15 years. The alternative mechanical valves would last longer but the patient has to take Warfarin permanently. Chris O'Brien said: "It is really working well at the moment and I feel like I've got a new lease of life".

It was reported locally that a 7-hour double bypass has been performed at Evelina Children's Hospital, London, for two-year-old Charlie Greenwood, from Hove, who was suffering cardiomyopathy. The hospital had never done an operation like this on a child before but Charlie has had an excellent response to surgery and now enjoys playing in the park like a normal toddler.

Cardiac Rehabilitation and Provision for Women

The National Audit of Cardiac Rehabilitation 2009 reported no increase in the number of patients taking up rehabilitation and that provision remains patchy in UK. Approximately two thirds of bypass patients, 30% of angioplasty patients and 34% of heart attack patients took part in cardiac rehabilitation. Around 27% of patients who were referred did not take part, of whom a third remained too ill or too incapacitated to participate. Older women are less likely to take part than men of the same age.

The BHF has also found that women with symptoms of a heart attack wait an average of 24 minutes longer than men before dialling 999. Women are more likely to experience symptoms of a heart attack as dull or heavy chest pain, which can spread to the back or stomach or feels like bad indigestion. Women are less likely to experience a sharp or crushing chest pain, which is more typical in men. Unfortunately, 35% of women would not dial 999 if they had an unusual chest pain because they feared it might be a false alarm. In West Sussex, almost 600 women die from heart attacks every year.

[sources: The National Audit of Cardiac Rehabilitation 2009, BHF; www.bhf.org.uk/999day Argus, 11th September 2009]

Membership Renewal 2009

If you receive this edition of the Magazine and you have not yet paid your membership subscriptions for this year, you now have a final opportunity to pay. If you have not paid, reminder forms were sent to you with the last edition. No Winter edition of the Magazine will be sent to you if you fail to respond. Please send your payments to Kevin Mechen, Subscriptions Secretary (tel. 01273 308403).

BTHG new T-shirts

The take heart group have a new limited edition T shirt designed by our resident cartoonist Alan Wickham. These are available in various sizes for £8.00 and can be purchased at any of the exercise classes or from Clytie Thomas.



Brighton Take Heart Group at other meetings

A committee member will attend the Heartbeat workshop of Sussex Heart Network on 16th September 2009 in Hastings. From meetings of Heartbeat and the Patient & Public Involvement Steering Group, Sussex Heart Network has now recommended action to local PCTs that copies of consultants' letters and cholesterol results are given to cardiac patients so that they can self-manage their own recovery.

[source: HeartBeat News, no. 4, Summer 2009, Sussex Heart Network]

Gala Birthday Dinner

Friday 16 October 2009 - Gala Birthday Dinner, Banqueting Room at Brighton's Royal Pavilion, 7.00pm for 7.30pm start. The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City Brighton & Hove, Councillor Ann Norman will be holding this event 'in aid of the Mayor's Charities, which are the Alzheimer's Society, Friends of Brighton & Hove Hospitals, the Martlets, and the Sussex Heart Charity. The sumptuous 3 course meal costs £65.00 per person. For bookings and more information please contact Terry Ayres, Sussex Heart Charity, RSCH (tel. 01273 523026).

Take Heart members assist in new study.

Six members of the Take Heart group were approached by Cardiothoracic Surgeon Mike Lewis & Consultant Anaesthetist Robert Kong to assist them in designing a study. This group of former surgical patients are looking at the patient information leaflet in order to comment on how 'user friendly' it is and whether they would have been willing to participate in the study if they had been approached prior to surgery.

The Take Heart group is delighted to have been approached to provide some 'expert patients' and we look forward to hearing the results of the study which involves treating anaemia prior to cardiac surgery.

BTHG funds Education

The Take Heart committee have agreed to offer funding for Katherine Moore to attend the Surviving Cardiac Arrest conference organised by SADS UK on 24th October. SADS (Sudden Adult Death Syndrome) is a charity that works to prevent premature loss of life by raising awareness about cardiac conditions and educating on the warning signs that may indicate that a person has a cardiac abnormality that needs treatment. It also provides monitoring equipment to hospitals and defibrillators to community organisations.

The honoured guest speaker at this years conference is Brighton's own Professor Douglas Chamberlain.

Katherine will report back from the conference in the next issue of the magazine.



Quiz night

Saturday 17th October

St Francis Church Hall, Moulsecoomb Way

7pm for 7:30 start

£1 per head, maximum six per team

Cash Prizes and raffle. Tea, coffee and nibbles

~~~~~

If you can't get a full team together, come anyway,  
we are a friendly crowd!

Contact Ken Thomas with names please.

Tel 01273 621343

Look for our sign. Parking at rear.



# Christmas



### PORTSMOUTH CHRISTMAS MARKET

Whilst revelling in the traditional seasonal cheer of a white Victorian Christmas, your family can step back over 150 years to experience the strict rules of a Victorian school, sample hearty Victorian food, visit a traditional Victorian 'green' Father Christmas, play parlour games, join in with novel bawdy music hall in Fagin's Tavern and delight in traditional Christmas carols, street and fairground entertainments.

Watch out for those pickpockets along the way, who will be joined by Fagin himself and a host of other colourful Victorian characters such as Scrooge, Mr Bumble and the event will get the Royal seal of approval with a special appearance by Queen Victoria .

Wander through the European-style shopping village, Victorian Street , Georgian colonnades and discover superb quality gifts, fine crafts, festive food and drink at the biggest Christmas market on the South Coast .

**Saturday 1st December, £19.00**

Coach departs 9am at Withdean Stadium and returns at approximately 6pm.

For bookings contact Christine Gumbrell on 01273 889031

## Weight loss isn't a chore anymore! By Shivani Samgi

I am one of the dieticians working at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton. I cover the cardiac wards in the hospital, and if you have been through cardiac rehabilitation we may have met during the cardiac rehab sessions, where I conduct two talks; **Eating for a healthy heart** and **weight management**.

Weight loss has many benefits and permanent changes to diet and activity are the most effective ways to lose weight and keep it off! Weight loss (if you are overweight) can also be beneficial if you suffer from high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes or arthritis of the hips or knees. If you are struggling to lose weight and would like some help and useful advice, then there are many options available to help you make the necessary changes.

The **Healthy Living Group** is a weight management group which provides practical information and support for people who want to lose weight. You will be able to

- ♥ Eat healthier
- ♥ Improve lifestyle
- ♥ Make long term changes rather than quick-fixes
- ♥ Make your own decisions about what you need to change

With the support of the group you can look at possible ways to eat healthy and improve your lifestyle. You will hear about other peoples experiences and you can contribute as much or as little as you like to the sessions.

The healthy living group is held fortnightly on a Tuesday afternoon at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. There are 8 sessions in all and the topics include:

- ♥ Importance of regular eating
- ♥ Healthy food choices
- ♥ Being more active
- ♥ Shopping and food labelling
- ♥ Cooking and adapting recipes
- ♥ Eating out and alcohol
- ♥ Keeping control of your eating

As the sessions are led by your goals you will be fully involved in deciding your weight loss target. Your weight will be taken at each session and we will be working towards a 5 -10% weight loss target in 6 months. Hereafter, you may want to continue to lose weight or maintain your weight.

If you do not wish to join the group but would still like weight reducing advice or information then you could attend our other weight management programmes. If you are interested, please discuss with your GP, consultant or cardiac nurse about referring you to the Dieticians at BSUH.

If you have any questions you can contact the Dieticians on 01273 696955 ext 4290

Our Mission is Nutrition!!!

**Shivani Samgi, Dietician**  
**Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton.**



## The Three Peaks Challenge (cont.)

At 4am we arrived at a warehouse at the end of Wastwater for morning ablutions. Ooh, what I would give for a shower. Although standing in the murky drizzle I did notice that we girls were the only ones to have indulged in a change of clothes, what luxury. Gone were the thoughts of croissants and fresh orange juice the race was on. We were unceremoniously dispatched from the back of the minibus clutching a handful of cereal bars for the climb up Scafell.

Again the ascent was in poor visibility but we had glimpses of the lake below and the hills that rise around Scafell. At the top there was collective texting to families at home on the verge of a busy Monday morning. We considered ourselves lucky to be away from the routine of a working day.

What joy can be gained from receiving a humble bacon butty on our arrival back at the base of Scafell. We were buoyed by the achievement, only one to go.

We arrived in Wales to sunshine and of course the now visible view of a further peak. We only had to reach the summit before 24hrs was up to complete the challenge, and we did this surrounded by the most beautiful views as far as the eye could see. We had a celebratory drink at the top- which had been devotedly carried. Then a few knees 'went' and there was much bargaining for the last 2 seats on the train, the remainder of us wobbled down, dreaming of the massage waiting for us.

A great challenge to have done, and to our surprise we could all walk the next morning. I would recommend the experience to anyone.

*Sarah de Belder*

*The **National Three Peaks Challenge** is a mountain-endurance challenge in Great Britain with a history of over 40 years, in which participants attempt to climb the highest peaks of each of the island's three countries. Whilst the challenge has no official rules or time restrictions, many participants try and complete it within 24 hours, or more leisurely over a weekend, using motorised transport to travel between the mountains.*

*The mountains climbed, in order of elevation, are Ben Nevis in Western Scotland, 1,344 metres, Snowdon in North Wales, 1,085 metres and Scafell Pike in North-Western England, 978 metres. In all the challenge involves some 42km (26mi) of ascent and descent, with total travel approaching 765km (475mi). The challenge is usually undertaken starting with Ben Nevis, the highest, and for many the most distant.*

*There is no formal governing body of the National Three Peaks Challenge. Each year a large number of organised attempts is made at the challenge with the aim of fundraising for charity, in which sponsorship is sought by participants, but many people are purely interested in the physical challenge and make attempts in small groups, usually with non-walkers performing a supporting function by doing the driving and having food ready. The Challenge has certainly been completed in as little as fifteen hours, including ten hours driving time.*

Walking through the snow on Ben Nevis



View of Wastwater from Scafell Pike



View from Snowdon, near the summit



The happy team on completion



# Peacehaven Exercise Classes

**Now supported by Sussex Heart Charity**

Would you like to continue with supervised Cardiovascular Exercise?

Do you live in Peacehaven or surrounding area?

Why not come and join our new

## **PHASE IV EXERCISE CLASS at PEACEHAVEN LEISURE CENTRE**

Greenwich Way, Peacehaven, East. Sussex BN10 8BB



### **Keep Fit Circuit Training**

Tuesdays 11:30am - 12:30pm

Thursdays 10:15am – 11:15am

Membership £5.00, Session £3.50

**For further information please contact:**

**Richard Stantiford mob. 07786 001771**

**Peter Mobsby tel. 01273 584930**

**by car** - off-street car parking spaces at Meridian centre, limited designated site parking.

**by bus** - no. 14, 14A, 14B, 14C at Meridian centre.

NB: Please bring a signed letter from your GP, a certificate of completion of the cardiac rehab programme at RSCH or other summary of your cardiovascular medical history.



**Would you like to continue with supervised  
Cardiovascular Exercise?**

**Do you live in Hove or surrounding area?**

**Why not come and join our**

### **PHASE IV EXERCISE CLASSES**

**Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 09.15am – 10.15am**

**at Ralli Hall, 81 Denmark Villas, Hove, BN3 3TH**

Phase IV follows on from the NHS Phase III programme held at David Lloyd and is designed to meet the needs of cardiac patients who wish to continue with on-going supervised exercise classes to improve and maintain their cardiovascular fitness. Unlike the NHS programme there is no restriction on how often or how long patients can attend therefore maximizing benefits to health.

The classes are supervised by a Clinical Exercise Specialist - qualified with The British Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation (BACR) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

**For further information please contact: Richard Stantiford Tel: 07786 001771**



**I have recently had a heart attack and I have to take warfarin. Why do I have to have blood tests and why does the amount I have to take vary?**

Warfarin is a drug that is given to prevent clots forming in the blood. It works on the clotting system within the body. With warfarin there is no set dose that is prescribed for every patient – the dosage required needs to be balanced for the individual patient. The only method for checking whether this dosage is right for you is by a blood test. The blood tests are very important as they are the only way of knowing whether the dose prescribed for an individual patient is likely to be both effective and safe.

When patients are prescribed warfarin the blood test required is called the international normalised ratio (usually shortened to 'INR'). This test times how quickly your blood clots compared to control sample. For each patient an INR target will be defined. For example for atrial fibrillation (an abnormal heart rhythm) the usual target is an INR of 2-3.

♥ If the result of the blood test is less than this level you will be advised on an increased dosage as the warfarin is likely to be less effective.

♥ If the result of the blood test is above this level you will be advised on a decreased dosage as higher levels increase the risk of side effects (which in the case of warfarin are mainly related to bleeding).

Patients taking warfarin are advised to carry information relating to their warfarin. The National Patient Safety Agency has updated the booklet for patients – commonly known as the 'yellow book' and introduced a card for warfarin patients to carry with them at all times detailing their treatment. Copies of these publications are available from pharmacies.

For further information the British Heart Foundation has a fact sheet available of on warfarin

[http://www.bhf.org.uk/publications/view\\_publication.aspx?ps=1000763](http://www.bhf.org.uk/publications/view_publication.aspx?ps=1000763)



**Since I have been on regular medication for my heart problem I have a funny taste in my mouth. Would this be caused by my tablets?**

Numerous medications have been reported to have the potential to adversely influence the sense of taste. In some cases affects on taste have had a significant effect on the quality of a patient's life as they can affect dietary choices, emotional state and compliance with medication regimens.

There is limited published information which makes it unclear how common a problem this is and also why it occurs. What data there is suggests that large differences exist among individuals in terms of their susceptibility to taste-related adverse effects, and that sex, age, body mass and genetic variations in taste sensitivity are likely involved.

With specific reference to cardiac medications the classes of medicines that most commonly seem to be implicated include angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (for example captopril, ramipril, perindopril) the angiotensin receptor blockers (for example losartan) and calcium channel blockers (for example amlodipine) with small numbers of case reports with a variety of miscellaneous drugs.

In many cases the adverse effects appear in the first few weeks after starting a new medication and are reversible within 2-3 weeks of stopping that medication. Unfortunately however stopping a medication is not always an easy option, particularly when one is dealing with life-threatening conditions. As always – if you think you have any adverse effects from your medication please do not stop taking your medication without discussing this with your doctor first.



*Alison Warren*

Senior Cardiac Pharmacist. RSCH