

Cardiographic

Newsletter

June 2016



Milton Keynes Community Cardiac Group

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Thank you for the feedback on the March newsletter; it was good to receive it. We have been pleased to receive the articles and news from members for inclusion in this edition and this support is much appreciated. Contributions (large or small) are very welcome as this gives variety in your newsletter. Details of how to get in touch are on page 8.

Group name

For the past 27 years the letters MKCCG have represented the name of our group, Milton Keynes Community Cardiac Group. However, more recently we have expanded our services to include sessions for people with conditions such as heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It is felt that the group's name does not at present reflect this.

After some discussion the Management Committee is suggesting that the name should be changed to Milton Keynes Community Cardiopulmonary Group, thus recognising all members but remaining 'MKCCG'. A proposal to this effect will be put to members at the next Annual General Meeting on 4 November. If you have any comments you wish to make before then please put them in the suggestion box and they will be considered by the committee.

Management Committee

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Singing for Breathing

On March 11th, the Singing for Breathing group took part in the Milton Keynes Festival of the Arts, competing against other choirs and barbershop groups. This is a remarkable achievement for a singing group which is barely two years old, but especially so for a group made up of people with varying degrees of breathing difficulty.

Ian Spratley explains the background to Singing for Breathing.

Singing for Breathing is not a new idea. Various groups in the UK and abroad have been exploring the benefits of singing, particularly for people with long-term lung conditions, for a number of years now. One of the pioneering groups in this country is based at the Royal Brompton Hospital in London. In January 2014, Carol Smith, Lyn Kirkbright and I attended a Singing for Breathing workshop at the Brompton to discover more about how such a group works and what the benefits to members of MKCCG might be.

There are many similarities between the techniques that singers use to develop breath control and the kind that physiotherapists use with people who have chronic respiratory problems. If people struggle to breathe they often adapt their breathing patterns to help them get as much oxygen as possible. However this can make the problem worse, especially if they start to take short, shallow breaths.

A typical Singing for Breathing group teaches people how to relax the stomach muscles, allowing air to be drawn into the whole upper body and then using the same muscles to support the out breath. They also learn how to slow down the out breath, which can increase oxygen absorption in the body. The actual singing part generally consists of warm-up exercises and simple tunes designed to help the breathing process.

It became clear during our visit to the Royal Brompton Hospital that it's not necessary to be able to sing to take part in a Singing for Breathing group. The techniques can help anyone with breathing problems.

Some of the evidence for the benefits of singing is anecdotal - particularly to do with general health and wellbeing. But there is also evidence that can be measured; spirometry tests on people with lung conditions have shown improvements in exhalation rates after taking part in Singing for Breathing groups.



Newsletter direct to your inbox

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Other research shows that singing releases endorphins including oxytocin – the so-called ‘feel-good’ factor. Eating chocolate has the same effect, but is more fattening!

Last year the British Lung Foundation visited MKCCG to see and hear the Singing for Better Breathing group. They have their own singing programme, which trains, supports and funds community singing leaders to set-up singing groups for people with lung conditions. By the end of May 2016 there will be 28 BLF Singing groups around the UK.

So what's it actually like to sing in front of an audience - particularly when you have difficulty breathing? Roger Wyatt describes his experience.

In a single, spontaneous word ‘wonderful’. There may be other words others may have used but perhaps to me the most important word should be ‘achievement’. It was an achievement to get there, to be there, to be brave enough and confident enough to see it through. The venue was a big place, with bright lights and people, lots of people a good number of whom had done this or similar before. It was a competition, an open competition, a prestigious competition and we, the MKCCG, Singing for Better Breathing group, A Breath of Fresh Air, were there!

Those of us with serious breathing difficulties, may as a consequence, suffer with nerves and anxiety brought about by the uncertainty of whether we will be breathing adequately to undertake any task placed in front of us, and that does not always have to be a physical task. Taking part in this Festival was some achievement.

When we started our Singing for Better Breathing group I doubt if anyone guessed or dreamt that we would find ourselves on a stage as big as that one on 11th March 2016, or indeed any stage at any other time.

The adjudicator that evening, Sam Dunkley, who was not made aware of our history, commented on our good breathing technique, among our other singing attributes. And our group has Lyn Kirkbright to thank for that and for putting us there and being there with us in the spotlights on that very special evening.

In summary it was not about winning: it was about the preparation: it was about the determination: it was about being brave enough to climb up on to the stage and do it. And, it was

Warming up and rehearsing



On stage



also about being humble when it was over and appreciating that others had also put a great deal of both time and energy toward their performance. Well done them, especially the two choirs in our section who came ahead of us, placed joint third, in a total of four. But we were there!

Putting festivals and competition to one side for a moment, it must always be remembered and considered that this group was and is about improving people's health, their well-being, their confidence and self-esteem and as a consequence improve their life quality. Personally, it has helped me achieve all of those aims and for that I shall always be grateful.

Indeed, all of us within the singing group should be grateful to those who make this incredible experience possible. They also make a commitment, share their skills and give their time and the greatest gift you can give to someone else is your time – you never get that time back.

Lastly, to my singing and breathing friends within the group, thank you. Thank you for your good company and your support.

Ian Spratley and Roger B Wyatt

Photos John Bromley

Swimathon

On Saturday 12 March MKCCG entered 3 teams in the Rotary Club of Milton Keynes annual swimathon. The teams consisted of 16 swimmers in total and in the 55 minutes actual swimming time the teams swam a total of 288 lengths. The group raised approximately £2375.00; total amount raised was £27,000.

Monies raised are going to The Mayor's Charities (MK Hospital and Royal British Legion) and Willen Hospice, Supershoes, Thames Valley Air Ambulance, Age UK Milton Keynes and Dogs for Good.

Thanks go to all swimmers and supporters.

Andy Chapman; photo Jos Lygo-Baker



Certificate of merit and bronze medal

Forthcoming events

The Social Committee are planning a number of events over the coming months including:

Sale of handmade craft items: Saturday 24 September at Hinton Hall

Race night and bingo: Friday 21 October at New Bradwell

Christmas Crafts: Saturday 19 November at Hinton Hall

AGM: Friday 4 November at Hinton Hall

Borderline Crossing in concert

On Saturday 30th April, a concert was held at York House, Stony Stratford and all proceeds went to group. All ninety tickets were sold bringing in over £700. We witnessed the close-knit harmonies of Borderline Crossing who were joined by Phil Reilly and our own Ian Spratley. For parts of the gig they were also joined by Susanne Winterbottom and Chris Mitchell (who as you will recall were previously in Fat Freddy's Cat alongside Ian).

We were treated to many original tunes (many penned by Phil Reilly) alongside covers and adaptations of songs made famous by artists as diverse as Ricky Nelson, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, the Beatles and Daniel O'Donnell (I'm not really familiar with the work of Daniel O'Donnell - wasn't he some sort of a dancer?).

The evening was a really big deal for Ian as he lost his voice 5 years ago as a result of cancer surgery and has only recently been able to sing again thanks to a brilliant surgeon at the QE2 Hospital Birmingham. The band will be embarking on a 5 night tour of Germany in July.

Trevor Adams; photo Jos Lygo-Baker



Quiz night

Friday 13 May saw 17 teams compete in the quiz night at Stantonbury Sports and Social Club. At half time there was a variety of food provided by members to replenish the brain cells. There were 8 rounds of 10 questions with a joker available to play on the round of choice. The winners scored an amazing 81 out of 90 and there was a tie in second place with 66 points scored. £236 was raised for group funds.

Photo Jos Lygo-Baker



Coffee morning

We were very pleased that Friday 27 May was a sunny day for the coffee morning at Hinton Hall. There was a number of different stalls including bric-a-brac, plants, cakes and crafts as well as the raffle. We welcomed a member of the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance who kindly drew the first raffle ticket for us. As the chosen charity for this year they will receive £553.88 from the event as will MKCCG. Gill thanks all those who helped with setting up, running stalls, generally helping before and on the day, and all those who supported the event.

Just for fun...

Milton Keynes Parks Trust manages approximately 5,000 acres of land across Milton Keynes. Much of it is extremely accessible. See if you can match the Parks Trust locations to the celebrities shown. Answers on page 8.

<p>1.</p> 	<p>A.</p> 
<p>2.</p> 	<p>B.</p> 
<p>3.</p> 	<p>C.</p> 
<p>4.</p> 	<p>D.</p> 

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A Funny Ole' Spring

It's been a long an' funny sort of
spring
At times it's been quite free-e-zing
When the wind did feel so cold
Blowing from the north I'm told

It snowed in April again this year
Giving children a spring-time cheer
But the snow didn't stay that long
For when it rained it soon was
gone

We seem to have had a tonne of
rain
Another wet winter yet again
There's now enough water to go
around
As reserves fill-up underground

The early snowdrops lasted well
Though with little fragrant smell
Then the daffs they came along
And the colourful tulips lasted long

Excited birds are singing songs
Enticing mates to come along
They'll soon be busy building nests
And protecting young from preying
pests

The apple trees are in full bloom
And soon there'll be the cuckoo's
tune
As the days grow longer to ease
the gloom
Just another few weeks and we're
into June

Roger B Wyatt

Members News

Regional Winner

Chris Maxwell who attends Wednesday LTC group has recently won trophies in a first aid competition. He is a member of a casualty simulation team of 3 people comprising a simulator, casualty and bystander who have a set of injuries to portray. Chris's team won the regional final in the Royal Mail competition and will be attending the national final in October. Trophies have been won for portraying injuries and they won best simulator (one of the team did the script and make up), best bystander (he had to assist First Aider treating Chris and show concern for him as he had caused the accident). Chris won best casualty for portrayal of injuries and reaction to right treatment. They also won the best team trophy. Good luck to Chris and his team in the national final.



MBE

David Ball who attends Thursday morning was delighted to attend an investiture at Windsor Castle after his wife, Jean, was awarded a MBE in the Queen's Birthday honours in June 2015. Jean was awarded the MBE as she founded Stanbridge and Tilsforth lunch club in 1993 and continues to provide the catering. The investiture was hosted by Princess Anne.



Staff changes

Welcome to Caroline Maddox who joins us as an exercise teacher on Monday mornings.

Donna Venn who was working as an exercise teacher on Monday mornings has moved to Shropshire and we send her best wishes for the future.

Craft sale

The craft sale on 24 September 10am-2pm is an opportunity for people to sell finished crafts and crafting materials. Tables are free with a 20% donation from sales made going to MKCCG. If you or your friends are interested in having a table please contact Mary Owen on 01908 322944 or email dmowen@talktalk.net Please book early!

There will be tables with donated craft items for sale with all proceeds going to MKCCG.

Volunteering for MKCCG: Blue Shirts

Without Blue Shirts MKCCG could not function. The majority of Blue Shirts are pre-existing members. We are always looking for new volunteers. We need at least one Blue Shirt for six exercisers: that number may sometimes need to be reduced further e.g. if there are inexperienced Blue Shirts.

Initially there is classroom-based training which lasts 6 weeks. Many different relevant topics are covered including the physiology of the heart, human anatomy, the effect of many of the more commonly taken drugs, learning the exercises (of course for the Blue Shirt left becomes right and vice-versa so we can follow them), and the effect of the conditions that members have on their ability to exercise.

After this time, the trainee Blue Shirts are mentored and shadowed. The aim of this period of time is to get signed off as competent in each of the roles that the Blue Shirts take on. For example, one of the important things that Blue Shirts do is to measure blood pressure and pulse. Initially, trainees will take readings and a qualified Blue Shirt will do the same. As the trainee acquires the skill the two readings will become very similar and the trainee is ready to be assessed by Gill. During exercise, the leader cannot see all of the group all of the time meaning that the Blue Shirts will also be keeping an eye on the people exercising. They have observed over a period of time how each member exercises and they are looking for a substantive difference which may be a warning sign that something may be wrong. For example, one gentleman on a Thursday night seems to erratically throw his arms around - if he wasn't doing that something may be wrong. Upstairs, similarly, the Blue Shirts will notice if someone needs to slow-down and they will also make sure that members are suitably responsive during exercise.

On the night every Blue Shirt has a role in case of emergency (that will be why they have that meeting at the start), so they would already know for example who would guide the ambulance in, who would use the defibrillator etc. Trevor spoke with John Melvin, Alain and Ali to compile this article.

If you are interested in training to be a Blue Shirt, please speak with Gill.

Answers to just for fun...

1. Walton Lake	D. The Waltons
2. Campbell Park	C. Donald Campbell
3. Howe Park Wood	B. Geoffrey Howe
4. Linford Wood	D. Linford Christie

Newsletter publication

It is anticipated that there will be regular newsletters published during the year.

Items for the newsletter can be placed in the envelope in the office at Hinton Hall or emailed to the newsletter email address news@mkccg.org

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this edition.