

# NO LIFE HALF LIVED

EX-COMMANDO ROSE TO CHALLENGE AFTER STROKE



# TROY'S CHAIN REACTION

**Former Royal Marine Commando Troy Johnson took on an incredible cycling challenge, just a year after surviving a life-changing stroke.**

Troy cycled 53 miles on a specially chosen route with stops at meaningful locations along the way – including the spot where he collapsed.

The 53-year-old took on the challenge to raise funds for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and to thank people like you for supporting him in his recovery. The testing event not only marked an amazing milestone in Troy's

recovery journey but helped him raise more than £2,000 for CHSS.

He said: "I've learned stroke rehabilitation is, in part, down to each individual to recover. I needed to be living. I wanted to go back to work and get back to my physical fitness as quickly as possible.

"I wanted and needed to be challenged in all the mental, cognitive and physical exercise I was given. The cycle run was the culmination of that challenge to myself, the trigger that motivated me to recover."

**TROY**

**'The cycle challenge was the trigger that motivated me to recover'**

Read the full story of how your support has made a difference this year - page 2

## CALL ADVICE LINE

Our specialist nurses offer a supportive, listening ear and tailored health advice to anyone affected by chest, heart or stroke conditions.

All calls are free and confidential.

CALL : Freephone 0808 801 0899

EMAIL : [advice@chss.org.uk](mailto:advice@chss.org.uk)

TEXT : NURSE to 66777

We can offer expert advice to families, carers and health and social care professionals, too.

We also provide:

- Telephone interpreting service.
- New Generation text relay service.
- Air quality & weather text alert service.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland

Advice Line Nurses

**0808  
801  
0899**



## ROAD TO RECOVERY STARTED WITH CYCLE TEST



**"I want to thank people like you for supporting my recovery"**

It was on a routine cycle on May 14, 2020, that life changed for Troy. He noticed something was wrong when he couldn't recognise or control his right hand.

Stuck by the side of the road, he managed to call his wife, Pippa, after several attempts. Then he saw a motorcycle paramedic approaching and tried to raise his hand to hail the potential lifesaver.

But Troy couldn't lift his arm or even call out and the paramedic drove on, leaving a concerned Troy on a grass verge.

He had suffered a stroke. He had no power or control over his right hand, his leg bent awkwardly, and his speech was affected. He spent the next four weeks at the Astley Ainslie Hospital in Edinburgh, undergoing extensive rehabilitation and speech therapy.

A cyber security specialist since leaving active service, Troy has always been fit and active. But his anxiety and concern over the immediate effects of the stroke quickly gave way to concern and frustration about when and how he would get better.

Troy recalls: "It was only around about October, six months or so after the stroke, that I started to feel very fatigued after therapy and exercise."

The period immediately after the stroke was perhaps the toughest time for Troy and Pippa as they were also supporting Pippa's mum June and stepfather Tom who was terminally ill. The couple moved in with Pippa's parents at their home in Dechmont, near Uphall in West Lothian, so they could be with Tom at the end of his life.

As the weeks and months

passed, Troy was still working hard with exercises and therapy but also dealing with death and grief and desperate to return to work. The stress and strain of the aftermath of the stroke was beginning to tell on him.

He says frankly: "I had to take stock. I have been practising mindfulness and that had helped me when I felt overwhelmed. No one had told me you can get depressed after a stroke, and I've had to be vigilant to acknowledge the signs because I could feel down and frustrated, which was affecting both Pippa and me." A positive change came

when Troy was referred to Audrey Bruce, Lead Stroke Nurse for Lothian with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS). While helping Troy deal with the clinical aspects of stroke recovery, Audrey also put him in touch with CHSS's Community Support Services to give him more emotional and psychological support.

Jackie Slater, the charity's Lead Coordinator in Lothian, realised he needed to connect with someone with a similar experience and mindset. She arranged a meeting with Neil Francis, another stroke survivor who is now a trustee of the charity.

Troy says: "I was put in touch with Neil, and it's been fantastic. We are quite similar, both goal-orientated and both physically active. Talking to him has been so positive for me. Through our calls, he helped me decide to take on a physical challenge." Troy's challenge cycle started from his home in Longniddry and

took him to meet Neil at North Berwick Seabird Centre. He then headed to Gullane to pass the location of his stroke before turning back to Edinburgh to stop off at the recovery stroke ward at the Astley Ainslie.

The final leg of the journey took him via the coast road to finish at Dechmont, paying his respects to his father-in-law and the support he received from Marie Curie.

For Neil, 55, chatting with Troy has been part of his own remarkable journey back from the stroke he suffered at the age of just 41.

Neil says: "Troy is an incredible guy. We've found a bond in a short time of knowing each other. I hope I've been able to help him realise stroke recovery is a long journey with a lot of bumps on the road. We all suffer setbacks, but it's how we deal with those that matters."

"Offering my time to someone like Troy is my own way of helping CHSS, which is an incredible organisation filled with incredible people doing incredible work."

Jackie Slater, of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, adds: "It was a real pleasure to link up Troy and Neil – they hit it off right from the start. They both are truly inspiring in the way they approach life, setting goals and making the most

of opportunities, so they are not just surviving but also thriving."

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's staff and volunteers are here to help people across the country get back to the things they enjoy - and it's all because of amazing supporters like you.

**If you or someone you know needs help, call Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's Advice Line on 0808 801 0899 and start your recovery.**

## BE A FUNDRAISING SUPERHERO

WE NEED YOU TO RISE TO THE CHALLENGE FOR PEOPLE IN NEED ACROSS SCOTLAND

[www.chss.org.uk/events](http://www.chss.org.uk/events)

Join one of our fantastic fundraising events\* in the coming months and into next year and be a fundraising superhero. Every one of our events is designed to inspire and challenge you.

Get fired up and Walk the Flames at our brand new Firewalk event. If you think you have what it takes to walk barefoot across glowing embers that sizzle up to 650°C, then this is the challenge for you. Sign up to our Walk the Flames event in Dundee on 20th November and look out for the date of Walk the Flames Ayrshire coming soon. You will be given expert training to put mind over matter and show you are capable of anything. Join us and prove you can defeat the heat!

If this isn't for you then you can feel the spirit of the Glen at the most beautiful run in Scotland in the Glenlivet 10k. Enjoy the landscape of Glenlivet in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park. The Glenlivet 10k takes place on October 31st and welcomes runners and joggers of all levels.

Or grab the family and enjoy one of our most popular family events and walk for a great cause at the Loch Leven Walkathon which will take place early next year.

Find out more about all our events at [www.chss.org.uk/events](http://www.chss.org.uk/events) and do something amazing. Sign up today and help us to ensure no one has to recover alone when they leave hospital.

*\*Our events may be subject to change due to the ongoing situation with coronavirus. To keep you safe, we are continuing to review all upcoming events to ensure they comply with the Scottish Government's latest official guidance. We'll let you know about any changes as soon as we can.*



## SILENCED BY THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF APHASIA

# STROKE TOOK AWAY MY VOICE

THANKS TO YOUR DONATIONS TOM NO LONGER FEELS ALONE

**Tom, 56, just wants to tell his grandson he loves him – but aphasia has silenced him.**

When Tom Morris suffered a stroke in November 2019, neither he nor his wife Karen had ever heard of aphasia. Now the isolating condition has not only affected Tom's life but his entire family's.

As part of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's drive to increase public knowledge of the condition during Aphasia Awareness Month in June, Tom and Karen told us about the devastating impact the condition has had on them.

Tom, 56, who lives in Edinburgh, wrote of his experience: "I've just become a grandfather for the first time and my new grandson Thomas means the world to me. I'm determined to get better because of him."

"I was overjoyed when my daughter Katie told me she was calling him Thomas after me. My greatest wish is to be able to get on the floor and play with him and tell him I love him."

The former IT specialist with RBS has been left with aphasia and verbal dyspraxia, two conditions that make verbal communication almost impossible. He has also

been left with paralysis and weakness on his right side.

Tom and Karen spoke of the amazing support from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, particularly as members of the Lothians aphasia support group, run by Lucy Bowman, Lothian Community Support Co-ordinator.

For Aphasia Awareness Month, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland worked to increase public knowledge of the condition and

raise vital funds to ensure people like Tom get the support they need. Our support workers deliver vital one-to-one support and also peer support groups, which are currently being delivered online.

Tom said: "I have always been Mr Healthy. But I had a stroke when visiting my son Ben in Dundee at university."

"After some tests and scans, Karen and I were told I might be 'locked in' forever by the effects of the stroke. It was terrifying to think I wouldn't be able to move, speak or communicate in any way at all. I have never been so scared."

Tom spent more than three months in rehab at the Astley Ainslie Hospital in Edinburgh and was released just as lockdown began in March 2020. He received

weekly speech therapy sessions by phone, with the therapist giving Karen advice and guidance on how to support Tom.

Tom and Karen also began attending Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's online weekly aphasia support group, which has become an essential part of their lives.

Tom said: "With the support group on Teams, I really feel part of these incredibly supportive sessions and try to take part far more in this setting than at other times."

"I don't feel so alone, and I know Karen feels the same. Stroke took away my voice, but Karen has been amazed at how much I have tried to talk since going to the group. The support we both get from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is hard to put into words. It's something so very special."

Karen added: "Lucy's determination to get the Teams meeting started has been a huge support. Tom enjoys seeing our family and children on FaceTime, but his severe aphasia and verbal dyspraxia make these experiences challenging and exhausting."

"The support group is so much more relaxing. It is a lifeline for both of us and has become one of the most important things in our lives."

**'I had a stroke when visiting my son in Dundee'**

the sort of one-to-one physical rehabilitation and speech therapy she might have expected was not available.

Into the breach stepped Darlene Drummond, Lead Community Support Services Coordinator Tayside for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland who paired Heather with a volunteer, Lilian Beattie, who contacted her weekly to help with her speech and writing.

Heather, who has two sons and a 10 year old granddaughter, says: "This charity has been a total lifeline for me. Darlene got in touch with me when I was still in hospital, so when I got home, she knew what I needed. Without her

and Lily and all the support I've had from CHSS, I would not be where I am today.

"I do weekly speech therapy with Lily, and I'm part of a conversation group where five of us chat together every week."

Heather also puts the improvement in her speech down to her participation in ICAP, an intensive aphasia therapy program run by Glasgow Caledonian University in partnership with CHSS, which was delivered online because of lockdown restrictions.

She says: "That was very intense, but it was great for me. I felt it made such a difference to me."

## HAPPY TALK

**HEATHER SAYS ONLINE APHASIA THERAPY IMPROVED HER SPEECH**



**Heather Paterson puts the remarkable recovery in her speech after suffering a stroke down to the help she has received - which is funded by you.**

The 58 year-old, from Dundee, was already in the city's Ninewells Hospital after a stroke when she suffered a second one three days later.

Unable to speak because the stroke had caused aphasia – when the parts of the brain responsible for communication are damaged – Heather also had issues with her mobility and struggled to use her right arm.

Heather was released from hospital just as the first lockdown kicked in last year, which meant



YOU ARE IMPROVING CARE AND SUPPORT

OUR LONG COVID  
SUPPORT SERVICE  
IS BUILDING BLOCK  
ON NATIONWIDE  
CARE PATHWAY

SHARING  
THE LOAD

More than 75,000 people in Scotland are living with Long Covid, their lives impacted by the debilitating long-term effects of Covid-19.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland has been working with the NHS and the Scottish Government to create a coordinated nationwide care pathway between the NHS, GPs and our dedicated Long Covid Service.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's Long Covid Service, which includes a peer support group, offers help and support to all those whose daily lives are affected. We have also published our Long Covid Action Plan that sets out four critical challenges that require action at national level.

Jane-Claire Judson, Chief Executive of CHSS, said: "There is no doubt that more needs to be done to improve the care available to people with Long Covid and quickly. We've taken the first step. Our Long Covid Support Service can help people manage symptoms and provide support for mental wellbeing.

"It's ready to take the pressure off GPs and the NHS, but we need to be fully integrated with the health service to make the referral process easier so people living with Long Covid feel supported from diagnosis right through to getting the long-term support they need to live well."

Tracey Binnie, 40, of Tranent, East Lothian, is someone who is learning to live with the effects of Long Covid. Just over a year ago,

Tracey who is married with a 14 year old son, was a busy working mum with an active family life enjoying long walks with her two dogs. Long Covid has turned Tracey's life upside down and left her with a series of health conditions that mean she needs a half-hour rest after even the lightest of activity.

Her working life has also changed beyond all recognition and she has had to give up her full time job as a contractor as well as running her own pet sitting business.

Commenting on the impact on her life, Tracey said: "Since falling ill with Covid-19 in March 2020, my life has completely changed. I used to be very active and outdoorsy person. Now I am pretty much housebound, and I rely on my family to do all the things I used to be able to do.

"I've had to adjust to big changes physically and mentally. But I'm fortunate that my GP has been very supportive. But lots of people with Long Covid are not as fortunate. And that's why it's so important that more education is done with the medical profession. I appreciate the NHS is under pressure, but that's not right. People need help and support because they are often very unwell, yet their symptoms aren't taken seriously."

For Tracey, Long Covid means constant fatigue, what she describes as brain fog and muscle ache. She

also has a lung condition for which she has to use an inhaler and is now on beta blockers after being diagnosed with PoTS – postural tachycardia syndrome, which is an abnormal increase in her heart rate after sitting up or standing.

Tracey has now returned to work and is focused on helping others like her to get the help they need to recover as much as possible from Long Covid. She has now joined Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland to

work part-time as Community Involvement Co-ordinator for Long Covid. She

says her role with the charity is allowing her to put the advocacy skills she has developed since her own illness into helping other people who have only recently contracted Long Covid and may not know who or where to turn.

A key part of Tracy's role is facilitating the peer support group for those living with the debilitating condition. The group, which meets regularly by Zoom and has a Facebook group, gives participants the chance to share their experiences with others going through something similar.

Tracey also encourages group members to help shape how Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is providing help and support on Long Covid.

For more information on our Long Covid services and how to access them visit [www.chss.org.uk/longcovid](http://www.chss.org.uk/longcovid)



TRACEY

'I've had to adjust to big changes physically and mentally'

Kindness Programme's  
£100k funding boost

A £100,000 award from the Scottish Government has boosted Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's Kindness services.

The funding will be used to help reach more people through our Kindness Programme, helping to tackle isolation and loneliness in Scotland as a result of the pandemic.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland was one of nine organisations to receive funding as part of the £1 million Summer Fund, part of a £10 million commitment from the Scottish Government to support a new five-year social isolation and loneliness plan.

Jane-Claire Judson, Chief Executive of CHSS, said: "Isolation and loneliness have been exacerbated by the pandemic. In Scotland, 44-54 percent of people reported feeling lonely between July 2020 and May 2021.

"This will have a major impact on people's long-term health and risk of developing serious health problems.

"Through our Kindness

'Funding will expand the reach of the programme'

Programme, our Kindness Callers have been there for people who had no one else to turn to, and this contact has a life-changing impact on both the person receiving the call and our volunteers."

The Kindness Programme, which launched at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in April 2020, recruited more than 6,000 volunteers who have delivered more than 35,200 acts of kindness in our communities – including phone calls, shopping trips, dog walks and sharing social media messages.

Jane-Claire added: "It is essential that we continue to tackle isolation and loneliness across the country and with this funding we can reach more people who are alone and in need of help."

If you – or someone you know – would benefit from help from our incredible Kindness Volunteers, please call us on 0808 801 0899 or sign up for Kindness support online at [www.chss.org.uk/i-need-help](http://www.chss.org.uk/i-need-help)



'We need a single place to go for information and help'

MAIREAD

Mairead Johnson, 58, lives in Greenock with her husband Henry, 62. The couple contracted Covid-19 in late December 2020 and both are now suffering the effects of Long Covid.

"A month after our positive tests, we were both still floored by it. I've had flu before, but this wasn't flu. We just lay for hours on end, me on the couch and him on the bed. The only thing that got us up was having to let

our dog Betty out on to the balcony.

"Henry began to notice that after he'd been awake for a while, his head would feel as if it was swollen,

his throat became constricted, and he got brain fog. In fact, he said he was hallucinating sometimes. He's a little better now, but he still gets very breathless, and



Dr Amy Small is a locum GP in East Lothian. She is living with Long Covid after contracting Covid-19 in April 2020 and has been a fierce advocate for greater care for those with the condition.

She had to leave her GP practice because she was unable to work full-time and became involved in a campaign to improve care and knowledge about Long Covid.

Dr Small, 37, has joined Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland as our first clinical advisor and will be bringing her knowledge and experience to our Hospital to Home service and further development of our work and support for those living with our conditions.

She talks to us about what Long Covid means personally for her and her family and what an integrated care pathway between the NHS, GPs and Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland can do for patients.

"I got sick in April 2020. A couple of days later, my husband Matthieu started to feel unwell and then my two boys became ill one after the other. And I just didn't get better. Matthieu had different symptoms from me, but he too just didn't get better.

"For me, the fatigue was relentless. It was tiring simply to do anything. I tried to go back to work part-time. I did half a day of paperwork on the Monday and a normal surgery on the Tuesday morning. That put me in bed for 10 days.

"It was like the battery being empty on your phone. You look and you've got 1 percent and it just can't do anything. I could hardly lift my arm to drink at times.

"I got involved with Chest

Heart & Stroke Scotland because I'd written a letter to the then-Health Secretary Jeane Freeman with other medical colleagues who had Long Covid. We wanted to show that this is a real issue and patients have to be listened to.

"I recognise I'm in a unique position – I'm both patient and doctor. So that made mine a strong voice to add to the work Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland were already doing on Long Covid.

"We can make life better for people. But we need to get the information about Long Covid out to the GPs, and we need to make the referral system clearer and simpler. That means bringing the NHS and GPs together with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

"Our Advice Line is already very good. The nurses

there have time to talk and listen to a caller, more time than a GP has. They have expertise in the field and can talk patients through their symptoms and help patients to get the most out of of a GP consultation.

"This is where Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is very strong. They know how to listen to patients, to empathise with them and reassure them they are not alone.

"The support groups are also excellent ways to give that help, too. We are looking at things like a befriending service for those with Long Covid who feel very isolated, perhaps because they can no longer work or they don't have a support network around them.

"There's so much that needs to be done, but we are making great strides already and I am very happy to be part of the team that's making a difference to people's lives."



'For me the fatigue was relentless'

AMY

Long Covid  
Changed  
Our Lives

CAMPAIGNING FOR  
BETTER LONG COVID CARE

We are delighted to announce that our Long Covid Care Now campaign has been confirmed as a finalist in the Campaign of the Year category at the Scottish Charity Awards taking place on October 1st. Run annually by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), the Scottish Charity Awards celebrate the best of Scotland's voluntary sector.

The Long Covid Care Now campaign was launched to make sure that those living with the condition don't become the forgotten victims of the

pandemic. The campaign, which is ongoing, has significantly raised public awareness of Long Covid and secured major commitments from Scottish Government to improve care. To date, the campaign has convinced the Scottish Government to fund a new support service and is bringing the NHS and voluntary sector together to start providing the wraparound care people with Long Covid desperately need. To get involved and find out more about our campaigns visit [www.chss.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.chss.org.uk/campaigns).

his heart has started racing. He has pain in his hips, too.

"I have joint pain in my foot, as if one toe is permanently broken. My hands and feet regularly get very red and the veins get prominent. I also have breathlessness and my heart is constantly racing.

"One day I was on the couch for hours and my heart was racing. According to my Fitbit, I'd done five hours and 23 minutes of cardio exercise – but I never moved at all!

"Weird things are happening to our bodies – Henry and I don't have a yawn reflex any longer – but we

don't feel we can constantly go to the GP and report on every new odd symptom. Those of us with Long Covid need a single place to go to for information and for help."



FOR LONG COVID SUFFERERS IN SCOTLAND



## THANK YOU DAY BRINGS THE NATION TOGETHER



**'Never underestimate the power of a cup of tea!'**

# WELL PLAID

**TARTAN TEA PARTY BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER ACROSS SCOTLAND**

**Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's Tartan Tea Party brought the nation together on the first-ever National Thank You Day**

On a sunny Sunday in July, thousands of people across Scotland poured a nice cup of tea, offered loved ones a slice of cake and said a heartfelt "thank you".

The Tartan Tea Party brought together families, friends and local communities on the first National Thank You Day, united in their gratitude for all the support and help we gave each other during the pandemic.

Stroke survivor Debbie Taylor, 45, of Comrie in Perthshire, is a Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland ambassador and was one of the group of people who put forward the idea of a National Thank You Day.

On Sunday, July 4, Debbie helped bring together her neighbours, family and friends in a celebration of togetherness – naturally marked by lots of lovely homemade cakes and lashings of hot tea.

Debbie's son Finlay, an avid bagpiper piped open the gathering, then the 12-year-old was given his own joyful Thank You Day surprise, courtesy of the charity – a

video message from his favourites, the Red Hot Chilli Pipers.

Debbie said: "Thank You Day was a wonderful way for everyone to say thank you to the people who mattered and who helped them over the last year. None of us could have got through this alone, so it was a delight to join with neighbours and family in this way.

"And the icing on the cake was the surprise video for Finlay. The special thank you video was amazing, especially the message from his favourite piper, Harry.

The Tartan Tea Party was backed by celebrities including Lorraine Kelly and Dame Katherine Grainger, while Michelin-starred chef Tom Kitchin provided two exclusive recipes for CHSS Tartan Tea Party participants to rustle up on the day.

Jane-Claire Judson, Chief Executive at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, said: "It was so important after a tough year for us all to come together to say thank you. If the pandemic has taught us one thing it's how important people are to us and that we are here to support one another.

"Never underestimate the power of a cup of tea!"

**William Gallagher, 69, lives in Drumchapel, Glasgow. He had a stroke in July 2019 and joined the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland weekly health walk in September that year.**

What makes William Gallagher thankful? After suffering a stroke two years ago, just getting out every day for a walk is what the Glasgow man is most grateful for.

William, 69, feared the worst when he became ill in July 2019. Discharged from hospital five days after his stroke, he fretted that he wasn't then able to take his beloved chihuahua Alfie out for his daily walks.

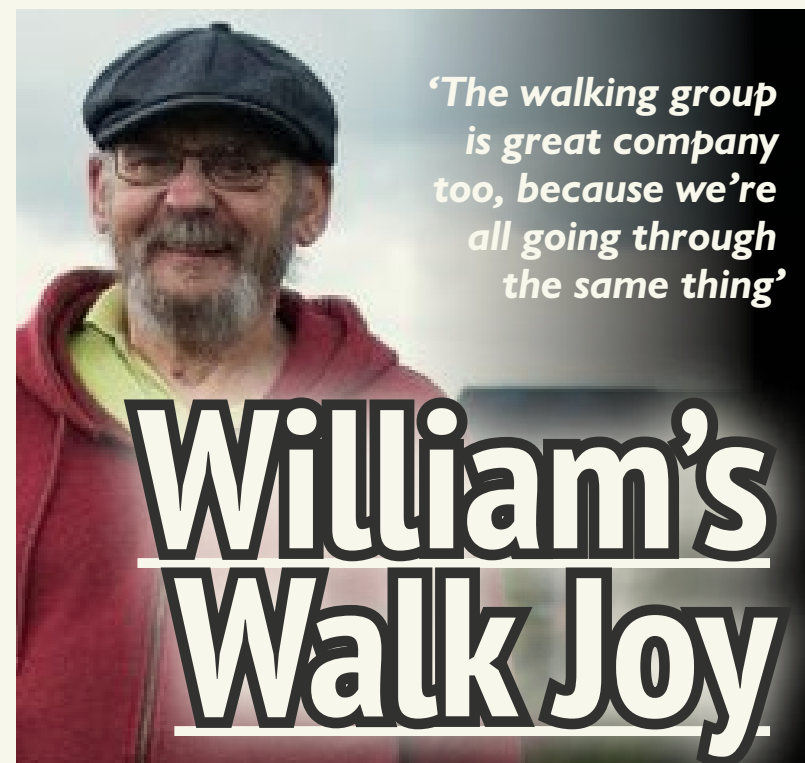
However, after a month of rest and recuperation – and a break for Alfie staying with William's son – better health and, importantly, those crucial daily walks returned for William.

He spotted a notice at the local health centre and was soon part of the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland health walking group.

William says: "When I had my stroke, the doctors at the hospital told me it was actually the second one I'd had, but I had no idea anything had happened to me.

"When I got home, I tried to walk the dog. I used to walk everywhere for miles, but I couldn't even go half a mile. I was so disappointed that I didn't have the energy.

Two months after his stroke, William began walking again with a walking group run by Kevin Miller, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Health Defence Coordinator in Drumchapel. The health walk is run in partnership with the Alliance Scotland



**'The walking group is great company too, because we're all going through the same thing'**

## William's Walk Joy

Community Links Practitioners who are based in Drumchapel health centre. The project is also supported by Paths for All.

For William, the joy of being out in the fresh air has been a lifeline during the difficult last year of lockdown and restrictions. While the weekly health walk was suspended by coronavirus restrictions, he doggedly went out walking every single day by himself, doing five or six miles at a time.

He says: "The best thing that a walk does is help your mental health because just being out and active makes you feel good. The walking group is good for us because everyone goes at their own pace. And we're out there, no matter the weather.

"I have lots to be thankful for. My dog Alfie gives me the motivation to get up and out every morning. My son makes sure I'm taking my tablets and gets me to hospital appointments.

"And the walking group is great company too, because we're all going through the same thing. I am very grateful for all the positive things in my life."

Kevin Miller says William is an inspiration, adding: "William came to have a chat with me after seeing the sign about the health walk. He started the next week and has hardly missed a walk since. On top of the group walks, he has been out every single day sometimes doing up to 40 miles a week. It's incredible dedication and inspiring to see."

**'The best thing that a walk does is help your mental health'**

## JOCK'S SO GRATEFUL FOR PALS

**'I would have been lost without the COPD support group'**

**Jock Shiels, 69, lives in Eyemouth, Berwickshire. He suffers from the lung condition COPD and runs a Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland support group locally for fellow sufferers.**

The last year has been a difficult one for Jock. The 69-year-old lost his youngest brother to Covid-19 and wasn't able to say goodbye properly because of lockdown.

Meanwhile, restrictions stopped him meeting up in person with the support group he runs for people with COPD, the long-term lung condition from which he also suffers.

But on Sunday, July 4, Jock

happily gave thanks for what has steered him through these turbulent times.

The retired joiner, from Eyemouth in Berwickshire, says: "I have to say the biggest thank you to Christine Wakefield and everyone at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

"She calls me regularly to keep me updated on what the new rules are and just to have a blether. Her keeping in touch has been fantastic because I can pass on information to the rest of the group.

"Even though we have only recently started to meet up again in person, we all stayed in contact by phone. And knowing that

Christine and the rest of the charity are looking out for us and care what happens to us makes such a difference."

Jock, a father of four, grandad of six and great-grandad of one, adds: "I would have been lost without the COPD support group. It gives us all something to look forward to. After our meetings, we pop into the local pub for a coffee and a bite to eat – it's become a real social event, and that's so good for all of us but especially those who are on their own.

"And I am so grateful to have my allotment. I can disappear up there for hours and focus on planting and digging and taking care of everything. It's all socially distanced, too – all the allotments are a metre apart, so we just have to shout a bit louder if we want to be heard!"

On Thank You Day, Jock was with his family to raise a cup of tea to acknowledge all who have helped him through the last year.

He says: "There's a lot to be grateful for this year, but for me, it's all about the reassurance I've had all the way through from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland."

## HELPING OTHERS IS ALWAYS TIME WELL SPENT

**OUR VOLUNTEERING HEROES SHARE THEIR INSPIRATION FOR HELPING OTHERS.**

# Volunteer Heroes

**LYNN**



**Stroke survivor Lynn Bruce says volunteering for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland over the past year has transformed her life.**

**The 49-year-old, who lives in Cardowan, near Stepps in North Lanarkshire, suffered a stroke in 2016 when she was living in Perth, Australia.**

Moving back to Scotland to be closer to family, Lynn went on to develop epilepsy, and the consequences of her medical condition meant she could no longer work as a phlebotomist (blood nurse).

A member of a stroke support group in Shettleston, Glasgow, Lynn realised she was getting as much from talking to volunteers as she was chatting to fellow stroke survivors. She decided to take the plunge and become a volunteer herself.

**'Volunteering is so worth it for your mental health and for your soul'**

She says: "I became a Kindness Caller after going through the training and I call two people every week. Each of them is young to have had a stroke, so I feel as though I'm helping them adjust to their new life. I think it's important that I've had the same experience that they are going through.

"What I enjoy most about volunteering is giving something back. Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland has done so much for me personally that I want to repay that. I hear and see the appreciation and happiness in the voices of the people I'm speaking to.

"When they know I'm going to call them the following week, I know how happy that makes them feel. That fills me with joy. It's not only benefiting them but also me.

"I love feeling needed. I hadn't felt that in a long time and now I do.

"Volunteering is so worth it for your mental health and for your soul. It's good soul food. Volunteering resonates and sends ripples of positivity throughout everyone involved."

**After a knee replacement operation, Peter Bathgate needed something to occupy his time during the recovery.**

**PETER**

**Since joining Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland as a volunteer, 62-year-old Peter has thrown himself into his new role, which he says has helped boost his own confidence.**

Peter, who lives in Edinburgh, says: "I had a knee replacement operation after a lifetime of being sporty and standing every working day for eight hours in my job as a printer. During my recovery in 2017, I got in touch with Volunteer Edinburgh who put me in touch with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

"I was immediately impressed at the work they were doing. They asked me to be a driver collecting service users, taking them to and from their support groups.

"I'm not the most sociable or most outgoing person, particularly when I first meet new people, so I thought driving would suit me down to the ground.

"At the first meeting, the co-ordinators asked me to sit in with the group. And that was it. I became not just a driver but part of the group.

"When the first lockdown came along, I volunteered to do

shopping for some of our service users who had to shield or weren't able to get out. Then, when we went into a second lockdown, I moved on to making telephone calls and organising Zoom calls with a couple of people.

"What I've enjoyed most is seeing people who have had a stroke start to improve. I only usually see them in the group for eight to 10 weeks, but I see their recovery in that time. It's so great to see their enthusiasm and to see them recovering something of themselves.

"I have the opportunity to get to know new people and can honestly say they have all been lovely. That's what I get out of it – meeting people and seeing their recovery.

"Going to the meetings and volunteering as a driver has brought me out of my shell and given me confidence. People ask me what I do in my spare time, and I tell them I volunteer for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and encourage other people to get involved."

**'What I've enjoyed most is seeing people start to improve'**

**ARLYNNE**



**Arlynne Gold, 54, of Leven in Fife, became a Kindness Volunteer with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland while she was furloughed. Walking the dog for a shielding person was time well spent, she says.**

**'I had been furloughed from my job as a receptionist in a sports centre in Glenrothes during the first lockdown. I really felt for all the people who were stuck inside, those who were shielding or elderly or vulnerable.'**

"I'm fit and healthy, so I wanted to do something to help. I did a Google search for volunteering opportunities in my local area and came across Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. This was my first time as a volunteer and it has been great.

"The charity asked me if I'd be happy to walk a dog for Michelle, who has had to shield and lives nearby. Well, of course, I was delighted! We have an

elderly cat but my husband David and I love dogs.

"Michelle owns a lovely West Highland terrier called Iona, and walking her has become one of the highlights of my day. In fact, the whole family has gone gaga for Iona! We even bought her birthday and Christmas presents.

"I walk Iona in all sorts of weather and at times I wondered what I'd let myself in for. But walking Iona has been such a joy, not just for me but for the whole family. And I've got to know Michelle really well too and we've formed a nice friendship.

Volunteering has been so good for me. It felt so good to know I

was helping Michelle because she was worried that Iona wasn't getting the attention and exercise she needed because Michelle had to shield.

"Now that I'm back at work, I don't have the time to be a formal volunteer, but I wanted to keep walking Iona. So now I send Michelle a text on my days off and go pick the dog up for a walk.

"If I wasn't so busy, I'd still be actively volunteering for the charity. Anyone who has got a little time to help should get involved. The people you help through volunteering get so much out of it and you also get such a lot out of it. It's a lovely thing to be able to do."

**'Volunteering has been so good for me'**



## FUNDRAISERS' SPECIAL: CELEBRATING SOME OF



## SYMPOSIUM COFFEE DRINKERS HAVE 'BEAN' RAISING THOUSANDS FOR CHSS

**Stroke survivor Paul Haggath was determined to give something back to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland for the help he received during his own recovery.**

As the owner of SYMPOSIUM Coffee, a chain of coffee shops in the north-east of Scotland, he found the perfect fundraising idea on his own doorstep.

Paul arranged for his chain's takeaway coffee cups to be emblazoned with the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland logo and donated 25p from every takeaway drink sold during the month of May, raising an incredible £3,000 for the charity.

Paul said: "This was a great opportunity to be able to give back to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. After I had a stroke back in January

2018, I never thought something like this would be possible."

When he isn't pouring perfect lattes, Paul is busy with wife Wendy and his four daughters but finds time to keep fit with regular visits to the gym.

He puts much of his own recovery down to the quick actions of Wendy, who knows what stroke

symptoms look like and called an ambulance immediately when she found Paul slumped behind their bathroom door three years ago.

Paul was taken to hospital and had thrombolysis within three hours. This is the process where a clot-busting drug is administered to disperse the clot that caused the stroke and return the blood supply to the brain.

Because of your donations, Paul

was able to receive weekly visits from a Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland stroke nurse to help.

Awareness about stroke is key for Paul, so he was delighted with the end results of his chosen charity month.

He said: "We've been blessed. We have 10 coffee houses and lots of customers buying coffee. So we thought there was no better way to spread awareness than to put Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland on the cups."

"We've been trying to make people aware of the charity and of the effects of a stroke and how quick action can save lives."

"We sold 10,000 coffees and we're delighted to have donated £3,000 to a charity that's very close to our hearts."



## WATCH THE BIRDY

## Alastair's fundraising idea takes flight

**A favour for a client has taken off for retired financial advisor Alastair Sillars.**

The 83-year-old, who lives in Thornhill, near Dumfries, has been making picture frames as a hobby for years. And when one customer asked if he could also make her a birdbox, Alastair thought this was the ideal opportunity to raise some much-needed funds for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

Rather than ask for payment, Alastair asked his new birdbox customers to make a donation to the charity, raising £50 in a matter of weeks.

In December last year, Alastair suffered a stroke, and the support he received from the charity as he recovered has been invaluable.

Alastair said: "Picture framing

was a hobby that's turned into a business. My wife Brenda, who passed away last year unfortunately, ran a painting group, and I learned how to frame pictures for her.

"One customer asked me to make her a birdbox a few years ago, then she turned up again last year and commissioned me to make another eight. I've now made about 28 and asked everyone to donate to the amazing charity."

"I was fortunate. My stroke was mild, and I was only in hospital for a couple of days. I've had lots of occupational therapy via Zoom, and I've been lucky enough to receive a Kindness Call once a week from a Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland volunteer."

Alastair said: "Picture framing

## THE AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS OF CLAN CHSS



**Rugby player Gordon Reid set himself a challenge – to walk 500 miles in April, including the virtual Kiltwalk, and raise thousands for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.**

Just don't ask the Scotland prod to sing the Proclaimers' song of the same name!

As well as walking 500 miles, Gordon, 34, also gathered sports memorabilia from pals in the sporting world for a charity auction later in the year. And he's even got plans for an attempt at a Guinness World Record.

**'I wanted to do something positive in his name'**

The prompt for this positive action was the sudden loss of his father, also Gordon, to a heart attack at the age of 65 last year.

Gordon says: "The heart attack came completely out of the blue."

"We were all stunned and are really still getting over the loss."

"I wanted to do something positive in his name. My wife Marissa and I did some research, and we thought Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland was a great fit with what we are trying to achieve."

"Your charity not only helps people with the physical effects of a heart attack or stroke but also with the mental health issues that can affect those who survive the condition and those who are grieving the loss of someone they love."

"You've tapped into something that matters so much to me. Everything you stand for and do is something I want to support."

Scotland's Virtual Kiltwalk took place over the weekend of April 23-25. This year every penny raised for CHSS will be topped up by 50

percent. That means for every £1 raised for CHSS, we will receive £1.50, thanks to the generosity of the Hunter Foundation.

Gordon set his sights on reaching his 500-mile milestone when he pulled on his own kilt that weekend. Wrapping himself in tartan also reminded him of a very special moment with his own dad.

He made his Scotland debut in the summer of 2014, during the national team's tour of the USA and against the host nation.

He recalls: "We were in the middle of Texas and it was boiling hot. I

looked up and there was my dad in the middle of all this incredible heat and humidity in his own kilt. My agent had arranged for my parents and my wife to fly out to see me play."

"It was one of the best moments of my life. But the memory is always one that makes me smile so much, thinking of dad sweating in his kilt

in 40-degree Texas heat."

"Dad wasn't really into sport at all, but he learned the rules of rugby and he followed me everywhere. I know how proud he was of me. I want to make him proud again with the Kiltwalk fundraising challenge."

"Dad was passionate about helping people himself. So this is just the first of hopefully many challenges I will do to help as many people as possible. And I want dad's name to go down in history, which is why I'm looking at the Guinness Book of World Records."

Gordon, who has now set up his own business restoring furniture and windows, is dad himself to two daughters – Emerson, five, and seven-month-old Roan. One of his greatest regrets is that his dad never got to meet baby Roan.

He says: "There are lots of bittersweet moments, lots of what ifs. I never knew my own grandfathers because they died before I was born. This challenge will help keep dad's memory alive for my girls and for me."

## Max Will Never Walk Alone



## 9-YEAR-OLD DID 5K DAILY TO RAISE £750 FOR CHSS

**For football-mad Liverpool FC fan, Max Guy, the moment was crushing. Volunteering to go in goal on only the first day of his holiday soccer camp, he fractured his wrist saving a shot.**

That ruled him out of the rest of his planned activities for summer, so mum Louise challenged Max to join her on a walk to stop him getting bored.

Amazingly, nine-year-old Max, who lives in Edinburgh, went on to walk around 140km in just four weeks, raising an incredible £750 for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

Louise said: "My son is very active, and he was devastated when he fractured his wrist the very first time he went in goal. That meant no touch rugby, no football, no nothing!"

Inspiration came in the shape of the Guys' neighbours, Tom and Karen Morris.

Tom had experienced a life-changing stroke in 2019, and the couple have been supported by CHSS ever since.

Louise says: "Max is football daft, and his two teams are Hearts and Liverpool. We were lucky enough to get tickets for a pre-season friendly, and he was so happy to see his favourite players. Max has really inspired people. I'm very proud of him."

Max added: "I thought the 5k a day was fun because some days I didn't have a lot to do, and it made me refreshed."

Karen suggested Max do a sponsored walk to support stroke survivors like her husband Tom.

Louise told us: "I asked him if he'd like to do the walk around our block. He said 'that isn't much of a challenge, is it?' and then asked if he could do a 5k walk."

"It snowballed from there. We thought about which charity we'd like to support, and Chest

Heart & Stroke Scotland struck a chord because of our neighbour Tom and also because my mum

had pulmonary fibrosis and my stepdad had COPD and heart failure."

Every day for a month, Max and Louise – often joined by his dad Dean – set out to walk 5k, often incorporating the distance into other activities such as a visit to Edinburgh Zoo. The final 5k came on August 8 when the family went to Liverpool to watch Max's football heroes in action.

Louise says: "Max is football daft, and his two teams are Hearts and Liverpool. We were lucky enough to get tickets for a pre-season friendly, and he was so happy to see his favourite players. Max has really inspired people. I'm very proud of him."

Max added: "I thought the 5k a day was fun because some days I didn't have a lot to do, and it made me refreshed."

## CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Check out our famous Scottish-themed Christmas cards, face masks and gifts from our online shop [www.shop.chss.org.uk](http://www.shop.chss.org.uk)

Our Christmas brochure is also available on request.

Get your copy by calling 0131 225 6963 or email [admin@chss.org.uk](mailto:admin@chss.org.uk)



## YOU CAN HELP CHANGE LIVES IN SCOTLAND

A gift in your will is a gift to every recovery, every moment shared, every step forward, every glimmer of hope for anyone in Scotland who is affected by chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Small or large, a gift in your Will means we can keep doing our vital work of helping survivors and their families now and in the future.

To talk to us about leaving a gift in your will or to find out more about legacy giving, please call Morag Fleming on 0131 297 2761 or email [Morag.Fleming@chss.org.uk](mailto:Morag.Fleming@chss.org.uk).

GIVE THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME



## FOCUS ON SUPPORT: HOW THE SERVICES YOU FUND



*'I've come on leaps and bounds since joining the CHSS support group'*

# MIC'S HEALTH TRANSFORMED BY GROUP FUNDED BY YOU

**Spelling mistakes in his texts to his sister spelled out that something was wrong with Mic Starbuck.**

In fact, the retired academic had suffered a stroke without realising. And once his sister had alerted his family, they quickly realised recent falls and slurred speech were the symptoms of the stroke.

A short stay in hospital was followed by just as short a stay in a rehabilitation ward. However, Mic has recovered well and puts that down to joining Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's online rehab group.

Now he is working on a plan to help group members take their online physio and exercises offline and start walking for health.

Mic, 71, lives in Burnside, near Glasgow. When he had the stroke last year, he and wife Carolyn were already shielding because of cancer, while Mic has asthma and is sensitive to fumes.

He says: "The longest-lasting effect of the stroke has been on my left leg. I've had to give up driving and I need to walk with a stick. But I've come on leaps and bounds since joining the CHSS support group because walking is so important for my health."

"I was diagnosed with Type 1

diabetes, and I had used walking to lose more than six stones in weight to manage the condition.

"I had excellent care in the acute ward at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, where I was admitted last year.

"When I was released from hospital, the occupational therapist came regularly, but the Covid-19

restrictions at the time meant only one person could come to the house so there was no physio for me. I had to find a local physiotherapist and pay for the service myself.

Mic's therapy ended after six months and he turned to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, with whom he has worked on clean air

campaigns in the past, to help him in his recovery. He joined the weekly online support group, which meets every Thursday when two physios take them through a series of chair-based exercises focusing on aerobics and building up muscle tone.

For Mic, the next step is to encourage group members, who are spread across Scotland, to start walking on their own.

And he is working with CHSS Physical Activity Coordinator Stuart Brown on a plan to make this as safe as possible.

He says: "It's very important for people in the group to move on and progress. I'm trying to do that for myself. Every day I try and walk the 2k to my local café where I'm a bit of a fixture.

"I've had a couple of falls, so my sons bought me an Apple watch that will alert them and the emergency services if I have a fall when I'm out walking. That reassures them that I'm safe.

"We want those in the group to feel comfortable and safe when they venture out, so having some kind of GPS device that tracks their movements is something we're looking into.

"I understand that people are

nervous about getting back out. I was nervous about going back to my favourite café because my wife and I had been shielding

for such a long time. We're not just dealing with the aftermath of stroke but also the reality of Covid.

"The group is so important, but no one has to go for a walk in a big group. They can go alone or with a friend, so long as they have found a safe route locally."



# Support Returns

**PILOT PROJECT FOR FACE-TO-FACE GROUPS IS BOON FOR JACQUELINE**

**Returning to her hometown in Scotland after suffering a serious stroke should have been a positive step for Jacqueline Aff.**

But the horrors of Covid-19, prolonged lockdown and shielding left the 56-year-old former nurse isolated, alone and afraid.

Only the loving support and care of her husband Said kept Jacqueline focused.

Now the couple have finally been given a positive boost with the return of face-to-face support from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, part of a pilot project funded by your donations.

Jacqueline says: "Being able to be back among people who understand what I am going through has been such a relief. Knowing we have the weekly support group to return to has made such a difference already."

Life has changed dramatically in a short time for Jacqueline and Said.

She was 54 and working as a cardiac recovery nurse at Guy's Hospital in London when she suffered a sudden stroke. Paralysed down her left-hand side, she spent seven months in a rehab unit.

With Said's support, Jacqueline decided to return to her hometown of Coatbridge to be closer to her brother and sister, her only surviving family. She made the journey north in an ambulance and then spent weeks in the rehab unit of the town's Coathill Hospital.

Said takes up the story: "Our accommodation in London wasn't

suitable any longer because Jacqueline needs a wheelchair now.

"She went into Coathill, but they thought she had plateaued in her recovery so she was discharged.

"The CHSS support group had to stop because of covid restrictions and only resumed last week for our first meeting in almost 18 months. The group takes place every Thursday, and it is so beneficial for my wife and for me.

"When we moved back to Scotland, a lot of people didn't realise how much the stroke had affected my wife. People very slowly disappeared from our lives, and we have to rely on each other. Fortunately, my wife and I prefer each other's company.

"The support group is lovely because it gives Jacqueline the chance to talk about how the stroke

has affected her. Covid has been terrible for everyone but particularly for us. But we have survived it, and now we are coming out of the end of the tunnel and can see the light at last."

Jacqueline says she could not have survived the trauma of the last two years without Said's support.

She says: "My husband does everything for me, and I don't know where I'd be without him. He cleans the house, makes my meals, takes me to the toilet, drives me where I need to go. He's been incredible.

"I used to be completely independent. Now it takes a lot of effort to get out, but the support group is worth the effort."

## ARE HELPING THOSE IN NEED ACROSS SCOTLAND

# THE CARDIACTIVES



*'The health walks are definitely helping our members both mentally and physically'*

**The Cardiacives in Nairn are a peer group affiliated with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. Over the course of the last year, the Cardiacives, supported by CHSS, have introduced a health walk, run in conjunction with Paths for All, that is open to anyone with a heart condition and to their family and friends.**

**Health walks are short, social and accessible low-level walks for those who want to be more active. Nairn Cardiacives meet every Monday at Nairn Community Centre from 6pm until 7.30pm.**

**If you're interested in joining, please speak to your GP and ask for a referral.**

**Find out more at [www.chss.org.uk/group/nairn-cardiactive-group/](http://www.chss.org.uk/group/nairn-cardiactive-group/)**



BLAZEJ

**Physiotherapist Blazej Pytko is the Walk Leader for Nairn Cardiacives. We asked Blazej to walk us through the group.**

**How did you first get involved in Cardiacives?**

The head physio at Nairn Hospital had suggested running cardio active classes at the local community centre, and I thought that was a great idea. That was back in October 2016 and I've been involved ever since.

**How many people are involved in your group?**

We currently have 10 people on the health walk and 12-15 taking part in outdoor circuit training.

**What types of conditions are Cardiacives members living with?**

Most of our members have heart and circulatory diseases. Mainly these are people who have had heart attacks or are stroke survivors. But we also have healthy people join us who simply want to get fit and be healthy, both mentally and physically.

**What kind of terrain do you walk on, and is there a preference for a particular area?**

We walk on a mixture of tarmac paths, sand, grass etc. Our preference is for safe, multi terrains away from traffic and main routes. Our routes are varied according to the weather conditions and risk assessment, and we also change routes regularly to make it more interesting for the walkers.

**How has the pandemic impacted on the Cardiacives over the course of the last 18 months? What challenges have the group faced?**

The pandemic has had a huge impact for any organised activity, specifically indoor activities. It has also had an enormous impact for mental health and physical activities. According to the government guidance, everything had to stop. Our Cardiacives group wasn't allowed to run usual activities, so we had to find another

option for what we could do instead. Cooperating with CHSS and Paths for All let me organise outdoor activities. These health walks were in accordance with government regulations. That was a positive breakthrough.

Our first walk was on December 9, 2020. We organised two walks a week. One was a long walk of around an hour on Wednesdays and a shorter half-hour walk on Fridays.

**How has the introduction of a health walk supported the group members as we have come out of lockdown?**

The health walks are definitely helping our members both mentally and physically. They offer such a good social aspect. The walks mean a lot and make such a big difference for our group.

**What is or was the biggest challenge in setting up the walk?**

The biggest challenge was waiting for the green light from the government to do anything. The rest was a matter of good organisation and encouragement. We fortunately had positive people involved who were willing to make it happen. That's the best way – surround yourself with the right people and the rest will be easy-peasy.

**WHAT DO THE GROUP MEMBERS THINK ABOUT THE WALK?**

"Great idea. Excellent. Great Team Leader who varies the walks and exercises. It is good exercise, and nice to have a social interaction with other members."

"I look forward to our Wednesday health walks. It gives me the incentive to go out and exercise. I enjoy the company and appreciate the experience and knowledge of our walk leader Blazej who keeps an eye on us all and chats to everyone."

"Our weekly walks are a great opportunity to get out and walk, meet with others and enjoy the chat. I feel in safe hands with Blazej who leads the walks."

**What do you enjoy most about being a walk leader?**

First and foremost, I enjoy being a walk leader because I like helping people.

**What would your message be to other groups across the country who are considering starting a walking group?**

Don't be afraid to do it. Health walks are safe and are helping people with mental and physical health issues. They also help people keep fit or get back to a better fitness level.

# WAY TO GO!

**Buddies David and Joe's 96-mile hike on West Highland Way raises incredible £6k for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland**



*'We've been pals 25 years and wanted to mark the occasion with a big challenge like this'*

**Colleagues David White and Joe Devlin wanted to do something spectacular to mark their long friendship, having met as apprentice engineers 26 years ago.**

The pair, who met as teenage apprentices, decided walking the West Highland Way in just four energy-sapping days was the ideal challenge – with the added bonus of ending the 96-mile trek by climbing Ben Nevis and raising thousands of pounds for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland along the way.

Big-hearted bosses at their employer, international spirits company the Edrington Group, boosted their fundraising total by promising to double match what they raise. And with their running total standing at £2,300, the likely lads are looking good to donate

more than £6,000 to Chest Heart & Stroke funds.

David, 42, of Bearsden, near Glasgow, and Joe, 43, of Drumchapel in Glasgow, set off on their epic walk on June 7, completing the legendary 96-mile trek on June 11.

David says: "It was Joe's brilliant idea to mark the occasion of knowing each other so long. He suggested we climb Ben Lomond or Nevis but then we agreed we needed a bigger challenge.

"We did it in the four days and finished by climbing Ben Nevis. That was as tough as anything we'd already done. There was blazing sunshine at the foot of the mountain, then the next thing we were shrouded in mist. But it was a real buzz to reach the top."

The pals chose CHSS because each has a personal connection to heart and lung conditions. David's dad, Tony, had two heart attacks in his early 50s and a quadruple bypass following the second aged just 52. Tony is now 82 and still hale and hearty. Joe's mum, Janet Gilmour, had stents fitted in her heart and lived with COPD before passing away six years ago.

Joe said: "Yours is a charity that helps people we know have suffered, from close friends and family to work colleagues."

Andrea McIntyre, Community and Events Manager (West) Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, said: "It's thanks to fundraising heroes like David and Joe that we're able to help people with chest, heart and stroke conditions live their lives to the full."



## FUNDRAISING HEROES LEAP INTO ACTION

# RIVER DEEP MOUNTAIN HIGH

DOUGLAS BAGS  
MUNRO AFTER  
LOCH KAYAK



**Action man Douglas Sewell went river deep and mountain high for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland in May.**

Stroke survivor Douglas, 63, kayaked across Loch Lochy, in the Great Glen between Inverness and Fort William, to the wild campsite at the foot of Meall na Teanga. Then, along with twin brother Bruce, Douglas completed the Munro Challenge by scaling the 3,012ft high peak.

What would seem a daunting challenge to anyone else was just another tick on the fundraising adventure list for Douglas. He survived a stroke on a Peruvian mountainside and a second, more serious stroke seven years later, then walked the length of Scotland, all 536 miles, to raise money for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. He also completed the Munro Challenge last year, albeit virtually.

Douglas, of Nairn, says: "I was inspired by armed forces' veterans who have returned from Afghanistan or Iraq

and have raised money and helped others despite their own injuries. I wanted to raise money for the charity, but the most important aspect of this challenge was to highlight the health benefits of exercise.

"I know how important physical exercise is to recovery. I want to provide people with our conditions with the information and opportunity to engage in physical exercise to improve their health and wellbeing."

Since his strokes, in 2003 and 2010, Douglas has become deeply involved with the work of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. Today he is a

**'I want people to understand how fitness can save lives'**

trustee of our charity, is also a Community Services Volunteer and serves on several of our

working groups.

He added "Everyone with our conditions can be helped with the right support, and I'm no different. I want people to understand how fitness can save lives. That's the most important message."

## Pals' epic cross-border cycle raises £2,700



## Pedal Power

**Chris Scougal and his two pals crossed borders to cycle 167 Miles from Glasgow to Sunderland and raised an incredible £2,700 for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.**

The trio had hoped to use a triplet - a multi-person bike - for the cycle into England. Let down at the last minute by the bike, the threesome climbed on their own bikes to do the journey anyway.

Chris, 35, of East Kilbride, was training for the London Marathon when he and chums Harry Kerr, 42, of Clydebank, and Steven Whitelaw, 35, of Airdrie, decided to team up for a joint fundraising effort.

Chris said: "I had told them I planned to do a charity bike ride to Sunderland, then Steven suggested we do something bigger. Within a day we'd come

up with this idea of all three of us cycling. I wanted to go to Sunderland because my sister Leanne lives there, and I hadn't seen her or her family for more than a year."

Funeral arranger Chris is a long-standing fundraiser for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, having been inspired to take part in charity events after finding receipts for donations to the charity in his late dad Charlie's paperwork. Charlie was just 54 when he died of a heart attack.

Chris had been diagnosed with an ectopic heartbeat after his dad's death before he himself suffered a mild heart attack in January 2021. He quit smoking and set his sights on his cycle challenge. The trio aimed to raise £1,600 for CHSS, but the final total was a fabulous £2,700.

# A GRAN DAY OUT

## LINDSAY'S SOLO TRIATHLON BOOSTS CARE HOME AND CHSS FUNDS

**Vet Lindsay Yates was looking for a challenge during lockdown when she signed up on an impulse to do a triathlon.**

Her inspiration was her gran, Jean Reid, who had suffered a life-changing stroke. Lindsay decided to raise money to be shared between Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and the care home where her gran now lives.

So, having thrown herself into the training for an event she'd never participated in before, Lindsay wasn't going to let a little thing like the cancellation of the official Glasgow Spring Triathlon because of thunderstorms and torrential rain get in her way.

That's why on Sunday, August 8, she went ahead with a triathlon of her own - on her own. And it was fitting that she finished the 5k run at the door of Whitecraigs Nursing Home so her gran could see her.

Lindsay, 24, of Glasgow, says: "The event was cancelled at the last minute because there was an amber weather warning for thunder and lightning. It's going to be rearranged for 2022, and I'll sign up for it again.

"But the weather was actually okay on the day, so I decided to do the triathlon on my own and on my own route because I want to get the sponsorship to where it's needed.

"I really enjoyed the swim, the cycle and the run, and I promise the swim was definitely 750m -

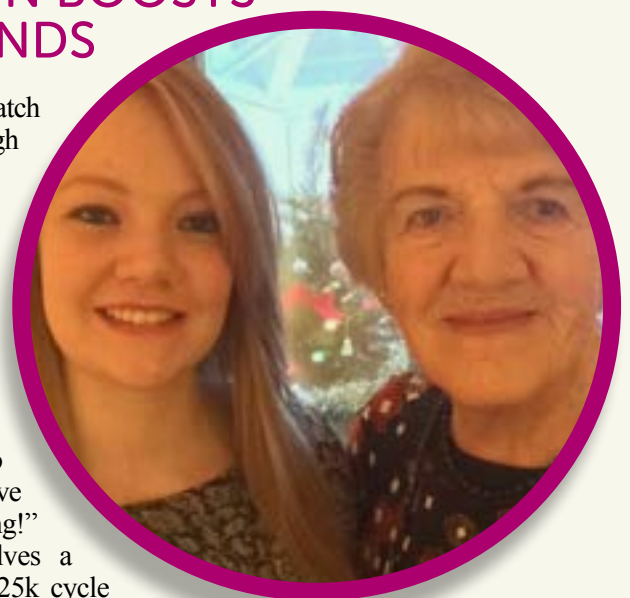
it's just that my watch wasn't fancy enough to track it!

"I planned the route to finish at the care home too, and that was lovely because some of my family and the residents were there to see me. I'm looking forward to next year, so I'll have to keep up the training!"

A triathlon involves a 750m swim and a 25k cycle before finishing with a 5k run. The Glasgow Spring Triathlon had been due to take place at Lapwing Lodge on Gleniffer Braes, near Paisley.

Lindsay was inspired to raise money for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland after her gran, Jean, 90, had a stroke in January. After weeks in hospital, Jean moved to the Whitecraigs Nursing Home in March. Meanwhile her husband Alec, 91, is adjusting to life without her at home.

Jean initially lost her speech, but while that has returned to some extent, she has cognitive issues that mean communication is difficult. Covid restrictions meant visiting was limited to her husband and two daughters, while the rest of the family have been able to see Jean only during good weather when they can meet outside.



**'I wanted to help CHSS do more of your vital work'**

Lindsay says: "It's been very difficult for my grandpa and my mum and aunt. They visit him every day, but there's a lot of stress for everyone dealing with the situation with my gran.

"The care home has been brilliant in getting her settled, so I wanted to do something to thank them and also to help Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland do more of the work they do in supporting people who have had a stroke and their families."

Lindsay set a target of raising £500 but has raised more than £1,300 to share between CHSS and Whitecraigs Care Home.