

# STROKE GROUP NEWS

November 2016,

Issue 11

Welcome to the eleventh issue of **Stroke Group News**.

The dates of our stroke group meetings for your 2016 diaries can be found below. We will be at the David Rayner Centre every Thursday afternoon from 1 – 4pm except for those Thursdays when the DRC has already been pre-booked or when there is no Stroke Group due to the Christmas holidays (these dates are highlighted in red below).

## STROKE GROUP – MEETING DATES

Thursday 10 Nov. 2016	Talk by Jonathan Bayne on 'The Art of Beekeeping & Making Honey' (starts 2.15pm) at DRC
Thursday 17 Nov. 2016	Stroke Group meeting at DRC (from 1-4pm) – <i>Training session for Committee members</i>
Thursday 24 Nov. 2016	Talk by Mike Levy - 'Getting to know him, the life & music of Richard Rogers' (start 2.15pm)
Thursday 1 December 2016	DRC not available – no meeting
Thursday 8 Dec. 2016	Stroke Group meeting at DRC (from 1-4pm)
Thursday 15 Dec. 2016	Stroke Group meeting at DRC (from 1-4pm) – LAST MEETING OF 2016
Thursday 22 Dec. 2016	Closed for Christmas – no meeting
Thursday 29 Dec. 2016	Closed for Christmas – no meeting
Thursday 5 January 2017	Stroke Group meeting at DRC (from 1-4pm) – FIRST MEETING OF 2017
Thursday 12 January 2017	Stroke Group meeting at DRC (from 1-4pm)

## VISITORS TO THE CENTRE

We are grateful to all the guest speakers and visitors who have visited and shared their knowledge with us.

In the last month, this has included Graham Lewis talking on 'Partnership Boards & Voices4Choices' and our highly regarded speech therapist, Sue Pethers, who gave a fascinating insight into 'Communicating with people with aphasia'. Sue is a specialist Speech and Language Therapist for Stroke from the Community Neuro Rehabilitation Team at Brookfields Hospital.

In addition, we were joined by Jenny Fulton and Judy Saunders from Shelford Craft Group who brought in bird boxes (made by Ralph Fulton) for the group to paint which resulted in some lovely creations by our members. Jenny and Judy run a fortnightly craft group in Shelford called Wool 'N Tea as well as running a voluntary craft group at the DRC every Tuesday.

## FUTURE SPEAKERS

Thursday 10 Nov. 2016	Talk by Jonathan Bayne on 'The Art of Beekeeping & Making Honey' (starts 2.15pm) at DRC
Thursday 24 Nov. 2016	Talk by Mike Levy on 'Getting to know him, the life & music of Richard Rogers' (starts 2.15)



Members of the group enjoying painting wooden bird boxes last month



Members of the group listening to talks by Graham Lewis (top) and Sue Pethers (above)

## LIVING WITH APHASIA

Following Sue Pether's recent talk to the group, we have included below 'Top Ten Tips' (produced by the charity Connect) to help us all have a better conversation with someone with a communication disability.

It is also worth being aware that, as of 31 July 2016, anyone who has a communication disability is entitled to ask for extra time during a GP's appointment.

# Ten top tips for talking with people with aphasia



## AND FINALLY

### Mick Gruby

Following the extremely sad passing of the very popular group member Mick Gruby, who died in July 2016, we have included the wonderful tribute to Mick from the 2016 summer issue of the *Sawston Scene* village magazine (see end of newsletter).

We would like to thank the Gruby family for their very generous donation, of over £1,000, to the Cambridge Stroke Group following Mick's funeral. Irene came to the DRC to see us last month and to present the cheques to the Stroke Group. It was wonderful to see Irene (see below) and we are enormously grateful to her, the Gruby family and all of their friends.

A very big thank you from everyone at the Group.



## OVER TO YOU – GET INVOLVED

If you have any ideas to help support the Group, are inspired to organise an event and/or your friends and family would like to be involved as a volunteer, we would love to hear from you. It is a great way to make new friends and be part of a rewarding and fun group of people with a common aim.

Please pop in and speak to the team, we are always happy to see you. We can be found at The David Rayner Centre (Scotsdales Garden Centre, 120 Cambridge Road, Great Shelford, CB22 5JT) every Thursday afternoon from 1pm.

**We are actively looking for volunteers to support the group on a weekly basis. Please let us know if you know anyone who might be interested & available**

### STROKE GROUP CONTACT DETAILS

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# Mick Gruby

31st December 1938 to 5th July 2016

This celebration of Mick's life was delivered by Reverend Bruce Waldron at Mick's funeral on Friday 15th July.

One of the earliest pictures we have of Mick (originally Brian William Gruby) is when he was a boy attending a Boys' Brigade Camp. The next is when he was a soldier and there our story begins. Mick was one of the last recruits for National Service and he served for a bit over a year at Aden in the Yemen, while it was still a British Colony. He was there from 1959 to 1960 as part of the 14th platoon of D Company, 1st Northamptonshire Regiment, just before it was merged with the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment to become the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Anglian Regiment.

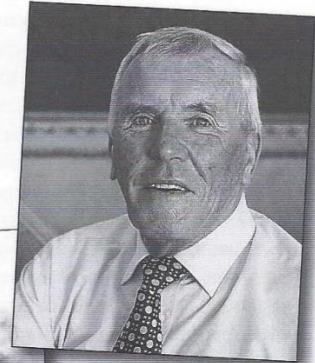
More than thirty years after his National Service, Mick was having his fireplace rebuilt. The tiler brought a bricky along who recognised Mick. It turned out to be Roy Ellis, known as Curley, who also served in 14th platoon in Aden, and happened to live in Hinxton.

There were four mates in 14th platoon. Mick was Shorty, Neville was Frank, George was Percy and there was John Layton too. They hadn't seen each other for more than fifty years when one day James got a phone call from Neville (Frank) trying to trace down Mick (Shorty), to tell him that they'd organised a reunion. Mick went with Irene, and after fifty years, he walked through the door and they spotted him and yelled his name. The strong bond of affection was still there and the reunions have happened every year since, the last time being the 1st June this year.

Irene met Mick when he'd just come back from Aden. She remembers the biggest beaming smile. They met at a pub in Chingford. There was entertainment and a group of them used to go and then afterwards to a coffee bar nearby where people like Tommy Steele used to play. The big beaming smile won her and she got the rest too. They were married in 1963 when she was twenty-one and Mick was twenty-four. Her dad had been taken ill the week before so they took half the wedding cake up to the hospital. It wasn't on the diet plan but everyone had a piece.

For the first eighteen months they lived in Chingford with Mick's parents and then in 1964 they moved to Sawston, and Sawston has been home for the last fifty-two years. When they moved in it was houses

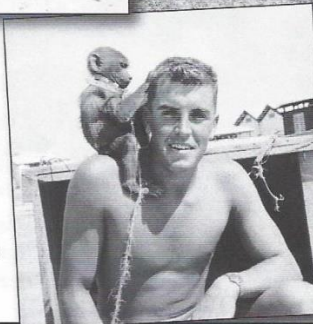
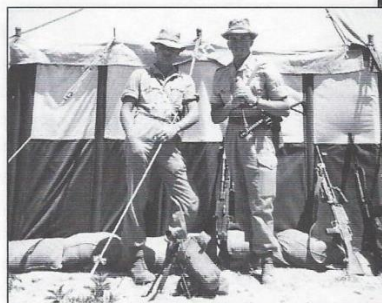
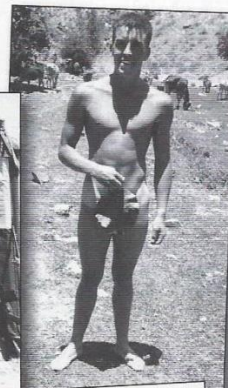
built on the site of Deal Farm and they had a quick course in pothole dodging. It must have seemed a bit foreign after Chingford which had gained its urban



status in 1894. For a long time they went home every weekend to Mum but then the family began with first Andrew, then James

*"Irene met Mick in a pub in Chingford. She remembers the biggest beaming smile."*

and then Matthew and so community life took off. Those were the days when Mr Challis would sit outside his shop and chat, and this church was the Congregational Church and the boys used to come along to Sunday



School and do their scripture exams with Mr Belbin, and Grace Reynolds would spoil them rotten with cakes.

Mick heard that the church was making a transport rota to help the frail to come to church so he joined in and was a part of that for many years, just knowing he could do some good. The young men of the church discovered the floor and the organ foundations were full of rot and Mick was a part of the team who ripped out the pews and the flooring and moved the organ from the sound shell to where it is today. Mrs Fuch, an

elderly neighbour and friend, was in the choir and Andrew also sang in it so they would go off together for choir practice.

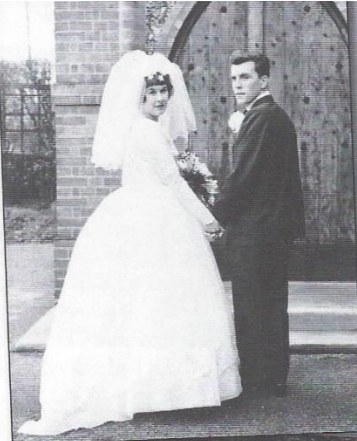
Mick was a civil servant in London and when he and Irene came to live in Sawston he was transferred to Bury and then to Cambridge on the National Assistance Board, what is now referred to as Works And Pension, and he served with them for over thirty years, first at Brooklands Avenue and then at Chesterton Road until he took early retirement at about 55 years old. Mick's job had been that when people needed help he would go out and meet them and assess the problem and then give whatever assistance was necessary. When they brought in computerisation he was deprived of that personal touch and he didn't like it; he wasn't happy in the job any more. Numbers were being reduced and early retirement was being offered, and Mick took it. That was back in the early 1990s.

Some years before, in 1988, at 49 years old, Mick had had a huge operation for the replacement of a faulty aortic valve. In those days it was open heart surgery and he had the scars to prove it. Mick didn't want Irene to come in to the hospital to visit; he didn't want her to see him in pain and vulnerable, but Andrew took her in anyway. They had their silver wedding anniversary while he was in hospital and Andrew provided a bottle of champers and some strawberries. It probably wasn't very approved of but Mick, being Mick, decided to share it with the other patients, a couple of chaps with heart-lung transplants. Andrew said to his Dad he wasn't too sure that this was allowed, and had he asked the medical staff. Mick said no, he hadn't, because they might say no.

Not long after Mick left the hospital, the doctors told him he could go back to work as long as he did part time for an extended period. Mick agreed, and went back to work part-time, for a whole week.

He was also a very keen squash player back in those days and he was busting to get back into the sport.

Most men after open heart surgery want to put themselves in cotton wool for a while. Mick didn't. He had no intention of staying in that invalid state.



It was about six years later that Mick finally decided he'd had enough of the Public Service. In the changed circumstances Irene offered to go full time and Mick said, right, I'll do the job at home, and he took on the housekeeping. It didn't last.

James introduced Mick to a local building contractor who was working for Marshalls, managing a gang of maintenance people and he was short staffed so Mick thought he'd go up there as a temporary. He stayed there as a temporary for eight years.

It wasn't always easy because Mick was raring to go and get on with the jobs and that was a bit of a challenge to the work ethic in the maintenance team. When break was up, Mick was raring to get out and at it but the ethos was "Well, let's stretch it out a bit longer." It wasn't always that the jobs were nice either; sewerage drains blocked and mess had to be cleaned up but he revelled in it, so totally different to his civil service career, but he'd always been immensely practical.

He wasn't really a great one for health and safety. One day he was pouring hot water on tar to soften it, and he was wearing shorts. It took quite a while for the tar to come off the skin as the skin began to heal and the scar tissue flaked off. And there is a memory of Mick doing a job at home on the TV antenna, high up on the chimney. Mick had strung a rope over the roof, through the window on the other side of the house and round the leg of the bunk bed; the other end was hooked through his belt loop. A safety rope!

Another day, he was doing a similar thing and had tied the far end of the rope around the tow-bar of the little trailer. And there

was the time when Andrew gashed his leg on the prop that the trailer sits on when it's off the car. It probably needed stitches but Mick fixed it; he pulled the parted



flesh together and secured it with Sellotape.

Mick's sons are a lot like their Dad in so many ways. Alan is going to tell a story about James in a bit, that illustrates just how like Mick his boys are.

Somewhere around his mid-sixties, things changed for Mick and he accepted that he just couldn't keep up with the young chaps any longer, so he decided to retire. When James bought a house nearby that needed a lot of fixing up, and then realised that this task was a bit incompatible with his work in London and the season ticket for Spurs he'd also purchased, Mick was free to go to work on the house. And when Andrew bought in Bury Road it was the same story. Right up until last year, this was Mick's way and when the cottage was bought up in the Peak District,



Martin Harris and Mick work on the floor of the Free Church

*“When Sawston Scene started up in 1970, Mick was the first to volunteer as a deliverer.”*

Mick was up in the scaffolding right up until the beginning of last year. If you needed a drill, no point in buying one. Mick would be around with his. There wasn't a tool he didn't have, not a job he couldn't tackle and solve.

When the boys were smaller, Mick got involved in the community. Back in the days before the lottery Mick was the football pools man for Pampisford and that end of Sawston, and he was involved in the Scouts; both he and Irene were on the Scouts committee, and on Sundays he'd come out and help on James' paper round, and sometimes when James was not well or away he'd do it for him. He did canoeing courses with the Scouts so he could take the boys out and go on father and son camping trips. From this influence Andrew later on became a Scout Leader.

When Andrew was a little boy Mick used to make up Airfix planes and then he'd take Andrew up the park to see if he could fly them.

The Lake District was one of their favourite parts of the country and they went there so often that he and Irene sometimes had discussions as to whether they had deprived the children of the seaside.

There were some characteristic signatures: the bit of rope they always carried for rock climbing, the primus stove Mick always had; he'd never buy a cup of tea when he could make one, and it was real tea, not teabags; it was disaster the time when they realised they'd left the

teapot behind. They actually had to buy a cup of tea.

Mick relented on this recently – he was persuaded by the cakes in Costas, and came to terms with the benefits of going out, but in those bygone days pennies had to stretch, and that suited Mick's preferences anyway. There was the time recently at the Peak District cottage when James bought some beautiful teak chairs for outside. Mick put them away and brought out his own two worn and wonderful old deck

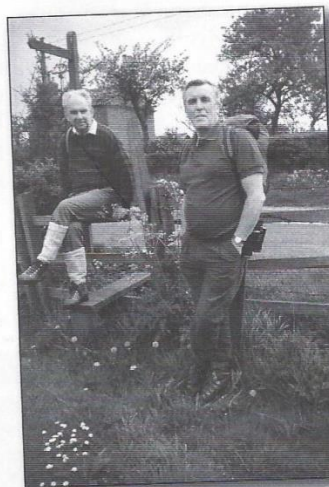
chairs that went everywhere with them.

In those early days Mick used to go everywhere on a clapped-out old motorbike. He and Irene have always been more than just husband and wife; they've always been best friends. One day Mick decided to buy, for his best friend, a beautiful, delicate, vintage car pottery ornament, and brought it home in the saddlebag. Irene was over the moon with her present. What she didn't know at the time, and never would have known if he hadn't told her, was that it arrived home in the saddlebag in three separate pieces. Mick painstakingly, very carefully and seamlessly, welded the pieces together so she could not even see the joints.

Mick was devoted to his family. WH Smith launched a new type of computer for their Christmas Sale one year and Mick queued up to get one for his boys. At the end of the day, just before Mick was at the head of the queue, they sold out. The next morning, Mick was back there at the head of the queue.

Irene's mum came for Christmas one year and before they left Walthamstow, Mick asked her to double check she had everything. She did, at least until they arrived in Sawston. She'd left her slippers behind and they were good slippers so she didn't want to go out and buy

a new pair. The next thing, Mick was gone. A couple of hours later he returned, with the slippers.



Like Irene and Mick, Jean and I moved up from London to Sawston in the mid sixties, remembers ALAN OSBORNE. They lived just across the road from us on the development in Woodland Road and

when our children arrived we all joined the same baby sitting group. We immediately became friends and started going out together with our families.

We often got together with other couples including Kathy and Graham, Valerie and Dennis, Ellen and Stuart, Eileen and Bruce for walking weekends and the occasional camping holiday. I remember family trips to Kent, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Norfolk and Lincoln. Mick loved walking.

When Jean and a few others in the village started up *Sawston Scene* magazine in 1970 Mick was the first to volunteer as a deliverer.

As our two families grew we ventured further afield together including several trips abroad. I have lost count of the numerous trips to London we made together – getting very wet at the Queen's Jubilee in 2012, and singing in the park along with Cliff Richard and Tom Jones.

Mick particularly enjoyed military music, maybe memories of his days in the army. We often went to band concerts and military parades together and the four of us enjoyed beating the Retreat on Horseguards parade in London in June this year. Like me Mick enjoyed eating eels and we often visited Manzies pie and mash shops in London.

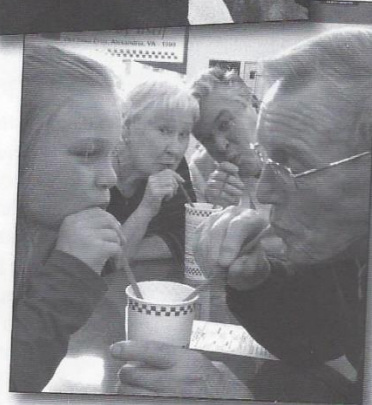
We always shared important birthdays and anniversaries together and we have photographs to prove it, particularly of Mick's birthday which was New Year's Eve. There is a great photograph of Mick sharing a joke with our son at our golden wedding last year.

Our last photograph of Mick was taken in Sawston Hall at the St Mary's Church Fete in June and he looked well and was enjoying the company of his beloved granddaughters Ella and Tilly.

Mick enjoyed life and was very easy going and laid back although always forcibly independent and wanted to do everything for himself to the very end. Jean and I have so many good memories;

He was always great company, he lived life to the full. We had two trips out together the week he died and he paid his respects at the war memorial on the morning of the 1st July for those who gave their lives on the Somme. He was a lovely man, a gentleman and a gentle man who will be greatly missed.

Donations in memory of Mick may be made payable to 'The Stroke Association' and sent care of Peasgood & Skeates, 45 Moorfield Road, Duxford, Cambridge, CB22 4PP



Our friendship probably started with fund-raising activities for Sawston Scout Group, says DENNIS BEAUMONT. Frank Carter and Reg Cullum had persuaded a group of parents to set up a committee, which developed into a group of friends.

During this phase Mick and I were persuaded that it would be a good idea to devote a weekend to build three canoes for Andrew, James and my son Ian. At that time Cambridge Canoe Club had a hire service for the moulds and sold the necessary fibreglass and resin. My garage was selected to house the production line. For weeks afterwards the remnants of fibreglass remained in the atmosphere causing irritation and to this day there are still lumps of the resin compound stuck to the garage floor. It was a long weekend but successful although I doubt the designs would conform to modern

Health and Safety standards!

Graduating from weekend breaks our first trip abroad together was to Spain. A good holiday but mainly remembered for a couple of pantomime incidents involving the hire car. The first involved minor damage to a wing mirror, easily corrected if we had superglue. In those days in rural Spain no one spoke English and being British we had no Spanish. There were no DIY shops or departmental stores, just the equivalent of a British village store which might or might not stock superglue. After prolonged charade type play acting we had to

*"He was a gentleman and a gentle man who will be greatly missed."*

admit defeat – but then right by the door we spotted the display of superglue and every one dissolved into laughter. The second involved a missing hub cap which Mick insisted on telling every one "was gorn". No one seemed to understand!

I have always associated Mick with Winnie the Pooh's friend Tigger: you will remember that Tigger was very energetic and his favourite occupation was bouncing. That analogy mustn't be taken too far though as Tigger's friends were frequently irritated by this display of energy – Mick had the energy but never aggravated anyone. Always on the lookout for something to do or someone to help, he directed his energy into the useful or creative. A good friend and a lovely man. He will be sorely missed. ⑤