

F E B R U A R Y – M A R C H 2 0 1 2

the  
**Defibber News**

Wythenshawe ICD Patient Support Group



### Jeanette's Corner

A very Happy 2012 to you all! I wish you all the best for a Healthy, Happy and Peaceful New Year. I hope you all continue to enjoy the Newsletter, the support group meetings and that you continue to share your fascinating stories with your fellow ICD patients, [the bonus is you do not need to read my groveling, nagging piece!].

A number of you know longer see myself or Lindsay in Dr Brown or Dr Fox's clinics. I wanted to use this opportunity to remind you, if you have any questions, concerns, or worries over appointments etc. Please do still telephone us; we are still here for you.

Our first meeting of 2012 is a favourite for many of you, 'Question Time' with the consultants. I hope you can join us. If you do have a question, would you please email/post or telephone me with your question.

Thank you to all who have sent in your stories. Look forward to seeing you all soon.

You know where I am if you need me or Lindsay! Take care!

**Come and join us – meet new people and share your experiences**

Our meetings are open to ICD patients, carers and family members. The heart conditions that we all live with are different. The responsibilities of being a carer and the impact on family members are sometimes different. What we all go through, we can share. We can encourage one another. We can support one another. We can find out things, smile and have a laugh. You can't afford to miss out!!

**NEXT MEETING - Wednesday February 29th**

Education &  
Research Centre  
2:00pm – 4:00pm

Tea/Coffee &  
Biscuits served at  
1:00pm

**Speakers:**

**Dr Fox and Dr  
Williams**

**“Answering your  
questions “**

**Ring or e-mail  
Jeanette if you are  
attending at:**

**0161-291-5076  
jeanette.hornsey  
@uhsm.nhs.uk**



## The Wedding of the Year

This is Emma – one of our ICD patients - and Joe, her husband, enjoying themselves on a very special day in their lives. We wish them both all the joy in the world.



## Life After Death....A hopeful poem by John J Ward

I lost the spark and went somewhere.  
No pain no grief and not one care.  
There was just peace and calm and sleep.  
A lightened darkness, no place to weep.

But then a thud and open eyes  
A different place to my surprise.  
Smiling tear stained friendly faces.  
The pain was theirs, put thro their paces.

There was a will that all did give.  
A power to make me want to live.  
Their hearts so strong, those thoughts intense.  
A shocking time, it all made sense.

And so I live to tell the tales  
No fear of death or timeless sails.  
Gone from my mind and from my heart.  
I will live on and play my part.



## Me and my Defib – by Geoff Twigg

It all started when I had a heart attack in 1992. Having recovered from that, all went well until 2003 when I was on a night out compering a country & western show. I just came off the stage, talking to friends, when I collapsed.

I was taken to hospital where I was told I barely had a pulse and was unconscious for two days. After a few days, I was transferred to Wythenshawe where an ICD was fitted.

Two days after being at home, my ICD fired off when it shouldn't have and again at regular intervals. I was taken to Stepping Hill hospital and then Wythenshawe, where Dr

Bennett corrected the defib.

But because this happened, it left me in fear of it going off again. I had panic attacks and depression. I didn't like being in the house alone, so I had some counseling and the help of my wife Kath. My confidence slowly returned and my defib was behaving itself.

It also helped when I could go back driving again, and now if I look back it is as if it never happened to me. I'm back to my old self, living a happy life.

Thanks to my defib & Jeanette, "your amazing".



## Defibber News

Do you have an ICD? Are you a carer for someone with and ICD and heart problems?

**Why not write something of your experiences for the Newsletter. You don't have to be Tolstoy! Just write about the impact on your life.**

**Send all contributions to the Newsletter, either by e-mail or by post to:**

**George S Davies  
103 Redearth Road  
Darwen BB3 2AR  
George.davies1@virgin.net**

# My Tale

by John J Ward

**When I came around** after the 6 bypass operation I felt vulnerable and fragile. Gone were the feelings of invincibility and disregard of human frailties. It's a wake up call and the heartache of those close to you is sobering. No longer will you take life for granted.

The effects of the event on your mind and body combined with the drugs and the unreality of consciousness leave one highly emotional. Crying comes easy and laughter can be a little painful. My constant companion was a cushion that allowed me to gingerly cough. Life was changed forever.....



**Yet my whole body** was resilient and I was soon tired of the resting, the tubes and the constant attention. Most people around you are kind and attentive and ever so careful with you and your feelings. Some are not. You realise that the world goes on and many people have problems of their own as well as dealing with you. You even find yourself more in tune with these “awkward” people than previously possible before the event.....

**Soon you realise** that survival is a gift that many do not get. Hey I am one of the lucky ones! The discomforts subside and you move from invalid to active remarkably quickly. Perhaps life will be full again? You soon realise that your lifestyle can dictate what is to become of you. The necessary changes, which once would have been difficult, are now easy to make. No fats, smaller portions. Fish and fruits fill your life and your taste buds adapt. Porridge is good and sugars and sweeteners are not desired. Amazingly to me, within weeks my exercise had gone from stumbling walks to 1, 2 and then 3-mile runs. The pounds had been shed with the diet and you definitely feel good. Better in fact than for the last few years .....



**Six months** fly by and you can get on with normal life. The medications are there forever as a constant reminder and emotions bubble just below the surface. Friends and family are back to normal and you wonder what life is now going to be like? I can only tell you my story. I was 60 when the event happened. Playing soccer with my son. I had always had an active life and I was determined that would not change. However there were changes that I could not avoid. My business had collapsed and the family were on the verge of bankruptcy. We had lost our family home and yet those were events that served to make me reconsider. I still had an active brain, a loving family and renewed health. To me it seemed a step in the right direction.....**cont on (page 5)**

## **The climb back into everyday society**

was not without difficulties. People in general were uncertain about my capabilities after the illness. Confidence had been lost and the only place to start the climb back was from the bottom. Our family had to go through a financial cleansing. we were poorer but not poor in financial terms. i entered into an IVA with my creditors and the journey back started.

I had been inspired by a quotation by Winston Churchill. "Never, never, never, ever give up" and that was where I started to rebuild. There is no secret formulae. You will loose friends and you will find friends. You will find kindness and compassion. Yet you will also find distrust and have setbacks. But it is a wonderful world and every day is a bonus. Your glass can always be half full if you choose. Keep looking and opportunities will present themselves. Its now a further 18 months on and I reflect on my life in that period only so that others can see with effort and some luck you can achieve your aims. The list below is not meant to be a boast or even cover everything but a selection of what was available to me with just trying!

To everyone who goes through similar circumstances I say: "Never say you can't do, listen to your Doctor and get on with enjoying this precious life"

## **Achievements in my second Life**

- I now run most days up to 10miles. A 10k run takes 53 minutes.
- Last month I drove 3,600 miles in 9 days to take my youngest daughter around Europe.
- My new weight of 150lbs has been constant for 2 years.
- Porridge is my now my favourite food (with a spoon of honey).
- Once a week only I eat "bad food" (e.g. full English breakfast).
- I take my daily dose of Satins, aspirin and beta blockers (rarely forget!).

- My bad cholesterol level has moved to the very healthy levels.
- I have had a defibrillator fitted into my chest. (It has yet to fire up!)
- I have travelled back and forwards over the Atlantic 18 times in the last two years.
- I have started and progressed a new project to build a village in the USA with little funding or assistance.
- My time has become valuable and I spend as much of it with my family as they can stand!
- I have written and published a book of 80 poems.
- I have stopped crying regularly.
- Lost friendships have been revived
- I have tried to Mentor others.
- I have started a new business with a good friend in the UK to create a centre of excellence.
- I have played soccer in the over 50's leagues
- Unexpected and generous kindness has been given to me.

## **My TO DO list**

1. Hug my wife and children as often as possible
2. Run another marathon, or two.
3. When I am over 65, to beat a seniors world record at athletics.
4. Complete new Village projects in the UK and USA.
5. Write a novel
6. Build a raft and sail across an expanse of water.
7. Right some wrongs of my own.
8. Find new opportunities to help others.
9. Make a difference, every day.
10. Inspire someone, somewhere, some time.
11. Play more soccer and score some goals.
12. Celebrate some success with each of my 14 grandchildren

# IT STARTED BACK IN '82

**It started back in '82**

**Prior to that, a fluttering in my chest**

**Ended up in Leighton Hospital**

**Where they did raise my vest**

**They** stuck on all those wires  
And gave me pain relief  
The effects of all of that morphine  
Was quite beyond belief

**It** made me so relaxed  
But I had to stay awake  
It took away the pain  
But my mind, an increasing lake

**I** really found myself spaced out  
Then I found my way back  
Then the doctor said to me  
You've had a heart attack

**Four** days coronary care  
Two more on the ward  
Started feeling better  
Getting really bored

**Ok** Mr Robinson  
It's time for you to scam  
Just wait for your appointment  
We'll send you for an angiogram

**North** Staffs hospital, off I went  
Really no need to hurry  
Thickening of the muscle, in the wall of  
your heart  
No reason for you to worry

**So** off I went then, back to work  
Twenty-three years, emergency visits  
galore  
Joanne Trelawny, echocardiogram  
Refer you to Wythenshawe

**Now** I've got a heart like a floppy sack  
And my life, it is no joke!  
But looking back, over all those years  
I blame the beer and the smoke

**Thank** god for the NHS  
For without it, where would we be?  
I probably would not be alive  
Except for my I.C.D

**To** our government, if you persist with  
cuts  
Then I truly say, that you are nuts!  
You may as well, roll in the hearses  
If you don't protect our doctors and  
nurses!

**Instead** of creating these countless  
flaws  
We need more doctors, nurses, walking  
hospital floors  
More doctors to carry out life saving  
deeds  
And nurses, to look after our patients  
needs

**Now** that my rant has almost ended  
It's time our NHS was mended  
More money is needed, and let's be fair  
To relieve the pressure on those who  
care.



**David Robinson in Crewe – a grateful, in and out patient at two hospitals**