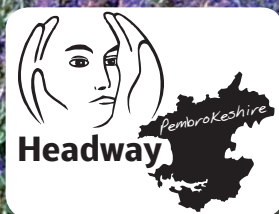


LIFE after BRAIN INJURY



**Headway
Pembrokeshire**
Issue 3: Summer 2016

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HELLO!

Hello again and welcome to our third issue!

We are a group of people living in Pembrokeshire whose lives have been affected by acquired brain injury. Between us we have many years of experience in rebuilding our lives after brain injury and we are here to show that it can be done!

If you or your family have recently sustained a brain injury, you may be confused, exhausted, frightened and depressed. We have been there too. Over time, some problems resolve on their own as the brain starts to heal. At the same time, many of us find therapies and treatments which are of benefit, and we start to develop strategies for dealing with the problems which are more long-term.

Our aim is to produce a magazine with a wide range of readers, including the brain injured, their families, carers and friends and interested health professionals. To ensure this, we hope that any of our readers will send in articles. Whoever you are and whatever you have to say, whether you attend our meetings or not, please send it in!

We hope you find our magazine helpful and if you don't currently come to our group, we look forward to welcoming you in the future!



JOIN OUR FREE MAGAZINE MAILING LIST

If you would like to receive a copy of future issues by email, please send us an email with your request to:

headwaypembrokeshire@hotmail.com

cover photo: Bluebells on Skomer by Rebecca

OUR SPONSORS

Headway Pembrokeshire is very generously helped by:

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Generous donations by private individuals and groups including many who have given their time and energy to fund-raise, and/or who do sponsored activities for us.



Before you criticize someone, walk a mile in his shoes.
That way if he gets angry, he'll be a mile away and barefoot. *anon*

Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again. *anon*

When a pessimist has nothing to worry about, he worries about why he has nothing to worry about. *anon*

FROM THE CHAIR

“Happy Spring-time everyone”

Sitting here looking out of my study window I have an amazing view to look over on the days I work from home. Today is one of those days and it is at its best. It's early and the hazy morning sun is bidding the hills a Good morning. The birds are singing – which includes my favourite, the cuckoo - there are seemingly endless green trees and rolling fields up towards the Preseli Hills – No wonder I chose to live in this beautiful little cottage

“Everything has its beauty, but not everyone sees it”
- Confucius

CHANGE

Over the past few months a change has happened in Headway Pembrokeshire

We have had a change of venue for our Social Evenings. We now meet at The Mind Centre which is in Quay Street in Haverfordwest. What a brilliant meeting place it is, It's calm and peaceful and quiet with a lovely view of the river, easy parking and easy to get to.

We had our first meeting there in May and it was hugely successful. In June's social evening we have Pip Lewis from Talking Stories coming along to talk to us about her project

We are so grateful to “Mind” for allowing us to use their facilities and grateful to our sponsors JCP Solicitors for funding the costs of the venue.

We are also very grateful to our previous venue hosts the RFC in Haverfordwest for all their past and future support. They have been fantastic hosts and I am sure we will continue to use their club for future events such as our Quiz Night.

Please come along and join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6.30pm

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT (PIP)

A subject that is like a minefield of fear, even before we start looking at the forms. Where do we get help, and who will listen to us or believe us anyway as a brain injury is all too often overlooked and seen as “The invisible illness/disability”

Well, believe me, they need to spend just half a day living in my world, walking in my shoes, fighting my demons, struggling with my fuddled brain – oops sorry, rant over. But no, actually I’m not sorry because nobody listens do they?

As a Counsellor, friend, Chair of Headway Pembs, I have all too often listened to the frustration of others as they have said “Nobody listens” “No one cares” and they are right. Our amazing medical team fix us and put us back together again, but we are left with the aftermath of our brain injury that affects our daily lives and disables us.

And to confuse the issue even further every brain injury is different and will affect its survivor in a different way

Recently one of our members had to go through the process of changing her Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to the current Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Scheme. Her DLA claim was an indefinite claim, so one would ask why she needed to be re-assessed. I know she felt anxious as, when she first became ill and made her original claim, they refused saying she was not ill. She bravely appealed and the original decision was overruled and her claim awarded

This time the process itself went through without any hitch, was easily handled and when she contacted DWP or Capita (which she did on several occasions) she found them helpful. However her assessment letter arrived “on the day” of her assessment giving her just over 1hr to prepare and no opportunity to get anyone else to sit through the assessment with her. She decided to go through with the assessment.

The result was that just two weeks later she received news that her claim had been awarded and that no change had been made, her claim was successful.

Now I also know that this is not “the norm” and many claims are being “knocked back”. It is a mine field and people just do not know what to do.

Recently someone else I know had their first claim for PIP turned down.

Please appeal – don’t give up. Get help. Citizens Advice Bureau – your local office offer support with form filling and advice

Contact Headway Head Office and check out their website

INSPIRING NEWS

I recently attended The Brain Injury Conference 2016 at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea (SWWBIG). What an event this was – please read my article.

I also met up with an amazing young man Rob Bates and his girlfriend Jen – read all about this too in my article

Have a great, safe and happy summer.

Keri

Chair



If at first you don't succeed, hide all evidence that you tried. *anon*

I changed my password everywhere to 'incorrect.' That way when I forget it, it always reminds me, 'Your password is incorrect.' *anon*

Don't worry if plan A fails, there are 25 more letters in the alphabet. *anon*

ABOUT US

Headway Pembrokeshire first met on 18th October 2002. We are a branch of Headway - The Brain Injury Association (headway.org.uk), a national charity which aims to 'promote understanding of all aspects of brain injury and provide information, support and services to survivors, their families and carers'.



We currently meet for a social meeting once a month and organise various other events throughout the year.

We provide a Helpline, so if you are in Pembrokeshire and would like to speak to someone about brain injury, please contact one of the Helpline numbers, to be found on our 'Contact & Links' page.

Our group aims to provide support for all acquired brain injury survivors in Pembrokeshire, both children and adults, and their families, carers and friends. There are many different types and causes of brain injury and we aim to provide support to all.

Certain types of injury, however, and/or other problems relating to/affecting the brain, notably stroke, multiple sclerosis and epilepsy not caused by injury, have their own support groups in the area; those seeking support for these conditions may find more targeted help in these more specific support groups.

For those not ready to attend our group, we can offer an outreach visit. Please contact our Helpline to find out more.

We welcome visits from interested local health professionals at our social meetings!



facebook.com/headway.pembrokeshire

LIVING WITH A BRAIN INJURY

Antony Davies is Milford born and bred.

Ever fancied living somewhere else, I ask?

"I can't imagine it," he tells me. "I served my time here as a carpenter and joiner and have been involved in all that Pembrokeshire has to offer for many years. I was a scout leader for 20 years and I have always loved walking, canoeing and photography, mainly landscapes."

Married for the second time and with two children, Antony has been self employed for 14 years, running his own Carpentry and Joinery business from his workshop in Milford. Life was moving along. He was very busy and the business was doing well. Then the unthinkable happened.

Then the unthinkable happened.

"Well I didn't think much of it at first, he tells me, I fell five feet backwards off a ladder. My foot just went through the rung. I got up and finished my work for the day. The following day was a rest day and I felt fine. I worked normally for the next 4 weeks and then woke up one morning with the top of my legs and the bottom of my feet feeling numb. I thought I had the virus that was going around and the doctor organised a blood test."

The blood test was clear but by Monday he had lost the use of his left side altogether.

"I had delivered a door frame that day and I knew



something was wrong. By the end of the week I was in hospital. It became clear in Withybush that I was in serious trouble, so I was rushed by ambulance to Cardiff to see a specialist. It was a big rush as there was only one bed available and I was warned that I was in danger of becoming paralysed."



Antony laughs, "We were just past the botanical gardens when the ambulance caught fire, so there I was on a trolley in my pyjamas at the side of the road where we had to wait for a fire engine and another ambulance. It all seemed very funny at the time."

You are laughing, but that all sounds very scary.

"It didn't feel very real. I remember in the hospital, it was about 2.30 in the morning. The surgeon was looking down at me from the end of the bed. He looked huge and he was explaining that I had four bleeds in my brain. I was told it was a bi lateral subdural bleed and they needed to drill 4 holes in my skull. The surgeon was explaining where and how big and I said...'Oh that would be about 10mm."

That's the carpenter in you.

"Yes it is. He must have thought I was very odd." He laughs again.

You sound like a really easy going chap.

"I am at heart," he tells me, "but since the accident I get very stressed. I have had to relearn things and it's frustrating that I can't think as fast as I used to. I can give you an example. I was making a circular window. Before my accident I would have worked

out right away how to make sure it opened safely. After the accident, although I knew what to do it took me about 3 days before it finally made sense. It all became clear in the bath."

Ah the best place for inspiration.

"For a while I was quite snappy. I think I am better now, but I have learned how to manage things. I simply cannot remember what I read anymore, but if I watch YOUTUBE videos I can retain that information."

This must have had a big effect on your business.

"Well at first it was pretty tough. I needed to work but I was adapting. I found I couldn't drive to places and then work all day. If people talk to me while I am measuring,



I can't focus. Some people don't get it so they are impatient. I have learned to work at my own pace in my own time and to only take on jobs I know I can complete, for people who have the patience to let me get on with it."

I tell Antony about someone I worked with who after his accident told me he used to play classical guitar. He knew he played to a high level, but could no longer remember how. He wanted to relearn, to take lessons with someone who understood.

"It does bother me. I think it's difficult for people to understand what it's like when I don't look any different on the outside - there is no physical evidence. I am grateful when I meet people who seem to get it. It can be very uncomfortable when people don't and I do worry that if people know about my brain injury they might make judgments about me."

That must have affected your business.

“Oh definitely. I lost business in the beginning. People seem to think if you are self employed you must be loaded, but we were really struggling for a long time. It’s better now and I am more confident. I know my business and I am good at what I do, but I have to do it in my own time and in my own way. I don’t work for people who want everything in a hurry now and I work from my workshop. I don’t take on projects that require a lot of hours on site.”



So what do you do to make sure you keep well?

“I first heard about Headway when listening to an interview on the Radio. It was James Cracknell , the rower, talking about his cycling accident . I started going to Headway 3 years ago. I am also fortunate that my cousin is a specialist Physiotherapist working with Brain injured people in Swansea. He has been very helpful. I started going to the gym and he gave me some advice on getting the best out of the sessions, and then he suggested Thai Chi. Apparently it is hugely beneficial for people like me.”

How does the Thai Chi help?

“I feel stronger and more relaxed. People comment that I am more laid back, though the first time I went

I rode my bike there and was completely knackered."
He laughs.

"I really feel that things have got better since I have been doing it. I can now work 5 days a week. I used to have more bad days. Looking back over the first five weeks, I really felt I hadn't had any bad days at all. I certainly feel less stressed."

"I have also started back Kayaking. I have to talk to my left side to get it to work properly but that's got to be good for me. I prefer canoeing. I used to be an instructor so getting back in to that has got to be good. We enjoy canoeing as a family and I did a white water safety and rescue course last year. We are involved with the Canoe Camping club too."

What's next?

"Business seems to be okay. I want to carry on with the Thai chi and I give myself more and more complicated things to do to keep my brain working. I have a busy life and as long as I rest and take care of myself, I don't see why it shouldn't keep getting better."

I agree Antony. Sounds like you have it taped.

"Just one thing," Antony tells me with a twinkle, "and this is awful..."

What's that?

"I am not allowed to drink more than one pint of beer a day."

Terrible I agree and we both laugh.



By Snorkelfish.
This article will also appear
in Pembrokeshire Life online.

SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | | 6 | | 4 | | 9 | |
| 5 | | | 1 | | 7 | | | 3 |
| | | | | 9 | | | | |
| 9 | 2 | | | 6 | | | 4 | 5 |
| | | 5 | 2 | | 9 | 6 | | |
| 4 | 6 | | | 7 | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | 8 | | | | |
| 1 | | | 4 | | 2 | | | 7 |
| | 5 | | 7 | | 6 | | 3 | |

Sudoku © Kevin Stone
Sudoku Ref: 322558

Fill in the blank squares so that each row,
each column and each 3-by-3 block
contain all of the digits 1 - 9.
Solution on P32.

Neither Created Nor Destroyed

For many,
religion is but a receding trapeze,
though more solace exists
if Einstein's dictum
can be believed.

This allows us to expect
some immortality,
more real and more certain
than any
loquacious theology.

So at my ending,
when a pinch of heat
slips free,
this last caress,
ascending,
begins that legacy.

Soon embraced
and then dispersed,
by bawdy,
waiting air,
though infinitesimal,
the energy released still causes events,
somewhere.

Particular clouds
could form because of me,
and if not torrents,
perhaps a raindrop
claimed
as my responsibility.

And this in turn
may coax
a reluctant over-mighty swell,
to tip into a wave,
to rove
unhindered,
the ocean's carousel.



Julian Cason

*Joint Secretary
Head Injury Solicitor*

KERI'S LEMON AND ORANGE DRIZZLE CAKE

For the Cake

225g Butter

225g Caster Sugar

275g Self Raising Flour

1 tsb Baking Powder

4 Large Eggs

4 tbs Milk

Grated Zest of 1 Lemon

Grated Zest of 1 Orange

For the Glaze

Juice of 1 Lemon and 1 Orange

175g Granulated Sugar



Method

Preheat the oven to 180c (fan 160c/350c/gas 4)

Put all the ingredients for the cake into a mixing bowl and mix with an electric mixer for two minutes until smooth

Put mixture into a lined tin and spread out evenly

Bake for 35-40 minutes or until springy to the touch

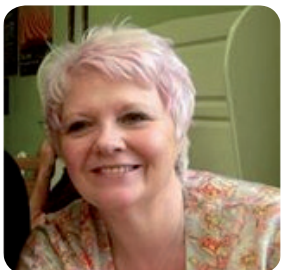
Make the glaze by mixing the lemon and orange juice with the granulated sugar and spoon this over the cake whilst it is still warm

Serve and enjoy

Best served shared with good friends

MEET THE COMMITTEE

KERI



Chair

KEVIN



Vice-Chair

REBECCA



Treasurer
Head Injury Solicitor

MATTHEW



Joint Secretary

BARBARA



GWYNETH



KEVIN



Committee Members

Headway member Luke with his son and his latest creation, Stumpy. Stumpy is now on show in his new home, Clynyfw Care Farm, Abercych, Pembrokeshire SA37 0HF



Headway member Antony and his son alongside Stumpy and the plaque Antony made.

Our members relaxing at their social evening in the new meeting place -

**The Mind Centre,
Quay Street,
Haverfordwest**





HATS OFF FOR HEADWAY

May 13 2016

Members took part in a fundraising event sporting their wackiest hats.

Our thanks to staff and pupils at Fenton Community Primary School, Haverfordwest for joining in the fun during the school day, with funds raised being donated to Headway Pembrokeshire.

Diolch yn fawr!

WORD SEARCH

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

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Fruit Word List

| | | |
|---------|------------|------------|
| APPLE | APRICOT | AVOCADO |
| BANANA | BLUEBERRY | CHERRY |
| GRAPE | GRAPEFRUIT | KIWI |
| KUMQUAT | LEMON | LIME |
| MANGO | ORANGE | PEACH |
| PEAR | PINEAPPLE | STRAWBERRY |

**Find all the words shown in the word list.
Words may be forward, backward, vertical
or diagonal within the puzzle.
Solution on P32.**

HISTORY OF OUR DEVELOPING RESPONSE TO THE EMOTIONAL AFTER-EFFECTS OF BRAIN INJURY



Dr Rodger Weddell
Consultant Clinical Neuropsychologist

When I was an undergraduate psychology student I was told about some strange behaviours that can occur after brain injury: e.g., in the alien hand syndrome, the individual might try to put on their shirt with one hand while trying to take it off with the other hand! So, I wanted to work with people who had brain injuries. I also wanted to understand people's emotional responses after brain injury.

I've always liked to help, so I naturally wanted to help people with brain injuries, but my primary focus was all these intriguing conditions and emotional reactions.

When I started working, I learned about typical and mostly unsurprising cognitive limitations that hugely changed lives. However, I was pretty disappointed when I discovered that most of the people I saw were pretty "normal" in the sense that the central issues gripping their attention were shared with the rest of the human race: e.g., Is there anything special about me? .. Am I lovable? .. What can I do that is useful to other people? .. Is there a point to my life? .. What do I do to become happier? .. etc. My working life has largely entailed walking along side people as they searched for their unique positive solutions to those basic questions.

When I started trying to help people find answers, experienced clinicians told me would be ineffective because people with brain injuries are forgetful so they can't learn much. How wrong they were! There are now many strategies that enable people to move from negative emotional reactions into more positive emotional territory. We can subdivide those strategies into (a) ones that enable people to challenge, block or reduce negative emotional experiences and (b) others that focus on enhancing positive reactions.

(a) Blocking/reducing negative reactions. Three examples: first, one cognitive behavioural technique for depression challenges the self-critical feeling that "I'm really bad for doing X" by asking me to consider a scale of badness with Adolf Hitler at one end and zero badness at the other end. "How bad do I think I am on that scale – am I anywhere close to Adolf Hitler for doing X?" Most people asked to consider their position on such a scale, conclude that they may have made a bit of a mistake but that mistake tends to be seen as more of a lapse rather than as the crime of the century. That is, they tend to become less self-critical about action X. Second, there are also cognitive behavioural techniques to reduce anxiety reactions. For example, the over-breathing during panic is associated with various thoughts and physical effects. Understanding the sequence of thoughts and feelings enables people to steer them in directions that tend to stop the panic response. Third, meditation techniques focus on physical sensations and they slow thinking right down. Those actions interfere with/interrupt the flight-fight reactions that underlie many of our negative emotional reactions.

(b) Enhancing positive reactions. Five examples: first, meditation doesn't just interrupt flight-fight reactions, it also relaxes and focuses on breathing and

other procedures that tend to make us feel good. Second, physical exercise has been shown to make people feel happy and energised and fitness gains help us to feel good about ourselves (it's important that we select exercise that interests us – e.g., only some people like the gym, others like dancing, walking, playing sport etc). Third, self-compassion techniques involve developing our appreciation of ourselves. They start by helping us to value ourselves, our feelings and thoughts. They then extend that to valuing the feelings and thoughts of others. Fourth, emphasis on skill development and achievement is another way forward. Fifth, doing things for others gives our lives meaning and it has the welcome bonus of receiving positive feedback from those one gives to.

Finally, when I started all those years ago, the focus was on how to help the person with the injury or how to help their relative. Over the last 10-15 years there has been growing appreciation of the fact that the person with the injury and their relative are connected. The more they can work together as a team in moving forward the faster and more effective that forward movement is. So, the work with families is a rapidly developing area – one for the future.

I'm still fascinated by some of the strange effects that can occur after brain injury, but I have gained so much more from walking alongside the many very special people I have been lucky enough to meet in my work. I am so grateful for the lessons I've learned, the fun shared, the connection and the sense of joint achievement.

POET'S CORNER

For Dad on Father's Day

Who munched his toast all hair and frown,
A grizzly bear in dressing gown?
Who guarded paper with a growl
As for a page of sport I'd prowl?
Who scratched his earlobe, chest and legs
Then drank the coffee to the dregs?
Who left for work at half-past-eight
His shoes a-shine and tie so straight?

But he the one who gave me life
So I could give him grief and strife.
My call for hygiene he replied
Each time I 'wedi gorffen!' cried.
He poured the wine into my glass,
Put the spin into my pass;
He walked the touchline where I fell
To call: "Get up, and give them hell!"
From he I learned to shave my chin,
He set my alarch on its llyn
And paddled hard behind the scene
So I could drift along serene.

And as I'd hack from day to day
He'd strive to keep my ball in play;
My every wayward pass he'd chase,
Each divot that I dig replace;
He'd rake the bunker where I'd tread
To ravel my unravelled thread.

So should I ever raise applause,
Acclaim deserve, ovation cause;
So be it then or be it now,
It's Dad who takes the final bow.

Matthew
Owen



*Committee
Member
Head Injury
Solicitor*

“I’M POSSIBLE”

By Keri

When I had my brain injury I wasn’t given much hope.

“Ah they didn’t know me”

Last week I was going through my memory chest, it’s crammed to the top with cards and photos of all my children, memories so precious they could never be replaced.

I traced my mother’s sister and brother who had both been adopted and united them over 10 years ago. I came across a letter my Mams sister had written to me telling me how special I was – how precious is that letter.

In amongst all these irreplaceable treasures are cards I received after my original brain injury and after each of my following brain operations that followed each year. I kept them all. I reread them, their messages poignant and made me cry not because I was sad, but because I was happy, happy that I am so loved. Inside one card I had written a quote by Audrey Hepburn

“Nothing is impossible;

the word itself says I’m possible”

I remember writing it there when I was flat on my back in HDU.

I have spent a lot of time walking our beaches lately as a career change has afforded me the luxury of spending more time outdoors walking our amazing coastline as I look for materials to use in my artwork. As I spent most of my career caring for others I truly appreciate this change of career and what it has afforded me, for once after many years of bringing up a busy family and being successful in my demanding career I have space for reflection and peace. I have discovered that I have a creative side in me that I was unaware of. Oh I have always been gifted in the musical sense - I can sing, play guitar, or should I say used to until my brain injury took that ability away from me.

I could create and make the most amazing wedding dress and ball gown and have done so for many a blushing bride or Army wife to go to a ball, but never did I once see myself as creative in the artistic sense. Another positive for me is that I have just started writing again. I had just completed and sent off my first book to my publishers when I had my brain injury in 2006 - it was published during my recovery that year and I had to read it to remember that I had written it. Sometimes if we push ourselves outside of what we know ourselves to be, we can often discover something that may have been there all the time just waiting patiently to be found - we might just need a gentle push.

The Brain Injury Conference 2016 -

From Survival to Revival

I attended The Brain Injury Conference 2016 at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea last month - the word amazing springs to mind.

To be around people who not only inspire but also encourage others is a joy.

We listened to the professionals as they delivered their talks about their topics - Dr Dindinedra Gill, National Co Director Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) Cymru, Dr Giles Yeates, Principal Clinical Neuropsychologist Community Head Injury Service, Buckinghamshire

In the afternoon I attended two workshops. The first was a workshop on 'The Impact of a Brain Injury on the Family System', which was full of information and advice and allowed the participants to have a say which we did and no doubt what was said made an impact on the Facilitator

The second workshop, 'The Science of Happiness' was run by Dr Zoe Fisher, Clinical Psychologist in Neuropsychology Traumatic Brain Injury Service at

Morrison Hospital. Now I know Zoe and she herself is a little ray of sunshine always making those around her smile and laugh. Together with her colleague Kelly they delivered an inspiring workshop that lifted everyone's spirits and reminded me about the Happiness course that I had attended in Swansea a couple of years ago and the importance of practicing my daily "feel good" techniques. I am now doing them every day and feeling the benefits already. One simple one to do is, at the end of your day, write down 3 good things about your day. Do this every day. I have started doing this with Chris.

After the workshops speakers spoke about their experiences of surviving their brain injury

It was good to see the "Gee Family" Alan and Michelle are looking well. They were there with their girls. Alan and Michelle spoke about the impact that Alan's brain injury had had, and was still having, on his family.

There was nothing to dislike about this day. The morning was chaired by Mr Michael McCabe, the afternoon was Chaired by Mr David Black.

Workshop 3 was Canine Friends - The Benefits of Assistance Dogs - John Burns BVMS MRCVS

Closing remarks – Dr Abankwa

There were some stalls there as well which gave those attending the opportunity to have a browse around or purchase something great from the "upcycled" goodies on display. I came away with a fab vintage china teaset in a lovely wicker basket for £12

The teaset is on my shelf in the kitchen. The basket has already held a picnic for Chris and I to take down to Nolton Haven

A great day with a fabulous title.

From Barry to Tenby

Chris and I travelled over to the Park Hotel in Tenby

last Wednesday to meet up with Rob Bates and his girlfriend Jen.

Rob and Jen have walked over 127 miles of coastpath from Barry to Tenby to raise money for Headway.

Rob is a young man from Barry who had a car accident in 2010. Rob was in a coma for over 2 months and in hospital for 10 months. We spent a couple of hours with Rob, Jen and Jen's parents, who supported their walk by mapping their movements.

What a joy this young man is. He talks of his head injury with determination to just get on with his life despite the challenges it presents him with. He told me how he had to relearn everything he could do. Rob works for Morrison's as a team manager.

Rob and Jen walked the stretch of coastpath in 8 days of walking - it took them a little longer as they took the safer route so that they stayed safe at all times. They told me that by day two the weather was awful and a great challenge. They were wet through to the skin, but the weather began to improve until they were sunburnt – typical Pembrokeshire weather I say! They told me that the hottest day was when they walked from Ferryside to Amroth.

They had to use their annual leave to undertake the walk but from asking them a few questions I guess their answers will give them some memories, although I suggest that Rob writes about them soon as I know that, like me, one of his brain problems is short term memory.

I asked them what were the best bits? The replies were a resounding - *Getting to Tenby!* Triumphant sense of achievement for both of you and so well deserved.

The kindness of people – one elderly gentleman was gardening and stopped to talk to them, he asked them to wait whilst he went indoors, came back out again and gave Rob and Jen £5, telling them it was to buy a pint. They replied “thank you, but it's going in our

giving bucket”

2 Campsites didn't charge when they found out what Rob and Jen were doing and why.

The amazing scenery, the birds the butterflies and the flowers.

I hope Jen won't mind me saying anything, and I know this walk was about Rob's journey, but tribute has to be paid to her too as she is an amazing young lady.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting these two amazing young people who genuinely love life. I hope I get to see them again. They really did touch my heart.

Well done Rob and Jen

Like I said before inside us all there is something even when we feel there is nothing.



“I'm possible”



Life is not about how you survive the storm, it's about how you dance in the rain. *anon*

Today I will live in the moment... unless that moment becomes unpleasant, in which case I'll take a nap. *anon*

If you can't laugh at your own problems, call me and I'll laugh at them. *anon*

SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Please send us anything of interest; it doesn't have to be about brain injury. Articles can be serious or light-hearted and of any length.

Electronic copies are the easiest for us to deal with but please, if you can only provide a paper copy, typed or handwritten, don't let that put you off! Pictures are very welcome, either electronically or paper copies to be scanned in.

Please send your contributions by email to headwaypembrokeshire@hotmail.co.uk, indicating that it is a submission for this magazine, or you can pass a paper copy to any committee member.

Articles will be printed with the author's first name only, unless you indicate that you would like your surname included or wish to remain anonymous.



Headway Pembrokeshire Member Antony gets some assistance from Kitty in writing his article for this issue. If you would like assistance with writing an article, please contact us at headwaypembrokeshire@hotmail.co.uk

MY TRIP TO SKOMER ISLAND

by Rebecca

How lucky are we to live in Pembrokeshire !

When the sun shines there is nowhere else I would rather be.

A trip to Skomer has been on my wish list for many years but for one reason or another I have failed to get there.

I was determined that 2016 would be my year to go. I had been advised to go in May to see the bluebells and I wasn't disappointed.



What a fabulous day out it was .

We were blessed with sunshine and enjoyed a calm , if somewhat cramped trip over on the boat.

We walked the circumference of the Island, stopping frequently to enjoy the wildlife and spectacular views. Our picnic was eaten on the cliffs watching the seals playing below, just magical. Strolling along the path we were then entertained by the comical puffins busy building their nests and happy to pose for photographs.

The Island was bursting with wildlife. We were told it is home to the largest population of Manx Shearwater birds in the world. We didn't see any as they come and go at dawn and dusk. The whole Island looks like a Swiss cheese underneath from thousands of their nests.

On the trip back a Porpoise played alongside the boat and a Ganet dived for food.

It was the best day of my year so far

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

BASIC (Brain and Spinal Injury Centre):
basiccharity.org.uk

The Brain and Spine Foundation:
brainandspine.org.uk

Brain Injury is BIG: braininjuryisbig.org.uk

Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust (BIRT)
thedtgroup.org/brain-injury

Brainline (USA organisation): brainline.org

Child Brain Injury Trust:
childbraininjurytrust.org.uk

The Children's Trust for Children with Brain Injury:
thechildrenstrust.org.uk

PAVS (Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services) : pavs.org.uk

The Pituitary Foundation: pituitary.org.uk

South West Wales Neurological Alliance:
swwna.com

The United Kingdom Acquired Brain Injury Forum:
ukabif.org.uk

CONTACTS AND LINKS

HELPLINES

Headway Pembrokeshire

01646 622977 (Kevin and Carol)

07908 538538 (Keri)



Headway Pembrokeshire Facebook Page:
facebook.com/headway.pembrokeshire

Social meeting:

2nd Thursday of every month

6.30pm - 8.00 pm at

The Mind Centre, The Old Wool Market

Quay Street, Haverfordwest

Pembrokeshire SA61 1BG

(Please note, we cannot give medical advice)

Headway UK

0808 800 2244

helpline@headway.org.uk

www.headway.org.uk



Headway UK Health Unlocked Community (forum)
healthunlocked.com/headway

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU

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WORD SEARCH

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| M | Y | D | Q | M | B | J | E | U | Q | I | P | O | X | N |
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01348 873 671

Haverfordwest
01437 764 723

AN APPEAL

For those of you reading who have no direct experience of brain injury, it is difficult to comprehend just how devastating it can be. It is a sad reality that, at present, there is very little support or aftercare available for the brain-injured from the NHS in Pembrokeshire, beyond the stage of treating the medical emergency and stabilising the injured person to the point where they can leave hospital. In this county, Headway Pembrokeshire is a valuable source of support for the brain-injured and their families, offering the opportunity for all affected to share their stories, to be taken seriously, and to swap advice. Our funds for providing this kind of support are extremely limited, so if you feel you would like to make a donation towards our work, however small, this would be truly welcomed. Currently, we can receive donations via bank transfer.

Our bank details are as follows:

Headway Pembrokeshire. Lloyds Bank.

Sort Code: 30-16-20 Account Number: 22551760



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