

News



The newsletter of St John Ambulance West Midlands
serving Herefordshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire

WINTER 2010



Gok takes a first aid lesson!

Gok Wan visits Lionel Street

PLUS FUNDRAISING + MEMBERSHIP + CADET ROUNDUP

WELCOME

by Keith Hunter
County Commander



Welcome to this latest edition of our magazine, highlighting some of the many events, achievements and activities involving our members. I commented in the last newsletter on my sense of pride in the vital work you all do, and having now been in post as your Commander for just over six months, I have seen, heard about and experienced this first hand. The scale and scope of our

volunteer activity is truly remarkable, as some of the stories in this edition demonstrate.

The Papal visit tested us with the largest ever single event in the county – and we admirably demonstrated our capabilities in planning and delivering a first class service, with over 250 West Midlands members on duty. Our operational capability is now further enhanced with new vehicles coming on stream, and there are further purchases in the pipeline. Other stories about our actions at the Wolverhampton Marathon vividly show we really are 'the difference' between a life lost and a life saved. From the youngest to the oldest, everyone can play their part in St John Ambulance. At one end of the age spectrum, our young people highlight involvement in the 'Cadet of the Year', and at the other end, 'The Coventry Telegraph' has awarded their local Fellowship Branch 'Best Elderly In the Community' award. All these stories and others show we remain a modern, caring, charity, ready to meet the needs of our communities.

Change has become a hallmark of modern life and further internal changes and legislative challenges lie ahead for us all. Internally, the organisation is reviewing its 'top structures' and externally, new regulations will affect a lot of what we do. I'll discuss these more fully in the next newsletter.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for all the work done in the name of St John Ambulance throughout 2010, to wish you a very Happy Christmas and to hope you have an enjoyable 2011.

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A big thank you....and a warm welcome

by Keith Hunter,
County Commander



Michael Evans,
Chair of Council,
who is now retiring

On behalf of us all, I would like to extend a huge vote of thanks to Mr Michael Evans, the Chair of Council, who is standing down after some 28 years of service with the West Midlands Council. Over this long period Michael has brought his good governance and wise council to the major issues that we have faced. Everyone will want to wish Mr Evans well for the future during his retirement.

In saying goodbye to him, we offer a warm welcome to his successor, Mr Robert Hughes. Mr Hughes, now retired, is new to St John

Ambulance, but comes to the role from a successful career as a senior manager in the public sector. I am sure Mr Hughes will be an equally 'steady hand on the tiller' as we face the challenges of the future, and that he can count on the support of us all as he takes up his new role.

Mr Hughes himself added: 'The West Midlands county of St John Ambulance is such an active and interesting part of the charity as a whole. I am honoured to take on the role as your new Chairman of Council and look forward to getting to know the team throughout a busy 2011.'

Wolverhampton first aiders save collapsed runner

A runner in the Wolverhampton Marathon may well have died had first aid not been available from Wolverhampton volunteers providing cover at the event.

Collapsing in West Park after running 26 miles, Robert Hickman, 40, from Tipton, was moments from finishing when he started to get into difficulties. Luckily for him, first aid assistance was close by and the team immediately sprang into action. Finding the patient unconscious, volunteers David Angel, Tracy Jones, Andy Corbett and Richard Rushforth swiftly administered oxygen, before he was rushed to hospital.

Richard Rushforth, Sector Support Officer Cadets, Wolverhampton, said: 'If we hadn't have been on hand and so close to him at the park he may well have needed CPR; we had our defibrillator ready but we were able to get him to hospital before that was necessary.'

It was Mr Hickman's first full marathon after completing three half-marathons earlier in the year. Thanking the St John Ambulance first aiders who helped him, Mr Hickman said: 'My wife and I are so



grateful to the St John Ambulance volunteers for their prompt response and professionalism. After speaking to people who were there at the time, I realise now how fortunate I was that they were there to help so quickly, as the situation could have been a lot more serious.'

A spokesman for the Wolverhampton Marathon said: 'Working closely with St John Ambulance gives us the confidence to know that our runners will be looked after, should anyone need first aid support. The volunteers are trained and equipped to make the difference and we were very pleased with the professional way in which they worked with the healthcare professionals on the day.'

New vehicles strengthen our fleet

St John Ambulance in the West Midlands has officially welcomed several new vehicles to its fleet

The West Midlands team, which has around 2000 volunteers across the county, is bracing itself for an increase in the number of injuries as the weather gets colder. The existing fleet of 63 vehicles has now been strengthened by the addition of two new frontline ambulances, a brand new Command and Control Unit, a logistics vehicle and a 4x4 ambulance donated by Jaguar Landrover.

St John Ambulance volunteer crews are on standby to support NHS Ambulance Service Trusts, ready, if needed, with 4x4 vehicles which can reach patients in places which are inaccessible to conventional ambulances.

County Chaplain, Mark Pryce blessed the new frontline vehicles in a ceremony that took place at County Operations Centre at the end of November.

County Commissioner, Operations, for West Midlands, Paul Bytheway, said: I would like to thank



our County Chaplain for officially blessing the new vehicles, which will be so useful in the coming months. During the winter of 2009/10, volunteers crewed 4x4 vehicles to help patients that couldn't be reached in traditional ambulances. In the West Midlands alone, we clocked up 259 hours of voluntary service, working six and eight hour long shifts, and not returning back to their operations centre until 3am in some instances. These new vehicles will help enormously.'

Charity round-up

We have had a fantastic number of donations this year from our supporters and would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to us, be it ten pounds or ten thousand! These donations make the work of our volunteers possible around the county and we wish we could name you all – but here are a few we would like to mention.

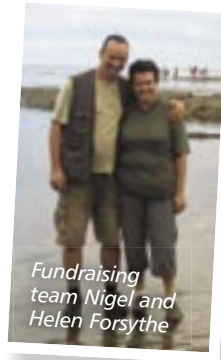
Quick thinking volunteer Raydene Hawthorne, of Kidderminster Quadrilateral, applied to her employers, Cooperative, for a grant towards the work of St John Ambulance through an employee nominating scheme which the company promote, and received a fantastic £250 through the post.

Wolverhampton member Albert Bevin picked up £500 as

a speaker's fee from insurance company Paycare, after waxing lyrical about St John Ambulance at their AGM.

Earlier this year, Helen Forsythe and her husband Nigel (pictured), undertook a charity trek in the name of St John Ambulance this summer, walking 230 miles from St Bees in Cumbria to Robin Hood Bay in Yorkshire, and raised an amazing £250.

Most recently we received an outstanding £10,000 donation from the Jordan Foundation to our cause and we would like to make a special thank you to them for this amazing gesture, which really will help to keep our local communities safer and promote first aid across the West Midlands.



Fundraising team Nigel and Helen Forsythe

Blind drive

The Blind Drive Challenge raised around £5000 at the beginning of August and was a great success with both the public and St John volunteers.

A huge thanks goes to the professional support from members Steve Piersen, Andrew and Angela Anthony, Tracy Jones, Matthew Connolly, Julie, Emily and Andrew Taffs and Jennifer and Elizabeth Corbett. We couldn't have run it without you!



The Big Tea Cosy

Fran Webb on why she supports St John Ambulance in Evesham

Hampton Ferry is a local riverside beauty spot on the banks of the River Avon in Evesham and my role is to organise fun and entertaining events there – many of which are in support of charities. I became involved with St John Ambulance after meeting Divisional Superintendent John Welch and the team at one of our charity gala days. When asked if I would like to help organise a 'Big Tea Cosy' event in August, I loved the idea of a great community event at the Ferry.

There was much to do before the event as we needed donations from local businesses, who were generous enough to give us all the refreshments needed, as well as tombola prizes, and a local bakery even gave us a 'St John Ambulance' cake for 'guess the weight!' Every penny raised on the day therefore went into St John Ambulance funds.

I have nothing but praise for the St John Ambulance team from Evesham, who worked tirelessly all afternoon. As with any event, there is always a lot of 'behind the scenes' work to do, such as logistics, advertising and finding supporters. It truly was a team effort, but the £300 raised



Divisional Officer John Welch and Diana Raphael get ready for the big day

was well worth the hard work. Before becoming involved with this first fundraising event in Evesham, I was not aware how much St John Ambulance depends on donations and public support. I have been asked to help with fundraising in 2011 and, together with local volunteers, we are planning more events to raise money for specialist, much needed, equipment. Next year will be even bigger and better!

I loved working with the local team in the knowledge that raising the profile of St John Ambulance in Evesham and Worcestershire promotes first aid and will ultimately save lives.

Fran Webb



Gok visits St John Ambulance

St John Ambulance West Midlands opened its doors to Gok Wan in October, inviting him in to find out just what it takes to save a life and be part of the nation's leading first aid charity

Celebrity fashion stylist Gok visited Lionel Street to witness the life saving work done by St John Ambulance in the West Midlands and to launch a Vodafone volunteering scheme with the help of our very own Coventry volunteer, Dave Pinfield-Wells.

Dave, from Longford in Coventry, had taken part in last year's Vodafone's 'World of Difference' scheme, which gave 500 successful applicants across the UK the opportunity to become a two month intern with the charity of their choice. With a successful applicant from Coventry in the scheme's debut year, and a large volunteer base around the country, St John Ambulance was the phone company's first choice charity when looking for a launch point in the West Midlands.

Gok took part in CPR and AED demonstrations, talked fashion with Cadets and sampled fruit kebabs made by St John Ambulance Badgers. Commissioner Training Janet Catto introduced Gok to volunteers and staff as he signed books and t-shirts for fans and posed for pictures.

Janet said: 'We had fantastic success with our intern Dave Pinfield-Wells last year and he became heavily involved with all aspects of the organisation

– helping to set up a new first aid group in Redditch and take a range of photos for our website and internal publications, which helped showcase our life saving work.'

Dave worked with West Midlands recruitment and PR departments during February and March of this year, in producing publicity shots and helping to set up new first aid groups around the area.

Dave, who is a volunteer with the Three Spires Division in Parkside, Coventry, offered his skills as a freelance photographer to the charity and has since set up his own successful photography website.

Talking about the Vodafone scheme, Dave said: 'It is amazingly easy - if you're passionate about helping other people this is the best way to do it. I gained more experience, not only of St John Ambulance, but of other organisations and agencies, and gained new skills that will help me in my work and life in general'.

Janet Catto said: 'First aid has the power to change lives in communities across the West Midlands. We intend to bring this



experience to new and diverse communities, particularly among young people, and to do more of what we do best: teaching people first aid.'

Andrew Dunnett, Director of the Vodafone Foundation, said: 'The Vodafone Foundation was delighted to accept St John Ambulance's kind invitation to use their Birmingham HQ to help launch the 2010 Vodafone World of Difference UK programme. St John Ambulance is synonymous with helping others and making a difference to people's lives, but like many charities across the UK, St John Ambulance needs people from their local community to come forward and help make this difference.'



Gok with Dave Pinfield-Wells



County remembers those lost

Remembrance Sunday saw volunteers conducting themselves with the usual high standard of respect and dignity that has earned us a special place at parades and services around the county.

Young and old from sectors all around the county paid respect to the fallen in their own style. Like many, Solihull Transport attended a service the week before Remembrance Sunday and were able to display their own wreath on the cenotaph itself, whilst Wednesfield Badgers got creative under the tuition of Angela Hall and made a range of colourful posters in fantastic poppy designs.

The city of Coventry had an extra reason to mourn, with 2010 marking the 70th anniversary of the air raid that cost the lives of so many of its citizens, destroying the heart of the city as well as its Cathedral. A full day of remembrance was therefore held with St John Ambulance volunteers providing first aid cover for thousands of grieving visitors.

During the morning, a service and parade was held in the city's war memorial park. This was supported by about 30 members, both adult and youth, who marched from Spencer Road, led by Assistant Sector Operations Officer, Jennie Mason, as standard bearer. During the service, a wreath was laid on the war memorial by Sector Coordinator, George England, and a poppy cross was laid at the St John Ambulance memorial tree within the park. In addition to those parading, Coventry sector also provided first aid cover for the event with two crewed ambulances and a foot team.

The afternoon saw a service at the civilian memorial within the London Road Cemetery. This memorial marks the communal grave where many of the victims of the Coventry blitz and later air raids, including St John Ambulance members, are buried. First aid cover was again provided, and a wreath was laid by ex-member John Sergeant, escorted by Sector Support Officer Operations, John Downey. This wreath was laid on behalf of not only the St John Ambulance members killed during the air raids, but also members of the Red Cross and hospital staff who lost their lives.

During the evening, a civic service was held within the cathedral and its ruins, at which three members and two ex-members were invited by the



Solihull Transport Division's Merrill Scott and Graham Green attended the Remembrance Service in Knowle, Solihull. Their wreath was positioned on the cenotaph itself.

Lord Mayor to represent St John. The cathedral was full to overflowing, many people having to settle for remaining outside. Once the service was over, the congregation moved into the ruins, where a siren alert was sounded to begin the two minutes' silence. The silence was ended by the sounding of the 'all clear', followed by all of the city's church bells ringing for 15 minutes. This was timed to coincide exactly with the start of the raid 70 years ago. The sky was illuminated by searchlights and a spectacular arch of lights represented the cathedral roof destroyed in the raid.

Once again, in addition to our ceremonial role, St John Ambulance also provided medical cover with a crewed ambulance and three first aid teams. Afterwards, the Cathedral remained open and a number of reflections in the form of poetry, readings and singing were performed. Cover was continued throughout the evening until the cathedral closed.



Wednesfield Badgers put pen to paper in remembrance.

St John earns praise at Papal duty

The skill, effort and energy of our West Midlands volunteers was toasted in a letter sent from The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which thanked the entire St John Ambulance team for their involvement in the Papal visit to Britain this September

Thousands of Catholics from the UK and around the world descended on Cofton Park, South Birmingham, for a special mass to beatify Cardinal John Henry Newman on the last day of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Britain on 19 September.

Pope Benedict had already visited Glasgow and London; however his final day was more elaborate with a visit to three separate sites around Birmingham.

Around 1,000 coach-loads of the faithful converged at the park, in Rednal, for the two-hour ceremony which attracted around 45,000 people – the largest event in the West Midlands calendar in 2010. The West Midlands team had been the first aid cover for Pope John Paul II's visit to Coventry in 1982; however the scale of this open air mass meant a more complex duty than previously, with more than 250 volunteers and 15 vehicles involved across eight sites.

Such a large scale operation meant hours of dedication from volunteers and the management team, not only on the day but for months beforehand. The duty team worked alongside Birmingham Council and other emergency services to ensure that every detail and eventuality was covered.



WMAS Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer, Mark Gough, with members of the County Operations team

County Headquarters in Lionel Street was set up as a base for volunteers returning throughout the night from a duty that ran for 22 hours (from midnight Saturday until 10 pm Sunday) with showers, beds and refreshments available at the end of the long shift.

113 people were treated and only one casualty transported to hospital.

County Commander Keith Hunter visited all sites on the day and expressed his gratitude to all concerned: 'My sincere thanks to all of the Operations Team and everyone else that helped make our coverage of this historic event the success that it was. It was a major undertaking. The planning and execution worked exceptionally well, which is testament to all the hard work undertaken over the months leading up to the event itself. I know this could not have been achieved without many people giving up so much time and I would like to record my personal thanks and appreciation for all of the efforts made by so many people.'

Dedication and enthusiasm

The County Chaplain, the Reverend Mark Pryce, reflects on his first year in his post

I have enjoyed every minute of my first year as County Chaplain of West Midlands St John Ambulance. I am pleased and privileged to be involved with a distinguished organisation that is doing such excellent work across the West Midlands, sustaining health and well-being locally, nationally and internationally. The invitation to serve as your County Chaplain has come as a wonderful opportunity for me to be part of a dedicated team of people doing crucial work in practical ways to help others - a calling to share in your vocation of service which is summed up in the twin motto of St John: for the faith and in service of humanity.

My first public duty was to bless the new Control Centre at Summit Crescent. It struck me that the new Centre is very typical of the St John Ambulance approach: hidden away in a run-of-the-mill industrial estate is a state-of-the-art facility through which St John Ambulance delivers the very best quality ambulance service: quietly and efficiently, the job gets done, saving lives and serving communities!

I have been out and about meeting members from local units and sectors. A very special occasion was blessing the impressive new St John Ambulance Centre at Halesowen, and another was to share in the County Awards ceremony. At all these events, and when I meet St John Ambulance members staffing regular duties, I encounter dedication and enthusiasm from long-serving officers who have given years of voluntary service, and real commitment and energy from young people who are finding skills and self-confidence through their membership. These two characteristics of St John Ambulance – long-term commitment and vibrant work with and by young people - make a remarkable and very valuable community.

I keep the work of St John Ambulance regularly in my prayers – if you would like me to pray in particular for any aspect of the life of St John Ambulance, please be in touch!



Dudley volunteer recognised

Dudley borough's top volunteers were celebrating after being honoured at a special awards ceremony this October at Brierley Hill Civic Hall. Amongst them was our own Antony Glyptis. Senior officials who make up Dudley Community Partnership joined local volunteer involving groups to thank the people who make such a difference by giving their time.

Organised by Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), awards were presented in categories ranging from Community Hero and Sporting Champion, to the Safe and Sound Award for community safety.

Netherton resident Antony Glyptis was nominated in the 'Health and Wellbeing' category and scooped his Dudley Volunteer Award for the time that he dedicates to St John Ambulance. Antony runs the Halesowen and Netherton divisions and one of the people who nominated him said: 'The whole of the Netherton division is now ready for any emergency that may occur while we are on duty. This has all been made possible by Antony's constant hard work and support.'

A further nominator added, 'Antony really goes the extra mile in helping everyone he comes into contact with and this has led to myself and others becoming more confident first aiders. Antony is dedicated, supportive and helpful, and really deserves this award for all of his hard work with St John Ambulance.'

Antony replied: 'Hearing these comments puts a big smile on my face and I just want to thank the members and the other sector staff, youth and training for their support in helping me to run multiple units. A big thank you to everybody.'

Congratulations, Antony, on your award!



Youth Awards

Congratulations to:

Grand Prior Award

- **Jordan Cotton** Bushbury Quadrilateral
- **William Nicholson** Holy Trinity Cadets

Super Badger Award

- **Angel Carpenter** Wyeside Badgers
- **Oliver Clark** Rookery Badgers
- **Jordan Wynn** Merewald & Leofric Badgers
- **William Gabb** Old Oscott Badgers

Sedgley celebrate



A multi-cultural themed party was held to celebrate the achievements of Laura Rees, Sophie Rees, David Presland, Danielle Gibbons, Bethany Millward, Jenny Littler, Ben Turner and Samantha Lawrence, from Sedgley Quadrilateral, who all achieved their Grand Prior Award earlier this year.

Members of Sedgley Quadrilateral, Wolverhampton Sector and county staff enjoyed a themed disco and buffet, with belly dancing and Bodhran drums!

Cadets take a break



Holy Trinity and Kington Cadets took a welcome break to the sea this October, which involved crazy golf, steam engines and pirates. Great fun!

LINKS success

LINKS sector has had the most successful October on record this year, with massive recruitment figures, training undertaken, and interest in joining the wider organisation. More than 200 students signed-up to find out more about us, complete basic training and begin membership applications in the first four weeks alone.

Each LINKS unit offered members an Emergency life support (all ages) course to anyone interested in learning first aid over two weeks, with more than 70 attendees at multiple meetings. Over the duration of these courses, a grand total of 309 students were trained to be 'the difference' and save a life, which is a fantastic achievement.

For those interested in volunteering with us, we then provided two Induction weekend events at the University of Warwick and Birmingham CHQ. Here, students were able to complete the rest of their basic training to ensure that once their membership applications are confirmed, we have members ready to volunteer straight away. As a result of both the Emergency life support courses and the Induction weekends we have issued a staggering 775 certificates, covering courses from Moving and handling principles through to Family first aid and Infection control.

LINKS sector would like to send a massive thank-you to all the volunteer trainers, assessors and helpers who've worked incredibly hard to help us achieve these amazing results, and to the staff in Youth services, Training services and Membership services for their support behind the scenes. We really couldn't have done it without any of you and we truly appreciate your time and efforts. Thank-you!

Jack Lewis, Sector Co-ordinator, LINKS

Coventry Fellowship Award

The Coventry Telegraph's Silver Stars Award for Best Elderly In The Community Initiative was collected by our hard working Coventry Fellowship group this July. The group, who meet in the Cheylesmore centre each month, were chosen by a readers vote as a positive influence on their local community.

The group's oldest member, George Foster, aged 92, was on hand to collect the award from the Telegraph editor, Darren Parkin, along with Vera Graham, Margaret Horgan and Elizabeth Elgar.

Vera said: 'This is not something we are used to. Our work is always about giving and we are not used to receiving, so this is brilliant.'



Redditch school promotes first aid for pupils

The Redditch Standard has reported how pupils from years three and four of Beoley First School, Redditch, were one of the latest schools in the West Midlands to benefit from a first aid workshop delivered by St John Ambulance.

Schools Trainer, Michelle James, visited the school in October and covered a range of vital life saving skills, such as dealing with casualties who are unconscious, bleeding and choking. Beoley First School Deputy Head, Katie Sweeney, said: 'Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it and will receive a certificate to prove they have done a mini first aid course. It was particularly interesting as it's something practical that might come in useful in the future.'



The Schools Training Team

Established over five years ago, the Schools Training Team consists of Michelle James, Jo Huck, Chris Greenaway and Susan Tarp, who cover the St John Ambulance county of West Midlands. Their role is to teach and promote first aid within schools through workshops and certificated courses.

Educating our youngsters with the invaluable life skill of first aid is definitely the way forward, but we need your help to promote what we do. So, if you are a parent, Governor, member of a Parent Teacher Association or have any connection with education, please encourage your school to consider what St John Ambulance can offer their young people – there is only a nominal charge for what we do. For further information, contact the team at schools@wmids.sja.org.uk, or call 0121 237 3872.

Cadet of the Year

Wolverhampton's Jennifer Corbett becomes West Midlands Cadet of the Year 2011

The 2011 Cadet of the Year was announced this November at County Headquarters, with Wolverhampton Sector Cadet, Jennifer Corbett, taking the title after another year of hard work for St John Ambulance.

County Staff Officer Cadets, Steven Liggins said: 'Each County Cadet of the Year has a whole host of duties and responsibilities and I know Jennifer will take these seriously and is so deserving of this title. I know she will do a fantastic job and represent the West Midlands to the best of her abilities to make it a great 2011.'



Jennifer with County Support Officer Cadets Steven Liggins

Jennifer was joined by her Deputy Cadets of the Year Dan Knight (Solihull Sector), Dan Sheppard (Dudley Sector), Amy Smith (Herefordshire Sector) and Danielle Gibbons (Wolverhampton Sector).

Ladypool Badgers' first year

Ladypool Badgers have held their first celebration evening. The sett, based at Ladypool School in Sparkbrook, Birmingham, has been up and running since the beginning of the year.

Attended by SSO Badgers Betty Watts, Julia Bloxsome (Recruitment & Retention), Youth Development Officer Chris Scrivens, County Co-ordinator Alan Grigg, and Ladypool Head teacher Liz Manley, all Badgers received their Welcome Paws, alongside First Aid Badger and Creative Badger.

'The evening was supported tremendously by the families and friends of the Badgers,' said Chris, 'the leaders and Badgers are a real credit to St John Ambulance.'

The Badgers stood up and told why St John Ambulance was so important to them, with many thanking the organisation for giving them the opportunity to learn first aid with their friends.

'A great deal of thought had been put in by the leaders, both in the participation of every Badger, and also in finding a suitable dress for the leaders to wear,' explained Betty. 'There was great support from parents, grandparents and the school.'



New Badger group

Bertie Badger was on hand to help youth leaders Tracy Jones, Katie Corbett and Jess Jackson officially open Wulfrun Badgers this September. The group has gone from strength to strength since day one, when

six little stars, Lewis, Victoria, Benjamin, Hannah, Tyler and Amelie, stepped through the door. Badger leader Tracy Jones said: 'In the last few months the group has got better and better and the Badgers have loved every minute of it. We now have two brand new Badgers in the group and the team is doing fantastically.'



Sedgley hit the toon!

18 youth members and four staff spent the weekend of the 10-12 September sightseeing 'up North'.

The weekend included touring Newcastle, seeing the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, the BALTIC Art Centre, METRO Centre, and the Angel of the North. They also went to Edinburgh to see the castle, experience the one o'clock cannon fire, shop on the Royal Mile, take a tour bus around the outskirts of the city, and finally a boat on the Forth of Firth! What a weekend!



Is there life after Cadets?

We asked a few former youth members to find out what impact St John Ambulance has had on them

Claire Biggs

Teacher of 'Travel & Tourism' at Stourbridge College
Vice President of Halesowen Quadrilateral division



What was the best thing about being a Cadet?

Making friends outside of school across the county at various events as well as taking part in competitions – I still believe this was the best first aid training tool I ever undertook and built my confidence so much as a teenager.

Has Cadets had an impact on your life?

My inspirations within the organisation were the Cadet leaders in the division, as I knew I wanted stripes one day! We also had an excellent area staff while I was a Cadet, who organised loads of fantastic events. It gave me confidence to deal with many situations and has also helped me gain extra employability skills in terms of team leading, team work, first aid qualifications and working with young people.

Mike Wallbank

Civil litigation lawyer at a firm of solicitors in Newport, South Wales



Member of Pershore Division, shortly to receive his 17 Year Award

Fondest St John Ambulance memory?

There's been a few over the years. I remember one year Worcester City FC got to the second round of the FA Cup and the BBC broadcast the game live. I was in a briefing with other members before kick off when the BBC presenters walked past and stopped and I managed to get Mark Lawrenson's autograph!

What was the best thing about being a Cadet?

Looking back, the range of transferable skills which I gained from being a Cadet is quite substantial. It really isn't just about the first aid. I received training in people management, public speaking and how to plan and deliver a training course or session. And then I got to put these skills, amongst others, into practice. Whatever the National Curriculum may say, school just doesn't teach you how to do that kind of stuff!

Ellen Poniatowska

Currently in her third year at the University of Wolverhampton, studying to be a Midwife
Member of Old Oscott Quad, Former Deputy National Cadet of the Year



Fondest St John Ambulance memory?

I have so many wonderful memories through St John Ambulance it's hard to narrow it down to just one! I think my best times have been on Cadet Summer Camp which I've attended every year since 2002. When else would you ever find yourself whizzing downstream in a kayak or playing lazer quest in a forest with people you've just met but are already firm friends with!

Has first aid had an impact on your life?

The basic care skills I've learnt have definitely helped me improve my practice as a student healthcare professional.

Laura Hadley

Currently in her fourth year of Medicine at University of Birmingham
Member of Sedgley Quad



Was there a leader who was inspirational for you?

Margaret Coomby to me *is* St John Ambulance. She's always been really supportive and made it really easy for me to carry on being part of my division whilst going away to university.

Has first aid had an impact on your life?

I think it helped me get into university to start with, as not many people have a ten year St John Ambulance history by the age of 18! It also made my mind up that going into the medical profession was what I wanted to do, as St John Ambulance gives you experience of medical situations that you can't get anywhere else without being a Healthcare Professional. It's also helped me at university, as we have had to do both basic and advanced life support courses – I'm also almost the only person in my year group who knows how to tie a sling!

Open day success

Both Coventry and Worcestershire Sectors received glowing feedback following visits to their headquarters to see the fantastic work which is taking place amongst our volunteers.

Worcester City Division opened its doors to local MP Robin Walker. After meeting County Co-ordinator Martin Figgitt and volunteers, the team ran through a simulated accident while Cadet and Badger members demonstrated CPR and bandaging. Mr Walker was left enthusiastic enough to report his experience with the division to the regional press. He said: 'Before my visit I didn't realise that St John Ambulance did such excellent work with young people through the Cadet and Badger schemes. I am very impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm of St John Ambulance's younger members.'

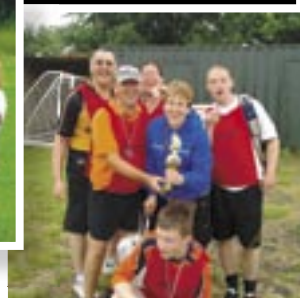
On the other side of the county, the Coventry Sector welcomed the Lord Mayor of Coventry, Brian Kelsey, and the Lady Mayoress to their HQ for their November open day. First aid and the long and proud history of St John Ambulance in Coventry were the focus of the day, with displays depicting divisions from the early part of the 20th century onwards. The Lord Mayor said: 'Meeting the dedicated team of local volunteers and watching their first aid in action really brings into focus that first aid saves lives, and I commend St John Ambulance for their work.'



MP Robin Walker talks to Cadets



The Lord and Lady Mayoress of Coventry –the Lady Mayoress is holding a photo of herself as a Cadet



Time for a rest? Not likely!

A hectic year in the life of Wolverhampton Youth

March - Badger residential – 25 Badgers went to the Peak District. Tried juggling, diablo, plate spinning, arts and crafts, games and facepainting.

May - Sports day, a great family day out with over 200 people. Sector football competition. Then classic sports day activities in the afternoon.

July - Cadet residential, a cracking time with team challenges, water fights, drama, arts and sports activities. Cadets competed to become the winning team, making hats, full body suits, save-the-egg challenge, as well as some role playing and social activities.

August - Adventure day, Go-Ape Cannock and Telford ice rink. Swinging, climbing and dangling from 50ft! Great day out!

October - Pool party - over 80 very wet but happy Badgers and Cadets!

Congratulations

As four Solihull/South Birmingham sector staff, Paul Hurley, 50, Roddy Keefe, 60, former Area Commissioner Alan Grigg, 70, and Betty Watts, 80, were celebrating their 'Big O' birthdays, it was decided to hold a celebration party for them.

Guests travelled from far and wide, especially the pilot group of Duke of Edinburgh Awardees – one being Alan.

The event was held at the Tally Ho Social Club with a buffet and disco. The most memorable part, however, was catching up with friends, some stretching back 60 years. A most enjoyable evening was had by all, with many suggesting that we repeat it in 2015.



THANKS

A big thank you to all our friends in the Fellowship who came into headquarters on Wednesday 15 December to help us with the mailing of this newsletter.

Another big thank you goes to all who have contributed photos and words to this and previous issues of 'News'. We had a great response with some fantastic articles and appreciate the time it takes to search out forgotten pictures. If you would like to contribute to future newsletters please contact County HQ on PR@wmids.sja.org.uk and mark the email 'News Magazine'.