

VSS
Volunteer
Stroke
Scheme

News

Issue 18 July 2003

**Twenty
Years A-
Growing**

**Post Stroke
Cognitive
Impairment**

**On the
move -
Southside**

**Climb
every
Mountain**

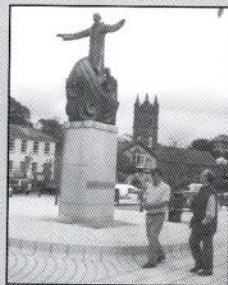
**News from
the
Midlands**

**Our Clubs
are very
Crafty**

Around the Clubs

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Front Cover (Page 1) :
Ned and John in
Bantry Co. Cork.
Photo: Bridie Lyons.

Twenty Years A-Growing



Anne Copeland

Congratulations to all our members - this year we celebrate our 20th Birthday.

In 1983 the Volunteer Stroke Scheme was set up to offer Physical and National support to stroke patients and their families. We started with one stroke club in the Dublin area, since then we have grown to four. We have grown in other ways as well providing Annual Holidays, education days, helpline and information packs, technical aids, producing our own Christmas Cards and running various fund raising functions. We have kept the ideals of our founders alive and have helped them grow.

The organisation is still run in the main by the volunteers with only two paid staff. It has approximately seventy volunteers. Volunteering in the V.S.S. seems to become a life-long commitment. Some of our volunteers have been with us twenty years others on a scale from one to twenty.

We guarantee people who join our clubs after their stroke a place for two years. However, most of our club members stay with us longer than that, some of them going on to become volunteers themselves.

People often experience great change in their own journey with stroke after they join our clubs. I

can say without doubt that it is down to mutual support. Each club member shares a similar traumatic experience and with that comes a level of understanding requiring no words. Each member is an example to the other giving each other courage and hope.

Letting go of a life that is familiar and starting out on the road of rehabilitation and learning new skills is an enormous challenge. Most of this is carried out in the safe but artificial atmosphere of a hospital. Return to home and into the community is frequently the most traumatic time for everyone involved. Community statutory bodies are very helpful but much greater support is needed. Voluntary organisations like the V.S.S. can hopefully help with the burden. We would always advise people to ask for help. Friends and neighbours are willing but can feel awkward unless invited to help.

Most of you are familiar with the writer Roald Dahl and his actress wife Patricia Neal. Patricia suffered a severe stroke and after weeks in hospital was discharged home. Roald Dahl realised he needed help. He contacted all their friends and asked for one or two hours of their time each week. This they gave freely and soon a rota of speech and physiotherapy was set up for Patricia at home. It was intensive but very rewarding. She made a wonderful recovery.

It is often the mental shift that comes from support and encouragement that brings about the real recovery in a person after a stroke. Every recovery is different but attitude is the key to the new way of living. Hopefully, the V.S.S. will remain an organisation that continues to help people with their recovery.

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, to our members and to all the people outside our organisation who support our work.

Climb every Mountain

By Angela Merriman

My name is Angela Merriman and on the 6th of October 2000 when I was 46 I had a brain haemorrhage which led to a stroke.

I was transferred from Beaumont hospital to Tallaght hospital but have no memory of anything until late January 2001.

I lost the movement of the right side of my body and couldn't do anything for myself. I had to go to physio to learn how to do everything with my left hand. When I was a bit more capable of doing things for myself I was taken to Dún Laoghaire Rehab Hospital where I was shown how to cook and to take a few steps with the help of a stick.

Biggest Achievement

After a few months there I was allowed home but had to sleep downstairs and use a commode. I still had to use the wheelchair to get around and someone had to push me and always be with me in case something happened.

Everyday I tried to do a little bit more for myself and now I can climb up and down the stairs and no longer need the wheel chair for short journeys. My biggest achievement is being able to go on the bus on my own. Two and a half years ago my family thought I wasn't going to live and if I did I would be totally incapable of doing anything for myself. Through hard work and a lot of determination and the help of family and friends I have come further than anybody ever expected me to and I just keep going. Now I am in the Stroke Club and have met a lot more people with the same condition as myself. We go on outings and I really enjoy going every week to the Club to meet new friends.



Angela Merriman.



Jim and Sandra Beirne in St. Marks Church, Pearse St.

Jim and Sandra were married on a beautiful day, 21st September 2002. They had 15 lovely days together. Jim went to be with The Lord after a very short illness while on honeymoon in Agadir, Morocco.

'I thank my God in all my remembrance of you'.

Phil. 1.3. (Jim)



Oldest Member in the Northside Club, 92 Year Old Mary Clarke with Paddy Merrigan.

Post Stroke Cognitive Impairment

By Professor Brian Lawlor, Consultant Psychiatrist.

Stroke disease is the second most common cause of death worldwide and is a leading cause of adult disability. Stroke can cause a number of disabilities including physical, psychological, functional and cognitive.

Post stroke cognitive impairment may be less immediately obvious compared to hemiplegia and is often undetected. It can range from mild vascular or cognitive impairment to full blown dementia and it can take a number of weeks to fully establish its extent. Cognitive impairment following a stroke is often the main reason for failure to regain full independence. Sometimes it can be mistaken for depression and its presence often compromises rehabilitation efforts.

How Common Is It?

Up to 1/3 of people develop dementia within 12 months following a stroke. The risk of post stroke dementia is age related. 5.4% of people over the age of 60 years and 10.4% over 90 years develop dementia in the first year following a stroke. The relative risk of dementia within 4 years is 5.5% and the incidence of Alzheimer's disease is doubled in people with a stroke.

Causes of Post Stroke Cognitive Impairment

On average 50% of post stroke cognitive impairment is caused directly by vascular disease with 36% due to a combination of vascular disease and Alzheimer's disease. The risk factors for post stroke cognitive impairment are shown on Table 1.

Following stroke have increased mortality at 2 years. There is also an increased risk of institutionalization and significant disability at 4 years following a stroke. The increased risk of institutionalization and mortality are independent of the physical and motor effects of the stroke. For these reasons, assessments post stroke should include measures of cognitive deficit in addition to physical measures in order to evaluate the true impact of the stroke.

Risk Factors for Post Stroke Cognitive Impairment
Table 1

• Age	• Co-morbid medical conditions associated with hypoxia
• Size/stroke volume	• Pre-existing cognitive impairment
• Left side	• Post stroke depression
• Large MCA infarct	• Homocysteine level
• Frontal pole	• White matter changes
• 2nd stroke	• Medial temporal lobe atrophy
• Atrial fibrillation	
• Diabetes	

Impact of Post Stroke Cognitive Impairment

The impact of cognitive impairment following stroke can be quite significant. People who develop dementia

Assessment

A brief cognitive assessment tool such as the MMSE or the abbreviated mental test score are suitable in most patients. Individuals with significant language deficits may have to be assessed using specialised

tools. Cognitive outcome in stroke patients should be monitored at 1, 3, 6, and 12 months to determine whether cognition is deteriorating, stabilising, or even improving.

Management Strategies

The most important management strategy for post stroke cognitive impairment is early detection. Symptomatic improvement may be possible and very importantly, efforts should be made to prevent deterioration and progression of any cognitive impairment occurring following stroke.

With regard to symptomatic treatment, comorbid depression should be treated as this could result in an improvement in cognition. When there is significant post stroke cognitive impairment a trial of cholinesterase inhibitor may be indicated. A number of recent studies in vascular dementia and mixed dementia point to an improvement in cognition and function with cholinesterase inhibitors. While there have been no specific studies in post stroke dementia, it is reasonable to extrapolate from the existing studies on vascular dementia and mixed dementia to support a therapeutic trial in post stroke cognitive impairment.

A major goal in post stroke cognitive impairment is to prevent deterioration and progression to dementia by lowering the risk of further stroke. This can be achieved primarily by aggressive control of vascular risk factors.

Key Messages

Post stroke cognitive impairment is common occurring in up to a third of patients following a stroke. It is often undetected. Post stroke cognitive impairment is associated with increased disability, institutionalization and affects rehabilitation. However, it is potentially amenable to treatment and early intervention can result in a symptomatic improvement and prevention of further deterioration over time.

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Happy Holidays in Clonakilty. Frank and John.



Tina Turner at the Christmas Party, 2002.



Pat Gath-Brady at the Hat Competition.



Happy Holidays at Clonakilty. Marie and Joan.

Saints and Hard Work

Theresa Worth

In August 1998 I started having problems with my legs. Gradually it got to the point where I could not stand. I was admitted to Tallaght hospital I had some tests - nothing showed up. It was suggested there that my inability to walk was psychosomatic and I was discharged.

Later I was admitted to St James Hospital. On 4th May 1999 while still there I had a stroke affecting my left side. I also developed septicaemia in the kidneys and bladder. From St James I was sent to Blackrock Clinic for a NMI scan which showed an abnormality on my spine. From there I immediately transferred to Beaumont Hospital where I had an operation the next morning to remove a benign tumour in my thoracic vertebrae - this tumour was the cause of my inability to walk and paralysis on my right leg.



I returned to St James' Hospital and was transferred from there to the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dún Laoghaire for intensive physiotherapy and after care. Whilst there my mother and my brother Peter were told that I would never walk again. However although I had not been told it myself, I felt I would walk again. I believed God would help me. My grandmother had died on 10th May 1997 and I had been left a relic of St Francis of Assisi, which I put all over my legs every day and prayed. My mother was a great source of strength to me and she used to bless me with her Padre Pio relic also. I have eight brothers who encouraged me greatly along with all my nephews and nieces. My good friend Tim O'Neill and his family helped to keep my spirits up during the bad times.

After five months in Rehab I was sent back to St James' Hospital where I had physiotherapy every day with a physiotherapist called Eileen from Cork. Not only was she a great laugh but she believed I would walk again. She used to call me Marilyn Monroe. One Friday she told me "Over the weekend observe how people sway their hips and on Monday I'll have you trying it also." On July 20th 2000 I was discharged from hospital. I was in a wheelchair at that stage. I went to Lourdes with my mother soon afterwards. By September I was walking with the aid of a tripod stick. Although my left arm is still paralysed I am still confident it will get better.

I worked as a legal secretary, but prior to my stroke I went back to College and studied healing. I practice self-massage. While in hospital I wrote a book on healing and perhaps some day I will have it published. I also attend a homeopath, which is helping me to recover. I enjoy painting watercolours and I feel very optimistic about the future.

The VSS helped me greatly because I meet with people in the same situation as myself - I enjoy the social aspect of Taney Club as well as the physiotherapy and scrabble.

Southside News

On the

Bridie Lyons, South Dublin Supervisor

Although strokes affect each individual in a different way, the one common experience is how the stroke impacts on the family as a whole as well as the stroke patient himself / herself. A range of emotions are experienced including frustration, anger and the feeling of why did this have to happen to me/us. Grieving for the lifestyle one has lost is a normal part of the process of adjusting to the changes the stroke has brought.

Having gone through all these emotions it is very encouraging to see patients and families reach the acceptance stage of their changed lives. In the past year I have met many such people and it makes working for the VSS a humbling experience as I see the dignified way stroke survivors and their carers and families accept their changed lifestyles. The volunteers and members in our Organisation play a very important role in the psychological support of stroke survivors and their carers. I wish to welcome our new members and to thank all the volunteers and members for all their support during this past year and for their help in the smooth running of the Mount Argus and Taney Clubs.

Outing to Poulaphouca House

We kicked off our year with an outing to Poulaphouca House, Blessington on 16 May. This was a most enjoyable day out. We availed of the good weather by sitting out on the patio overlooking the Wicklow Hills. The meal was delicious and was followed by a singsong with everyone more than willing to take part.

move - Southside

Or next outing was a garden party in my house. Again the weather was very favourable and everyone could stay outdoors and enjoy the craic agus ceoil.

The venue for the respite holiday from 26th to 29th September, was the Quality Hotel, Clonakilty. The long outward journey was broken by a very welcome lunch break in Cashel. We were all glad to get out to stretch our legs and have a bite to eat. It was a most enjoyable break and included day trips to various beauty spots in West Cork. The bus driver Stephen was most helpful as was all of the staff in the hotel who did everything possible to make the holiday a success. Each evening there was a party atmosphere in the lounge with everyone doing favourite party pieces. The hotel has a really nice leisure centre and Theresa Worth of Taney Club had a go in the Jacuzzi for the first time since her stroke two years previously.

On 5th November we went on an outing to the Bracken Court Hotel, Balbriggan. It was a great day with 43 people in total for lunch. The food was excellent and the staff was really helpful and courteous. Everyone was in great form and a singsong followed the lunch. As it was a bright sunny day although somewhat cold, some people braved the cold and went for a walk to the beach while others did a spot of shopping.



Bridie Lyons

The Christmas Party was held in the Coach House Ballinteer. This proved to be a popular venue where both members and volunteers who all were in a party mood could relax and enjoy the festivities. The Christmas dinner was delicious and the staff was most helpful. Music was, as in previous years, provided by Mick Hyland ably assisted by Stephen Bennet.

Many thanks to Eileen Murtagh and Hugh O'Gorman's family who again took part in the Ladies Mini Marathon, to help raise funds for our Organisation.

Table Quiz

Thanks also to everyone who collected the sponsorship cards and money and those who also supported the table quiz, which was held in the Coach House on 11th February 2003. It was well attended by members,

volunteers and their families and was a successful occasion. We received generous donations and items for the raffle from local businesses, members and volunteers.

One of our Mount Argus members, Michael O'Brien, appeared on TV3 on Ireland AM. Michael did a great job representing stroke survivors answering question about his stroke.

Our final excursion for 2003 was a shopping trip to Liffey Valley Shopping Centre on 13th March by the Mount Argus Club. This was a good days shopping marred however by the theft of one of our volunteer's bag of shopping - reminding us that we must be forever vigilant when out and about.

The Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists, whose chairperson is Afric Morrissey, launched a new portfolio "Continuing Professional Development". Ivor Callelly Junior Minister in the Department of Health and Children launched the portfolio at a reception in Taney Club on 9th April. This was a most interesting and enjoyable morning and I wish Afric and her colleagues ever success for the future.

I would like to remember the members who died during the year - Anne Sludds and Ben Grant from the Mount Argus Club and Richard McSharry and John O'Callaghan, Taney Club.

Around t



Phyllis, Bridget, Anne and Nuala at Poulaphouca House, 2002



Helen, Angela and Theresa, Clonakilty, September 2002



Hugh, Gerry and Mary.



Kay, Pat, Marie and Paddy.



John, Alec and Bridie.



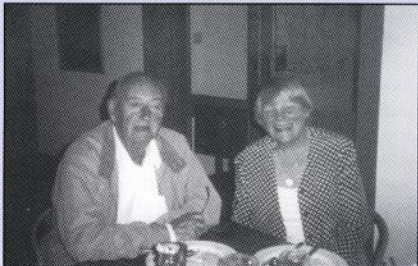
Phil Kerr and Charlie Dolan.



Arthur and Betty.



Ned and Kay.



Michael and Pat.

The Clubs



*Club Persons of the Year.
Declan Fowler & Marie
Kearns .*



*Christmas Party 2002.
Back: Sandra, Centre:
St. Marie and Front: Irene.*



Christmas Party 2002. Left to Right: Phyllis, Mary and Kay.



The Monday Club.



The Wednesday Club's 12th Birthday.



The Wednesday Club's 12th Birthday.



Brian Hoey, Tenor, Tess and Rosalee.



Craftwork. Left to Right: Jim, Kay and Kay.



Craftwork. Left to Right: Marie, Anne and John.

Freedom

Jean Murphy

I want to tell a story
about something I hold dear
it gets me out and about
It's my motorised wheelchair.

I drive around the park
and chat to everyone
I go over to the florist
I can go anywhere I want.

I go to visit Grainne
And to Church to Sunday Mass
Grainne calls me Mary Poppins
Sure we always have a laugh.

And I go down to the Doctor
To get my prescriptions filled
I charge down through the park
Oh, I love going down the hills.

And I love the feel of freedom
That my wheelchair gives to me
As long as its not pouring rain
I'm as happy as can be.

The Blackbird

Kay Byrne

THE NEW YEAR SHOULD START
WITH SPRING

YESTERDAY I HEARD A BLACKBIRD
SING

HE SANG HIS HEART OUT ALL DAY
LONG

TO CHEER US UP WITH HIS
LOVELY SONG

I WOULD SWEAR GOD SENT HIM HERE
TO TAKE AWAY ALL OUR FEARS

SO IF YOU WANT TO BE HAPPY
NO MATTER WHAT'S WRONG

TAKE TIME TO LISTEN TO HIS SONG

Drumraney & Mullingar News

News from

Mary Mahon, Jackie Murray

The year 2002 has been very busy and rewarding year for me, on behalf of the Westmeath Stroke Scheme. During the year we had three parties at Easter, Autumn and Christmas. They were very well attended by members and their carers. A great time was enjoyed by all, lovely meal, music, song and dance, big raffles, most of the prizes

being donated by members themselves. Of course the Christmas Party is the big one - Santa pays a visit with gifts for everyone.

Our trip to Knock in June was enjoyable and relaxing even though the weather was not too kind. We had a good time. We had 21 on the trip and their carers. We were able to get out and about each day and in the evening quite a few were very fond of a game of cards, whilst others preferred to have a good chat. We had lovely accommodation in



the Midlands

the Flatley guest house. Our host and hostess were extremely kind and caring and made us feel very much at home.

Our fund raising has been quite successful. Our church gate collectors are so loyal year after year in all kinds of weather. Our Six Mile Sponsored Walk in May proved a good money spinner with quite a good crowd of walkers on a lovely sunny day, which made it a real treat to get out and about and enjoy the countryside.

Drumraney Stroke Club celebrated their 10th Anniversary with a lovely meal for their members and carers, the committee and helpers. Drumraney being a very rural area,

consisting of a Church, School and Community Centre, the Committee are to be complimented on their dedication and caring nature. Three loyal musicians entertain them every month at their club.

Mullingar Club continues to meet on the last Tuesday of each month with a good attendance. They take their members out regularly on trips to the countryside and places of interest.

So all in all Westmeath Stroke Scheme is very much alive and are looking forward to 2003 in anticipation of bigger and better times ahead.

Pictured top Left: Drumraney Committee. Members with CEO Chairperson & Organisation. Left to right: Back Row: Maura Dolan and Nora Lowery. Front: Jackie Murray, Lena Ward, Nancy Cunningham and Mary Mahon on the occasion of their 10th Anniversary Celebrations.

Pictured bottom Left: The three loyal entertainers at the Drumraney Club each Month: left to right: Sean Guilfoyle & Paddy Ledwith, Athlone & Frank Slevin, Glasson.



*Pictured Left:
Mother, Father &
Daughter.
Kathleen & John
Daly.
Front: May Daly
from Mullingar.*

Puppy Love

Joan Keely

I had a lovely weekend in Carnew, Co. Wicklow with my son and his family. They wanted me to stay longer but I came back to go to club on Monday morning.

The children were in great form. The little girl went to a birthday party, and arrived back with a puppy. Her friend's dog had a batch of pups and found homes for all the pups at the party. The children played pass the parcel with a puppy in each parcel and when all the pups had new homes the children went home very, very happy.

When I was leaving, the baby was sitting on the floor with the new puppy playing happily. The pup was tugging at her cardigan and the baby was kicking out her little feet and chuckling with laughter.

I'm looking forward to spending another weekend with them in Carnew for another bit of Puppy Love in the near future.

" Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream"

Jean Murphy

My daughter, Nicola, drove Monica, my volunteer, and me to our lunch and poetry competition in Dollymount House to celebrate Valentine's Day.

Bill was there when we arrived. Irene arrived next and before long the place was full, and it was buzzing with chatter. Slips of paper were looked at and carefully put back in pockets, indicating that we had enthusiastic poets waiting in the wings.

Our volunteers were out in full force, making sure that we were all safe and sound. Our new volunteers, Deirdre and Bernie, added a dash of glamour to the occasion and Nancy busied herself selling pads of raffle tickets.

Dollymount House did us proud as usual. The food was excellent, and we were seated in a sun-filled area overlooking Dublin Bay. The variety of food was incredible ranging from turkey and ham to scampi and chips, washed down by whatever you wished.

Then came the poetry and prose readings. They were many and varied. The craft of creative writing has sure taken off, and why wouldn't it? Sure isn't this Roddy Doyle country.

While the judges were deliberating Stephen, our new driver, entertained us with songs and everyone joined in. Who said he's the Oldest Swinger in Town!!

Two of the poems composed that day by Jean Murphy and Kay Byrne are on page 10.

Northside Stroke Clubs

Our Clubs

Erica O'Mara, North Dublin Supervisor

We had planned for a long time to bring more crafts into Club and perhaps have a display and so we did. We started last September with the usual painting and went on to other crafts. Shell work was very popular and we started by making some jars into pen holders. This was easy to do with one hand and so proved very popular. Over a period of weeks we made a number of dried arrangements from the miniature to the large and dramatic, with identification of flowers and ways of preserving them.

Painting is very popular and five of our volunteers, Ann, Kitty, Teresa, Nancy and Tess are good tutors from their own experience in painting in oils. Poster paints are used in Club and an hours effort can produce great results. Michael in the Wednesday Club also has teacher talent and our oldest member Mary Clarke is brilliant even in the short space of time. One morning I was asked to identify a painting - I thought it was a potato with three sprouting eyes on a green background. It was a bunker on a golf course with three players trying to play out - enough said. That's modern art for you.

We did indeed have our display at Christmas at the Club Party and for just a term's work it was very impressive, with paintings on screens acting as a backdrop to the other craftwork.

Physiotherapy takes place in each Club every second week with up to a dozen or more stroke people exercising strenuously with Graine and maybe a steadying hand from a volunteer. Our music tapes are well known and often a chorus accompanies the effort and the frequent laughs that ring out.

Our time in Club goes from 10.30a.m. - 12.30p.m. and in each Club there is often more than half the number already supping tea by the starting time. If a Club member is missing because of sickness a card is always signed by everyone and sent with good wishes.

Activities in Club are, as always, many and varied with certain favourites like darts, quizzes, cards and discussions. One morning we had a collection of postcards, many over twenty years old. Everyone took two cards and spoke about them regarding holiday or whatever. One prized card was of the Twin Towers and was kept by someone who had been there four years before.

On a particular Wednesday we divided into four tables, each

are very Crafty



with a separate topic. 1) Pavements and wheelchairs. 2) Croke Park and Soccer. 3) Roy Keane - should he be forgiven. 4) Memorial for three busmen killed by a bomb thirty years previously. Each table had their discussion and appointed a speaker to report back. The result was tremendous, discussion was lively and speakers very effective - putting certain other assemblies to shame.

22nd April, 2002 MONDAY CLUB'S 16th BIRTHDAY

This our 16th Birthday was celebrated in the Club premises and we invited the four girls who had been with us the previous week from Santa Sabina School, Sutton. We celebrated with sandwiches and cocktail sausages and a huge Pavlova made by Pat Gath-Brady. Enda Faughnan was also a guest - Enda had his stroke many years ago and had been able to drive herself to Club on our very first day. She also went on to be a Club driver. Yvonne Byrne and Pat Gath-Brady were awarded trophies for Club Persons of the Year and well deserving recipients they were too.

1st July, 2002 SUMMER OUT- ING - MONDAY AND WEDNES- DAY CLUBS

On the day we assembled at the Club premises before boarding the coach. We had planned to visit Ardgillan Castle but as the day was showery we made a detour around Skerries instead. Our destination was the Bracken Court Hotel in Balbriggan and a great choice, thanks to Tess Harrington who checked it out.

When we arrived there were five traffic bollards to protect our parking space and two staff members to welcome us and direct us where to go, very much appreciated.

Our function room was on the first floor, but with a lift, so there was no problem. As we entered our room we were given a glass of wine courtesy of Eugene Lattin, Tess's son-in-law, also much appreciated. The meal was lovely - cream of vegetable soup, chicken breasts in mushroom sauce and vegetables, with apple pie and cream to follow.

We usually start the entertainment with a musical quiz but this year we had some additional experts and the quiz took most of the time and was very enjoyable.

Time went by quickly and we got back on the coach and headed for home, singing most of the way and with nine birthdays to sing for. A belated birthday to celebrate was Mary Clarke's ninety-second birthday and she as spry as ever! We were back at the Club by the arranged time of 10.30 pm - a great day out and a great choice of hotel, with a total of fifty-three stroke people, guests and volunteers.

6th November, 2002 WEDNESDAY CLUB'S 12th BIRTHDAY

We celebrated our Club's birthday in usual fashion with a party. Tea and sandwiches were provided by Sr Margaret and her staff and a large cake courtesy of Superquinn. The Club trophies for Club persons of the year were awarded to two very worthy recipients - Marie Kearns and Declan Fowler.

16th December, 2002 CHRISTMAS PARTY - MONDAY AND WEDNES- DAY.

We had a full house in St Luke's Social Centre which is the premises for both Clubs. It is more or less the centre of our area of North Dublin and the walls could tell of many a laugh and joke. Seventy three people were served Christmas Dinner and music and jollity followed with some of the volunteers and stroke people providing the fun. Firstcomers are always delighted to see the great set-up we have as well as the comradeship. We parted wishing each other a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year in spite of all.

John Richards died in September, 2002. He was well known in Club for saying 'Close that door' as a person came in. There were no draughts.

Our youngest lady in Club, Sandra Hannon, got married in September but unfortunately her husband Jim Beirne died on their honeymoon. Sandra came back to Club and as always is an inspiration to everyone. See picture on page 3.

As always our thanks go to our volunteers, drivers, Sr. Margaret and her staff. Thanks also to the Northside People Newspaper who ran our ad for drivers on an ongoing basis which was very successful and resulted in six new volunteers. Thanks to Superquinn for providing biscuits for the last sixteen years as well as cakes.



Sr. Margaret

In this the Year of Disability the Volunteer Stroke Scheme can show that stroke need not be the end of everything but the beginning of new friendships and a standard of courage for the rest of us to look up to and equal.

News from Theo's

Theo Davis, Honorary Secretary

I am proud to have been involved with the Volunteer Stroke Scheme for so many years, and to witness our survival, with our hands on approach to stroke patients and their families, by offering practical help through our clubs, outings, holidays and general support.

The web site is still very useful in getting our message about what we do across to people, and to be able to access our General Information on the internet has proved very useful for our clients.

It is obvious from the amount of calls to the office from people living in the

provinces that there is a big need to have stroke support groups nationwide even one in each province would be a great help. I realise that what with the changing times there is not the availability of long term commitment to volunteering, but all it needs is for a few like minded people to come together to give support to each other, and things seem to get off the ground. The present groups around the country are doing a great job and are an example of what can be achieved. The report from the Midlands Group on page 10/11 shows what can be done.

These Wonderful People

The VSS here in Dublin is lucky with the group of Volunteers who give up

their time, week after week, to act as drivers and help run the four clubs. We treasure, and truly appreciate these wonderful people, many of whom have been with us for well over 15 years, which is some dedication to a cause and a great credit to them. Without the volunteers, the Volunteer Stroke Scheme would not be able to function. Credit must also be given to everyone who supports our fundraising activities, but it is very rewarding when you see and hear glowing reports of how the V.S.S. has helped so many people. The monies raised are really put to very good use in our work with stroke patients and their families, and appreciated by everyone who avails of our services.

I am blessed to have had the support of

Recommended Reading

After Stroke

Stroke!

A Self - Help Guide.

Return to Ithaga

Who Cares?

A guide for all who cares for others.

Stroke

A practical Guide towards recovery.

Whose hand is this?

Depression

The Common Sense Approach.

A Stroke

in the family.

My Year Off

Stroke

at your fingertips.



Office

my fellow Committee members who along with the two Supervisors and the Volunteers have kept the Volunteer Stroke Scheme up and running for all these years. Long may we all work together to give support to stroke patients and their families.



Theo Davis,
Hon. Secretary.



These books have proved very helpful to stroke patients and their families and are very well written.

Anyone having difficulty tracing these books should contact the Honorary Secretary, Theo Davis -
Telephone: 01 - 455 9036 (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday mornings.) or our Website www.strokescheme.ie

Money Matters

John L'Estrange Reports

Once again we had a good year on the financial front in 2002.

The Eastern Regional Health Authority gave us €25,000 for 2002. The VSS is most grateful to the Authority for its continuing support.

A wide range of commercial firms helped us again e.g. Banks, Building Societies, Insurance Companies, Manufacturing Firms and Retail outlets.

We have listed below, in alphabetical order, the main companies who have helped us in 2002.

We are grateful to them for their generosity.

- Abbot Laboratories
- Aer Rianta
- Allied Irish Banks
- Amdahl Computers
- Aventis Marketing
- Baileys Irish Cream
- Bank of Ireland
- Becton Dickinson
- Bristol Myers Squibb Co.
- Burmagh-Castrol
- Bus Eireann
- Calor Kosangas
- Cassidy Wine
- Conways Pub
- ESB
- Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel
- Fitzwilton
- Fyffes
- Glaxo Smith Kline
- Grange Pub
- Guinness
- Heineken
- Iarnrod Eireann
- IBM
- Irish Cement
- Irish Distillers
- Irish Life
- Jet Oil
- Killiney Court Hotel
- Marks and Spencers
- McCormacks
- New Island
- Novartis
- Odiums
- O'Neill Bros.
- PMPA
- Quinnsworth
- Rhone - Poulenc Rorert
- Roches Stores
- Royal Insurance
- Smurfits
- Stena Line
- Woodchester Investment
- Zoological Gardens



Aims of the 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 volunteer 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 further helped.
4. To provide outings from time to time.
5. To create a greater awareness and understanding of stroke through effective and relevant publicity.

Volunteer Stroke Scheme

249 Crumlin Road,
Dublin 12.
Phone: 01 - 4559036
Fax : 01 - 4557013

Patrons:

Dr. Morgan Crowe
Dr. Mark Delargy
Mr. Vincent Keaveney
Dr. Angela McNamara

Registered Charity
CHY 6989

Committee

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Alex Tuohy

Editorial Committee:

John L' Estrange (Editor)
Michael McGinley

Supervisors:

Bridie Lyons, South Side
01 - 4941052
Erica O'Mara, North Side
01 - 8481059

Website:

www.strokescheme.ie

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This issue of VSS News has been typeset by Alex Tuohy.
Alex, a long time activist in VSS, has had a stroke himself, and is a member of the Committee of VSS.

VSS News is distributed to
Hospitals and Health Boards
throughout the country free of charge.
Organisations requiring copies of
VSS News please contact:

The Editor,
249 Crumlin Road, Dublin 12.
Phone: 01 - 4559036,

Between 10.00 am and 12.30 pm on
Monday, Wednesday or Thursday.

More volunteers and drivers are required
by the VSS.

Contact us at the number given above or
write for further information.

I wish to subscribe to the Volunteer Stroke
Scheme and I enclose €20.00 for 2003.

Name

Address

.....

.....

Phone.....

Cheques should be made payable to the
Volunteer Stroke Scheme.

Signed.....

Date