

VSS

Volunteer Stroke Scheme

NEWS

Issue 3, March, 1988

Ann Kavanagh's Review

Having suffered a stroke myself in 1983 I know only too well the trauma, the feeling of despair, the loss of confidence in oneself and the heartbreak at seeing the family suffer. The Volunteer



Ann Kavanagh

Stroke Scheme (VSS) is committed to helping stroke patients with speech and allied problems. The aims of the VSS are simple. We offer each patient a volunteer who will visit for one to two hours a week on a regular basis. Our volunteers help the person to continue to work at home on the programme given to them by their speech therapist. We have found that all our volunteers have built up very fine relationships with their clients and real friendships develop. We provide clubs where patients meet and where they can be helped further. We arrange outings from time to time which are stimulating and enjoyable. We provide a counselling service for both patients and their families. We have found that it is not only the patients who suffers but also the families. Stroke can be a very shattering blow to all concerned. Our aim is to lessen the impact with practical help, understanding and friendship.

On a more general level we aim to create a greater awareness and understanding of stroke.

A volunteer scheme such as ours needs a lot of support to ensure that all concerned understand stroke recovery and know how best to relate with confidence and consideration. The voluntary committee which I am honoured to chair this year

has worked with high commitment to achieve our goals. We are blessed also with a small staff of two part-time Supervisors, Erica O'Mara and Deirdre King. Erica and Deirdre are now well known for their expertise and devotion. They are supposed to work half-time but they give many extra hours on a voluntary basis - hearty thanks - and more - are due.

Money in the Bank

No one will be surprised to hear that funds are needed for our activities. Like the finances of the Nation our own funds had been in trouble, especially in 1986. We have no Minister for Finance to impose taxes for us but our situation was transformed in 1987 by grants and income from an astonishing array of fund-raising activities. In an article inside Olive Loughran gives details. I claim Chairperson's privilege to say a special word of thanks to the shopkeepers and people of Rush where I live. They supported all my efforts and Pat Hayden of the Old Mill Bar in Rush gave free use of his lounge for my events. I am sure others could tell a similar story of support in their areas. A thousand thanks to all and let's make Millennium 1988 a year to remember for our Bank Manager.

Office and Membership

In a most generous gesture the Irish Epilepsy Association let us have an office free of charge at their headquarters, 249 Crumlin Road, Dublin 12, Telephone (01) 557455. They also arranged an answering service. We have the office manned three mornings a week, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. We are indebted to our friends in the Irish Epilepsy Association.

In future there will be only one form of membership at the give-away price of £5 a year. An application form for membership is on the

back page. In 1988 we hope to develop our organisation all around the country so that we are in touch with every person who has suffered a stroke. We look forward also to a time when we can help to provide the required aids to people with power loss. Whatever about these plans we know for certain that we will continue to deliver understanding, good fellowship and friendship to stroke people and their families.

I take this opportunity to thank every member of the Committee and of the fund-raising Committee for their help and support in 1987. I wish all our member, their families and our supporters a really happy 1988.

Ann P. Kavanagh,
Chairperson.

SEEKING EXPERT ADVICE ABOUT INCONTINENCE...

Talk to Fannin Healthcare. We specialise in incontinence care. Our expert will give help and advice on your problem.

So talk to FANNIN
HEALTHCARE, the retail
division of Fannin Ireland at:

DUBLIN: 14-16 Redmond's
Hill, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 782211.

CORK: 9 Washington Street.
Tel: (021) 274011.

GALWAY: 31 Dominick Street.
Tel: (091) 63882.

Caring for Life

Fannin

Ireland

Money Matters

Olive Loughran Reports.

VSS received almost £20,000 in contributions in 1987. There were four main sources - the Eastern Health Board, a wide range of commercial firms, the Lotus Philanthropic Group and the proceeds of a variety of fund raising events. The success of our fund raising shows that the goodwill and generosity is there. It is up to us to harness this goodwill.

Following a persuasive visit by Ann Kavanagh and Professor Davis Coakley, the Eastern Health Board gave VSS £8,000 for 1987. This was our biggest single donation and was a real boost to our morale.

We were delighted with the wide range of companies who helped us. The following list has companies of every type - manufacturing, distribution, service, state-sponsored. The widespread support for stroke-affected people is heartening. Companies are listed in alphabetical order:

Anderson Pearson Windows, Aer Lingus,
Agricultural Credit Corporation, Allied Irish
Bank, Anglo Irish Bank, Antigen,
Birex, Bord Baine, Burmah Castrol,
Calor Kosangas, P.J. Carroll, CBF, Ciba Geigy,
CIE, Louis Copeland,
Dunnes Stores,
First National Building Society, Fli
Gallagher, General Motors Distribution, Glaxo,
Guinness, General Accident Insurance,
Institute of Education, Irish Cement, Irish Civil
Service Building Society, Irish Permanent
Building Society, ICI Pharmacology,
Jet Petroleum Products,
Magee Travel, Marks and Spencer, Masstock,
New Ireland Assurance,
Peter Mark, PMPA, Priority Travel Service.

Quinnsworth.

Robinson Travel, Royal Insurance, Ryan Hotels.
Smurfits.

Wellcome, H.E. Williams.

We wish to express our thanks to all these firms who contributed to our appeal. About £2,500 was received.

The Inner Wheel Women's Clubs of Ireland adopted us as their Charity of the Year, 1987. Their donations were much appreciated. The Lotus Philanthropic Group gave a magnificent grant of £2,000 for which we record our appreciation and thanks.

The variety of events organised under Olive Loughran's careful eye is amazing. These events serve two purposes. Money was raised, but, more importantly, the events raised the public awareness of VSS. They added an important social dimension to VSS's fund raising. (Editor's note: Olive's contribution is beyond praise. Her original draft of this article omitted any mention of her name). The main events were:

- * Coffee morning and cake sale in Breda O'Leary's home.
- * Bridie Kennealy's cake sale subsidy.
- * A buy-a-line event run by Olive Loughran with the help of children of St. Brigid's School, Castleknock.
- * A bridge evening run by John L'Estrange.
- * A fancy dress ball hosted by HMV in the Cathedral Club in association with the National Children's Hospital, Harcourt Street. Anne Copeland, Olive and John were to the fore in this venture which is expected to yield about £5,000.
- * A gala dramatic presentation by the Contemporary and Elizabethan Theatre Group of "Requiem for the Living", written by speech therapist Miriam O'Meara.
- * Carol singing by Castleknock teenagers organised by Lynn Cahill.

To all our contributors VSS extends their sincere thanks. We could not continue with our work without your help. To all our good friends we say thank you.

We hope to make 1988 a year to remember and

not just for the Millennium. There are lots of exciting events in the pipeline. A four-ball golf event, a flag day, coffee mornings, cake sales and a gala fashion show are just some of the treats in store. Remember fund raising is important and the good fellowship generated will remain when the funds are spent.

Treasurer off to Nepal

Sandra O'Donnell, the Treasurer of VSS, has left for Nepal, a remote country between India and China. Don't worry she has not taken the VSS treasure with her.... it was too heavy!

Sandra was a nurse in Dublin since 1980, having trained in the Richmond Hospital. She became

interested in VSS about two years ago and took on the job of Treasurer soon afterwards.

She will be in Nepal for two and a half years. That country is about twice the size of Ireland and has a population of 12 million. She will be based in the capital city, Kathmandu, with the Church Missionary Society, working with the United Missions. Her first five months will be chiefly occupied in learning Nepalese. She will live with a Nepalese family who do not speak English. After that she will start work in the Patan Hospital in Kathmandu.

Sandra is a wonderful person, very kind and thoughtful and an excellent Treasurer. All in the VSS wish her every happiness and success in distant Nepal.

Sean Mac Bride

The VSS note with sadness the death of Sean MacBride, a wonderful man and one of our patrons.



Christmas at Coolock

Party Pictures from 14 December 1987.



Relaxed Supervision
Erica O'Mara.

Two's Company



Myra and John Annesley



Portrait of the Artist
John L'Estrange



The Church Vigilant
Sister Margaret

Beauty at the Feast



VSS at play

Tucking in
Ethna Costelloe
Clem Loscher

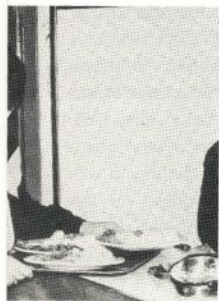


Ladie's Choice



Beatrice McLoughlin
Paddy McLoughlin
Bridie Kenneally

Concentration
Father Joe McHugh



Margaret Tobin,
Nancy Cullen,
Tess Harrington



Living After a Stroke

by Diana Law and Barbara Paterson.

Souvenir Press Ltd.

London, 1980, £7.99 stg.

Diana Law suffered a stroke in 1967. In this book she and Barbara Paterson have put together the highlights of her life, especially how she coped with all the disadvantages that a stroke can bring.

Early Life

She was born in Sandycove, Co. Dublin in 1919, the middle child of a family of five. Her father died when the family were quite young and her mother moved the family to London. Diana joined the British army in 1939. In 1945, she was demobilised with the highest recommendations. After the war she took various jobs before joining International Computers and Tabulators Ltd. in 1959. Eventually she was made manager of their Educational Liaison Service.

A quote from this early phase gives the flavour of her personality: 'I like hard work. I don't like sitting about. I like drinking and gambling..... Housework - horrid! and I like watching sport too. Athletics, Rugby, Cricket.....' She had lots of boyfriends too but didn't get married.

Vital Operation

In December 1967, at the age of 48 she had a brain haemorrhage - a stroke. She had an operation and was making a marvellous recovery. She sounded lucid and rational but about three days later she had a major stroke. Successful brain surgery followed but she had lost control completely of the right side of her body, including her voice.

The Long Road Back

Her partial recovery took two years, first in Atkinson Morley in Wimbledon, then in Wolfson Hospital and finally in the Camden Medical Rehabilitation Centre (CMRC). The programme consisted of remedial gymnastics,



Diana Law

physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. At the CMRC which was the last of the centres they worked from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Gradually she improved but I know, having experience of stroke myself, it is a very slow process.

Host of Friends

All the time she had a host of friends. Three of those deserve special mention. Her mother, Mary Law, who did her a tremendous amount of good by believing in her right from the start of the stroke, when others didn't. Her sister Jacqueline, who was there whenever Diana wanted her. Finally Joan Ellams, the speech therapist at the CMRC who came into her life in June 1968 and who, according to Jacqueline, "was, perhaps, more than anyone else the one who transformed Diana's life". Joan first assessed her in June 1968: "a woman of very high intelligence who has a severe predominantly executive dysphasia with some receptive loss -- more marked for the written word than the spoken word". Also she has very little spontaneous speech. She improved every year after that, even after the formal treatment was over. Her writing was not so good, however.

Speech Clubs

She knew how much benefit she received from group therapy at the CMRC and later at the City Literary Institute. In 1972 a letter from her appeared in the Daily Telegraph recommending the forming of "Stroke Clubs" in areas where a sufficient number of people would be willing to get together. This ultimately led to the forming of the first "Speech Club" in 1974 and by 1978 over 200 clubs had been formed. This was helped by a Committee of Speech Therapy Services which in 1972 had disclosed that there were 40,000 adults in need of speech therapy in Britain and yet far too few speech therapists were being trained. The Government then saw fit to expand speech therapy services when Diana and others put the pressure on.

In a typical Speech Club members meet once a week between 10.00 a.m and 12.30 p.m. They chat as much as possible with even the slowest member being allowed to speak. At present, all are members of ACTION FOR DYSPHASIC ADULTS

(ADA) with Diana Law as President. Dysphasia, as many readers will know, is caused by damage to the language centre of the brain either by stroke or by accidental injury to the brain.

Volunteer Stroke Scheme

In 1973 Valerie Eaton Griffith formed the Volunteer Stroke Scheme in Great Britain. This is separate from but affiliated to the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association (CHSA).

MBE

In 1978 Diana was awarded an MBE for her work. The award gave special pleasure to her mother who died in her nineties in 1982.

Conclusion

I can recommend the book to all stroke sufferers and their families. It will show them that they are not alone and also what can be achieved with determination and hard work.

THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

84/85 Lower Leeson St. D.2. Tel: 613511/613392/3/4/5.

1. Full Time Day Leaving Certificate

Specially prepared for students who wish to improve grades. Higher and Lower courses. Outstanding results. Study facilities. 8.30am. - 4.30pm.
Choice of times and subjects.

2. Evening And Saturday Morning Tuition

Leaving, Intermediate, Pre-leaving and Matriculation (N.U.I.) All subjects Higher and Lower.

3. Intensive Preparation And Revision Courses

All subjects Higher and Lower. (A) Christmas and Easter Holidays (1 week).
(B) End of August. End of May (1 week). (C) Summer Holidays (2 weeks).

SCIENCE LABORATORY

for Biology, Chemistry & Physics practicals. LANGUAGE LABORATORY for French, German and Spanish courses.

FULLY FITTED KITCHEN

for Home Economics Practical.

Experienced, Highly Qualified, Hard-Working and Dedicated Teachers.

VOLUNTEER STROKE SCHEME
249 Crumlin Road, Dublin 12.
Telephone: 557455

Members of the Committee

Chairperson Ann Kavanagh
Vice-Chairperson Bride Murphy
Secretary Breda O'Leary
Treasurer Sandra O'Donnell
Members

John L'Estrange,
Olive Loughlan,
Joan Monahan,
Brendan Murphy,

Editorial Committee

John L'Estrange,
Olive Loughlan,
Michael McGinley.

Supervisors

Erica O'Mara,
Deirdre King.

The next edition of VSS News will be issued in Autumn, 1988.

VSS News is distributed to all hospitals and Health Boards throughout the country free of charge. Organisations requiring copies of VSS News please contact the Editor at 249 Crumlin Road, Dublin 12, between 10.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.. on Monday, Wednesday or Thursday.

AIMS OF VOLUNTEER STROKE SCHEME

- 1 To help people who suffer from speech and allied problems as a result of a stroke.
- 2 To offer each patient a small team of volunteers who will visit singly for about an hour at a time on a regular weekly basis.
- 3 To provide a club where patients can meet and be helped further.
- 4 To provide outings from time to time.
- 5 To create a greater awareness and understanding of Stroke through effective and relevant publicity.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

(Block Capitals)

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone.....

I wish to apply for membership of the Volunteer Stroke Scheme and I enclose fee of £5.00 for 1988. Cheques payable to Volunteer Stroke Scheme.

Signed

Date

Please send to:

Volunteer Stroke Scheme
249 Crumlin Road,
Dublin 12.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The fourth Annual General Meeting of the Volunteer Stroke Scheme will take place on Wednesday, 11th May, 1988, at 3.00 p.m. at the Burlington Hotel, Dublin 2 (Elgin Room).

VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED TEL: 557455

Fannin Healthcare
—specialists in
homecare equipment
for the disabled.

**See the complete range at
Fannin Healthcare.**

Redmonds Hill, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 782211.
9 Washington Street, Cork.
Tel: (021) 274011.
31 Dominick Street, Galway.
Tel: (091) 63882.

Caring for Life

Fannin
Ireland