

News Update May 2008

Welcome to latest edition of our newsletter. We have the first story from a carer on page 3 of this edition. We are still keen to hear from carers to give us their stories, poems and/or ideas for future issues.

Moffat Project

Carers of East Lothian is delighted to welcome Claire Thomas as the new East Lothian Carer Practitioner. Claire will focus on developing Carers Assessments as part of improvements to the Single Shared Assessment process and the work will have two main objectives:

- To support an increase in the number and quality of Carers Assessments carried out by social work and health staff.
- To provide direct support to carers, through helping with Carers Assessments, providing ongoing individual support and facilitating peer support groups.



Travel Pass Problems

A few carers have contacted us regarding renewing travel passes for people with learning disabilities. It appears that when the new "Scotland-wide" passes came in to force, the eligibility rules changed slightly and some people who previously qualified were not able to renew their passes. As far as we understand this has mostly affected people with learning disabilities and we have been able to help in the cases we know about. If anyone else has had a similar problem would you please contact us as we are trying to establish how many people have been affected by this and also the circumstances they are in.

In Case of Emergency

Many of us carry our mobile phones with names and numbers stored in its memory but nobody, other than ourselves, knows which of these numbers belong to our closest family or friends.

If we were to be involved in an accident or were taken ill, the people attending us would have our mobile phone but wouldn't know who to call. Yes, there are hundreds of numbers stored but which one is the contact person in case of an emergency? Hence the 'ICE' (In Case of Emergency) Campaign.

The concept of 'ICE' is catching on quickly. It is a method of contact during emergency situations. As mobile phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should be contacted during emergency under the name 'ICE' (In Case Of Emergency).

The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when he went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but they didn't know which number to call. He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognised name for this purpose. In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital staff would be able to quickly contact the right person by simply dialing the number you have stored as 'ICE.' For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2 and ICE3 etc. A great idea that will make a difference!

Let's spread the concept of ICE by storing an ICE number in our mobile phones today!

ICE will speak for you when you are not able to.



What's On

IT Tutorials

Our year-long series of computer workshops is continuing to prove very popular. The Musselburgh sessions at Interesk café will continue through the project – until June 2008 and, due to the demand in the area, we will continue with the sessions at Prestonpans library. If you are interested in taking advantage of the opportunity to learn or advance your computer skills with other carers, please contact Ingrid at the Carers Centre on 0131 665 0135. If you are already on the waiting list we would ask you to be patient and we will contact you as soon as a suitable place becomes available.



Carers Week 2008

9th - 15th June is Carers Week, and this year the emphasis is on the health and wellbeing of carers. The theme "Carers can't afford to be ill" is the reality for many carers, and highlights the need for better support and services.

Carers Week will

- Recognise and celebrate the contribution made by carers
- Reach out to 'hidden carers' in every community; ensuring they know where to find support
- Promote policies and practices that can improve the quality of life of carers
- Campaign for better support and services for carers

Tynepark Carers Support Group

A support group for carers of adults who experience mental health problems is held in Tynepark Resource Centre
Tynepark House
Poldrate
Haddington
On the 3rd Thursday of every month
For further information contact Ariel, Teleri or Carol at Tynepark Resource Centre on 01620 822 444.

Carers Week Survey

The survey this year asks carers some key questions about how health problems and issues affect their ability to care. If you would like to take part, the survey is available online at www.carersweeksurvey.org.uk or you can download a PDF from the Carers Week website www.carersweek.org. If you do not have a computer, but are keen to take part, please phone the centre on 0131 665 0135 and we will download a copy for you. There may also be articles in the media about carers' issues during Carers Week.

Scottish Ambulance Service

We would like to hear your experiences of Patient Transport Services – both good and bad. We plan to forward the information to local NHS and East Lothian Council planning groups, to help improve the service across the county. Please telephone us on 0131 665 0135 or e-mail: centre@coel.org.uk with your experiences.



Weekly Benefit Rates 2008/2009

Carers Allowance	£50.55
Earnings limit for claimant	£95.00
Disability Living Allowance	
Highest rate care	£67.00
Middle rate care	£44.85
Lowest rate care	£17.75
Higher rate mobility	£46.75
Lower rate mobility	£17.75
Attendance Allowance	
Higher rate	£67.00
Lower rate	£44.85

A Song to be Remembered By – by Don Sowden

This story spans the best part of seventy years but, do not despair, it is not a continuous narrative of that period. It begins in the years just prior to World War II when the Boy Scout Movement held international “Jamborees”. These were great gatherings of Scouts from all over the world to promote goodwill and understanding. By the time I became a scout the storm clouds were gathering and very soon broke into the storm. International goodwill was at a low ebb. The stories of Jamborees became legends; some real some apocryphal. One of the stories, of which category I cannot say, concerned a group of Yorkshire scouts who had been fortunate enough to attend one of these mammoth shindigs. This story was treated with great reverence because ours was a Yorkshire troop.

One of the highlights at a Jamboree was “Campfire” when all delegates assembled for a sing song. Eventually the singing progressed to the point where the various groups were invited to sing one of their traditional songs. To a Scot this represents no difficulty possessing, as they do, a great fund of folksongs; to a Yorkshireman things are different. Other than “On Ilkla Moor ‘Ba Tat” (which is too long and dismal) we are scraping the bottom of the barrel. However this group had a secret weapon and gave voice to:

*We're all down in t'cellar 'oil
W'ere t'muck starts on t'winders
We've burnt all our coil and now we're bonin' t'cinders
If yon old bum-bailiff cums he'll niver find us
Cos we're all down in t'cellar 'oil w'ere t'muck starts on
t'winders*

The tune is unimportant being more of a chant than a song but for those not fortunate enough to have been born in Yorkshire, a translation will be necessary:

We are all down in the basement
Where the dirt splashes on the windows
We have burned all our coal and now we are burning
ashes
If the bailiff comes he will never find us
Because we are all down in the basement where the dirt
splashes on the windows
Our troop adopted this as part of our campfire
programme but, unfortunately, never had the opportunity
to make public use of it. However, as is often the case
for the skills we learned in that amazing organisation, I
was able to put this bit of training to good use many
years later.

The scene shifts to the early sixties and I had been working on the development of Guided Weapons with Ferranti Ltd for quite a few years and, with the help of smoke and mirrors, had managed to trick myself on to the senior staff. As was the custom in those days the senior staff were treated to a Christmas Lunch in the senior staff canteen and it was generally understood that the lunch could extend well into the afternoon. A holiday atmosphere pervaded the proceedings and, as the dining room was

rather too small to house the whole staff in one sitting, things were cramped and this added to the informal jollity. I explain this in some length to excuse, as best I can, what follows.

By the time the coffee and mince pies arrived decorum was hard to find and paper pellets made from the detritus of crackers, started to wing their way as unguided missiles across the room. It pains me to say that some members, having run short of paper pellets, brought uneaten mince pies into use. At this, justifiably, the Manger's lady secretary stood up to protest, only to arrest in mid flight, one of the errant mince pies. The jollity ended abruptly and we returned shamefacedly to our respective places of work. One year later, after admonitions from the manger himself, the festive celebrations were muted and I found that we were back at work earlier than would have been the case on an ordinary working day.

Another year passed and I was determined that we should make every effort to re-establish the leisurely return to work and after the coffee I organised a sing song. Now this was a collection of very clever and well educated individuals and I assumed that carols and popular songs would trip from their lips effortlessly, not so! A disaster loomed. I decided to give them a singing lesson and unearthed, from my memory “We're all down in t'cellar 'oil” We were in Lancashire, a foreign land to Yorkshiremen, the Peneine Range had been built to keep us apart! So it was an uphill struggle but the time taken ensured that the objective of a later return to work was achieved. The simple words caught on with the intellectual mob and became a regular feature of subsequent festivities.

The story now leaps about thirty five years to the mid-nineties. In the intervening period, because of a series of unfortunate circumstances, Ferranti Ltd went into liquidation. A book was produced setting out the history of the firm and all ex-employees on the pension books were invited to Manchester to attend the launch. This gathering quickly became more of a reunion than a book launch.

Those of you who have attended a reunion of colleagues will understand the difficulties of recognition. Dark hair has turned to white or disappeared completely but once identities are revealed, the person looks, in your mind's eye, exactly the same as all those years ago.

You may remember I said that the group I worked with were a very clever lot. Some knew it and made the most of it, and some carried their brilliance with humility. In my opinion MG was the brightest of the bunch and I was always flattered that he would explain to me, in detail, his latest creations. Eventually we met and after initial perplexed looks he said “Ah Don, I remember you. You used to teach us to sing a song about dirt splashing on the windows” Not a word about all the technical successes I had achieved but it's nice to be remembered for something!

Carers Support Groups

Our support groups offer information, peer support and the opportunity to share experiences. They are informal and welcoming.

If you are interested in learning more about our groups or coming along please call the Carers Centre and we will be happy to discuss this with you.

We currently run groups in the following areas:

Dunbar - second Wednesday of each month 10.30am - 12noon.

East Linton – first Thursday of each month 10.30am – 12noon

Haddington – last Wednesday of each month 1pm – 2.30pm

Dirleton* – first Tuesday of each month 10.30am – 12noon

Ormiston/Pencaitland – last Monday of each month 2pm – 3.30pm

Musselburgh – every three months (Thursday) 10.30am – 12noon

North Berwick – 2nd Tuesday of each month 10.30am – 12noon

In addition to the above groups we hold a **Drop-in group** at the Centre on the third Tuesday of each month. We also run the **Long Term Care Group** which is specifically for those carers whose loved ones are in long term care. This group meets on the second Thursday of each month from 1.30pm – 3pm in Musselburgh. For full details of all our groups and activities please contact the centre as detailed below.

Dates for Your Diary

May 2008	June 2008	July 2008
1 st East Linton Group	3 rd Dirleton Group*	1 st Dirleton Group*
6 th Dirleton Group*	5 th East Linton Group	3 rd East Linton Group
8 th Long Term Care Group	10 th North Berwick Group	8 th North Berwick Group
13 th North Berwick Group	11 th Dunbar Group	9 th Dunbar Group
14 th Dunbar Group	12 th Long Term Care Group	10 th Long Term Care Group
20 th Drop-in Group	17 th Drop-in Group	15 th Drop-in Group
26 th Ormiston Group	23 rd Ormiston Group	28 th Ormiston Group
28 th Haddington Group	30 th Haddington Group	30 th Haddington Group
	9 th – 13 th Carers Week	

*This group meets in the Open Arms in Dirleton

Have your details changed?

We try to ensure that our mailing list details are correct. If your details have changed please let us know and we will update our database or remove you from our list if you no longer wish to receive information from us. Thanks for your help.

Remember though, that you do not have to come off our mailing list if your caring role has ended and you still feel in need of support.

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