Kenneth’s Climb

BY KENNETH LONGSTAFF

I have a Facebook page for wheelchair users. I wrote a blog about how I used to be a fell (hill) walker but since I had been seriously ill I could only look at them.

One of my carers’ husbands saw the blog. He’s in a running group. He contacted me and asked if I would like to go back up. I said it wouldn’t be possible but he thought that if we could build the right chair his running group could carry me up. I said I thought that we could modify my manual wheelchair instead, which we did.

After some practice runs on the street we decided to go up Latrigg, a fell near Keswick in the Lake District. The fell is one of the only ones owned by a private land owner. He gave us permission but wouldn’t let us fly a drone for aerial photos.

We had decided to go on the 8th June. In the morning the weather wasn’t perfect but we knew it would be hard to get everyone together again. It took two hours to get up and two hours to get down, with some time at the top.

We thought we might as well make it a fundraiser. I set up a fundraising page online and we raised £1,500, smashing our £1,000 target which we split between KeyRing and St Theresa’s Hospice. We had a team from the BBC follow us on the day. The director has the same illness as me and we’d met up to talk about it. He said he wanted to come.
My trip to Malta

BY RICHARD FARMER

I wanted to fly in a plane and go abroad. I had got into a bit of a rut and I talked to my support about it. I’d seen beautiful places on TV and we decided it was time I had some adventures.

My support helped me book a holiday and my appointee sorted out my money. We decided to go to Malta because it is very historical.

I felt a bit nervous flying for the first time, but it was amazing seeing everything from afar. We left a rainy Sheffield and arrived to a heatwave of over 90 degrees... what a difference a three hour flight makes.

It was glorious. I used my euros for the first time and bought a meal and a glass of wine. We did lots of things, visited the Elvis bar, the museum and the aquarium. We walked by the beach and we enjoyed the lively evening atmosphere. I am looking forward to lots of new adventures now I am more confident.

Our French Adventure

BY RICHARD FARMER

Robert and Richard are both interested in history so earlier in the year we began to plan a holiday to the Normandy Beaches where we could learn more about the 1944 Normandy Landings.

It was Richard’s very first trip abroad and Robert hadn’t been since he was a child, so it was very exciting. We went by ferry and arrived in the hot French sun. The weather all week was great.

We visited Sword Beach where English troops landed and imagined what it must have been like for the young men involved. We were able to walk along the canal to Pegasus Bridge where we had tea in the café which was the first domestic building to be liberated by the allies. We saw museums and monuments and found a visit to the war graves very emotional.

We enjoyed ice cream on the beach and lovely French cafes – it was a very thought provoking but also enjoyable trip, we learnt a lot, and had a great time, we even spoke a little bit of French, and spent our euros.
Hiking at Fox House

Michael Hopkins is a Member in Yorkshire. It has been a long term goal of his to go hiking where he used to go with friends when he was young, and after a lot of attempts, planning and missed opportunities he got there with his support worker Shaun. Here are some of his photos…

“You thought it was just about getting out a blasted mop & bucket. We look like we are on the lam (This phrase refers to fugitives, or maybe we just look like reprobates).”

“Down by Fox House one thing you can say for sure it’s not bloody boring, I mean look at the view.”

“Yes indeed Fox house in October, Froggatt/White edge, you can see lots of feathered creatures flying. Including kestrels. The weather this time of year has its own sense of fun, quite bracing.”

“More of the Fox House experience, what kind of daft apeth (fool) wouldn’t appreciate this?”

“You thought it was just about getting out a blasted mop & bucket. We look like we are on the lam (This phrase refers to fugitives, or maybe we just look like reprobates).”
Tyneside Active Members Organisation (TAMO) is made up of KeyRing Members. All KeyRing Members in Newcastle and Gateshead are welcome to be a member of TAMO.

We now have a bank account and may be eligible for some charitable funding. We have regular meetings to plan events. Some generous members who are able have contributed money which means we are able to subsidise the cost of trips for people who wouldn’t be able to afford to go.

After our last trip there was some money left in the pot and members agreed to leave it there to fund the next activities.

**Barbeque on the beach**

One of our Summer activities is a barbeque on the beach. The best one for everyone is Cullercoats.

This year the forecast was quite good but we got off the bus and it immediately started raining heavily. We hung out in a cafe for a couple of hours and had lunch there. Eventually the sun came out and it was warm and sunny for the rest of the afternoon and we larked about on Cullercoats beach.

Our burgers and sausages were eaten for everyone’s tea instead!

**On the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway**

This is a 15 inch gauge railway line with small steam trains that take people through beautiful countryside in the Lake District.

We went to Keswick and on a rainy day we went to the Keswick Pencil Museum. We did a quiz while we were there and did some drawing with the pencils there. Afterwards we had a walk and a picnic in the woods.

“*It was funny the way it wound round the track. I talked to the engine driver about it while I was taking my photos. He was very enthusiastic and told me about when they built the trains.*” - Victoria.

We also went to the water mill. We had a tour and got to feel the flour. There’s a lovely stone circle.

**The Chain Reaction Friendship Group**

The Chain Reaction project supports older people in Newcastle.

We run our Friendship Group every other Wednesday. One of our trips was the Land Train outing to Tynemouth on July 10th. Before that we went to the Dippy the Dinosaur exhibition at the Hancock Museum, seeing the display on its tour of the UK.
**News from Grimsby and Sheffield**

---

**Ricky and Sally’s Wedding**

**BY ANNE PALMER**

In 2011 they moved in together and in 2014 they purchased their own home in Grimsby through a part-rent part-buy scheme.

Ricky and Sally are valued Members of the Grimsby network and are always there to lend a helping hand. Ten years since they met they finally decided to get married – I’m sure you’ll agree they both looked amazing.

Everyone in Grimsby wishes them all the happiness in the world, they truly deserve it.

---

**Goodbye George**

**BY SUE SPOONER**

Sadly our friend George has died. He was a larger than life and colourful character, he was great fun to be with. We loved listening to his stories and songs.

He loved to dress up and had hats, wigs and costumes a-plenty, he particularly liked being a policeman, but also a judge, Elvis and cowboy. He was Elvis’s biggest fan and liked to sing his songs for us.

We will miss meeting up with him at the pub for a ‘Carling darling!’ a chat and a snack. We will miss his music, his friendship, his presence and his smile, he was unique.

---

**Kath’s Horse Riding Adventure…**

One of our Members Kath has a bucket list of things she’d like to do (again). Kath used to enjoy horse riding when she was a young girl and asked her support worker if she would support her to ride again – here’s a picture of Kath back in the saddle.

---

Richard, Robert and Steven (above) wanted to remember George. They organised a sponsored walk raising £100 for Diabetes UK.

George Wild Sept 1949 – Sept 2018, KeyRing Member, Lowedges
The North Yorkshire Self-Advocacy group is happy to announce that we have got the contract for another 3 years, so we can continue to run the project. Now we’re looking at how we can use technology to reach more people so that more people can use the service.

Our North Yorkshire self-advocacy forum was held in Northallerton in April which was led by Sam and Mark who are the co-chairs of this forum. There were over 40 self-advocates from across North Yorkshire.

We had a big picture of an umbrella for people to write down how it feels when you are not feeling safe. We wrote on blue stickers to put this above the umbrella so they looked like rain.

Then people wrote down how they felt when they are safe on orange stickers to show sunshine.

Christopher’s Award!

Christopher Porter is a member of our Craven self-advocacy group. He is co-chair of the Craven and Harrogate learning disability Local Area Group based in Skipton and the North Yorkshire Learning Disability Partnership Board representative for work on the NHS Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) programme. He also works with other groups including Oxfam in Skipton, South Craven Community Library, Fallfest and Exclusively Inclusive.

In recognition of this work he was recently awarded the Craven Citizen of the Year award. He was shortlisted for volunteer of the year and was disappointed when he didn’t get this award. The Citizen of the Year Award is presented to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to Craven during the past year. The winner of the Citizen of the Year is usually selected from the winner of all the other categories by the judges.

Christopher said “I can’t tell you how shocked I was when my name was called out. I am so proud of myself for getting Citizen of the Year. I love being part of my community and giving something back. It’s not always easy for me because I have a disability but I do my best. I encourage everyone to have a go at doing their best to make their community a better place to live.” Congratulations Christopher!

You can find the self-advocacy group online:
Facebook: www.bit.ly/2KcwlAV
Or search for ‘North Yorkshire Self Advocacy’
Twitter: @KRSelfAdvocacy

This forum was all about keeping safe. We talked about hate crime and mate crime, keeping safe on the internet and keeping safe when you are travelling.
Upcycling in Sheffield

Sheffield Members are starting an enterprise, upcycling and selling environmentally friendly goods to encourage people to use less plastic.

We want it to be a co-operative because it gives us more of a voice in the business. We went to Leeds to do some training and we are going to work with Business Sheffield who will help us set up.

We are going to link up with like-minded people. We have started to make beeswax wraps to use instead of clingfilm and upcycled material and slate into new products.

Richard and Steven hope to be set up properly by September.

Kenneth’s Painting

Kenneth doesn’t only go up mountains!

Since I joined KeyRing in September I wanted to get back into painting which I hadn’t done since I was 16.

My wife got me some paints for Christmas. At the KeyRing group there is a resident artist and it’s a nice atmosphere. I did my first finger painting there. I wasn’t happy with the amount of detail so I started taping the brushes to my finger. I’ve got reasonably good at it now. I use acrylic paint. It’s easy to fix if you make a mistake.

Kim says “They’re so good people thought they were photographs!”

I’ve got an exhibition next month in Darlington market. I’d like to sell them but it’s hard to part with them. I’d like to do a calendar for Christmas.

Richard’s Cushions

Richard from the Low Edges network has been working with staff to make ‘happy’ cushions.

He sometimes gets sad so to help him think of good memories we made cushions in colours which help him remember things that he’s done.

Richard designed the pictures and Pauline embroidered them for him. It brings a splash of joy to his flat.
Our trip to Scarborough

BY GARY SUTHERLAND

On the 10th July the Darlington network went on a coach trip to Scarborough. When we got there we went for fish and chips and then to the amusement arcades.

After dinner we walked along the seafront, went to ten pin bowling, then walked back and had an ice cream.

Then we went to the Pleasure Beach. I went on the Cyclone Twister. It goes round forwards and backwards and then it went right up in the air. The guy I went up with lost his cap!

Mary’s Birthday Trip

BY MARY DODSWORTH

On my birthday I went on the train with Kim (every time we get a train it’s delayed) to Doncaster to go to Yorkshire Wildlife Park to see the animals.

My favourite was the polar bear. We also saw tigers, lions and giraffes, black rhinos, zebras, meerkats. We even heard the lions roar.

Goodbye Doncaster

BY DAWN HAGUE

It was with a very sad heart that we had to say goodbye to the Doncaster network. We celebrated the 16 years we had been in Doncaster with a party and saying our goodbyes.

I got to meet some incredible people and the Members will always hold a special place in my heart. I know that the Members will move on to do great stuff.
Louise Hindmarch goes to the Darlington Hub where she does painting. Below Louise is holding one of her recent pieces of work.

MICHAEL lives in Sheffield. "I like walking and I’m an urban rambler, and I’m a creative person. I read a lot and I’ve just started writing. I’d like to write about what it’s like to have autism and I’d like to write a novel".

REBECCA has joined Slimming World. “They’re very helpful. They give you free books to follow and they are bringing out an easy read version which will help me to follow it”.

JAMES is from the Newcastle network. "I’ve lived in Newcastle for about 7 years. I like cycling and walking. I’m currently looking for a job”.

VICTORIA is from the Gateshead network. "I’ve got a boyfriend called Jason. We are looking forward to the new football season even though we support different teams!"

MARY lives in Northallerton. "I love animals. I used to be called Pauline but I wanted to change my name to Mary Annie".

KEN has lived in Darlington all his life. "I had a fit and healthy lifestyle but in 2012 I got a life changing illness. I lost the ability to breathe, was paralysed and lost my eyesight. I spent a year on life support and 2.5 years in rehab. It was a long time but I didn’t give up. I had to learn to speak again and swallow. I still get lots of physio but I’ve got lots of things back.” Read more about Ken on the front page.

Mary says:
“I enjoy being able to come to the hub and do my paintings. I have done 10 and I am proud of them all.”
At the Sheffield Hub

BY MEMBERS OF THE SHEFFIELD HUB

Lubna and all Members had a discussion, after having speakers coming from different organisations to deliver workshops and taking part in activities.

Members felt their skills needed to be recognised. We came up with the idea of a scrapbook to let the other Members in KeyRing know what Sheffield Members are doing at the Hub, not drinking tea and having biscuits. Sheffield Members wanted to be recognised in the KeyRing newsletter more often.
Ask Listen Do at the House of Lords

BY CHARLIE BALL

At first I felt a bit nervous about going to the House of Lords as I had to dress posh and I’m not used to going to those sort of events. I wanted to look nice for the day so I made sure I made an effort.

I travelled with my fiancé David Gill who is also a KeyRing Member and works for NHS England as a Learning Disability and Autism Adviser. He is more used to going to these events through his job and has had a key role in producing the Ask Listen Do work.

When I met up with Frank Steeples from KeyRing and Annie and Vicky from Speakup I felt even more comfortable.

When I got inside the House of Lords I felt excited and enjoyed having the experience of afternoon tea there. It was a lovely room that overlooked the Thames and the afternoon tea was amazing.

I was proud when David did his speech about getting organisations to say what they are going to do next and Frank did a lovely speech about the work KeyRing has done in Barnsley testing the Ask Listen Do documents and how this is going to be part of KeyRing’s complaints procedure going forward.

Ask Listen Do is about making it easier for people with a learning disability, autism or both to give feedback, raise a concern or complain about their care, education or support. There have been booklets and forms produced by people with lived experience for people with learning disabilities and autism. These will be rolled out in KeyRing nationally and become part of the complaints procedure.

I was part of the Ask Listen Do focus groups when creating the autism booklets and forms. This has helped me gain knowledge and confidence on how to complain when a service isn’t right. This led to me complaining to my dentist when I had a poor appointment. I felt because I followed the Ask Listen Do resources that my complaint and views were listened to.
News from Barnsley and Rotherham

BY STEVE PRITCHARD

A Sad Goodbye to Barnsley Networks

Earlier this year we received the news that Barnsley Council needed to save some money and that our KeyRing contract along with 3 other services would be merged into a low level mental health contract.

Determined to fight for Members in Barnsley KeyRing formed a partnership with the mental health charity MIND and we put together a joint bid to run the new service. Unfortunately we were pipped at the post by another charity organisation called Humankind.

The KeyRing network in Honeywell was the first network to be set up in the North and involved KeyRing founder Carl Poll travelling up to Barnsley to speak to the council. David Brown was one of the first Members to join the new Yorkshire network and I’m happy to say he and his wife Angela are still supported by KeyRing to this day.

It was a very tough and emotional time and there were lots of tears explaining to Members that the networks would end on the 30th of June. Along with some amazing Members we also lost a valued member of staff Sharon Swales.

Sharon developed the hub in Honeywell into a joint project with older people living on the estate. It was really well attended every week and you could get a cracking lunch with a pudding for £2. Members developed friendships and social activities outside the hub too.
James and Elizabeth

I would like to send hearty KeyRing congratulations and best wishes to James and Elizabeth Wyatt on moving into their new home.

James joined KeyRing in 2009 and met Elizabeth a couple of years later through his work at Speak Up. They moved in to James’ flat together in 2017 and married a year later. They dreamed of moving into a house with a garden and a few months ago their dream became a reality.

They both continue their work at Speak Up and are also Members of the Rotherham Autism Group. Elizabeth is a big fan of ice hockey and has made friends with a few of the players during her regular visits to Sheffield Ice.

They are also big live music fans and are regular faces in a lot of local live music venues. James sometimes does a bit of DJing and recently had a spot at the famous Sheffield Tramways Festival which is a series of music events over a full weekend in and around Sheffield. It’s been a pleasure to be a part of their journey.

Picnic in the Park

The picnic is now in its 6th year and takes place under the bandstand in Clifton Park, Rotherham. Apart from one year we have been really lucky with the weather and always had a lovely sunny day.

Members bring their own food and usually the staff provide cakes and buns. On a couple of occasions Barnsley Members have joined us and it’s always been a fun day. We have also had social workers and the Supporting People team join us in the past.

This year’s picnic was also a consultation on what Members wanted from the Rotherham Hub. New Thurcroft Member Ben Swift attended and enjoyed the lively debate while also making a few new friends.
News from the Trustees

The Trustees’ meeting was on the hottest day of the year in London: 25th July 2019!

Safeguarding

The meeting looked at our annual report on safeguarding. We report on the number of safeguarding alerts and the types of safeguarding issues that Members have as well as our learning and improvements made.

Complaints and Compliments

The Trustees also looked at the annual report on complaints and compliments. There were fewer complaints recorded than last year. This may be because we have worked with Members to understand better what a complaint is and what outcome they want from making a complaint. The Trustees were pleased to see so many compliments for staff and volunteers.

Member Satisfaction Survey

We are now doing the Satisfaction Survey by region at the same time as the Quality Review. It is really important for Members to do the survey as it is your chance to say what you do and don’t like! We use your information to plan improvements for every network and service.

Community Organisers Training

We are about to launch the Community Organising training for Members. We will be looking for Members to be involved as co-trainers. Look out for workshops near you later in the year.

Our New Policy

KeyRing has a new policy about Co-Production. This will replace the Member Involvement policy, since it is about how we work with Members.

The policy says what KeyRing wants to do. It explains how Members can get involved and what staff and volunteers will do.

There is an easy read version of the policy. If you would like to see it you can ask your support worker for a copy.
Top tips for using KeyRing’s telephone support service (SMaRT)

Phone: 0333 0000 0321   Text: 07506 628 693

1. Save the numbers in your phone.
2. Make a practice call if you are unsure (your support worker can help with this).
3. If something happens during the day try calling your support worker or volunteer first.
4. If you miss your welfare/medication call please call SMaRT back to let them know you are ok and have taken your medication.
5. Think about whether you need to speak to someone right now, or if it can wait until your support worker is available.
6. When you call SMaRT speak as clearly as you can.
7. If you do not like using the phone think about what you want to say before you call. You could write it down first.
8. You can also text SMaRT instead of phoning.
9. Remember that SMaRT are not local. They can’t come out to visit you.

In the daytime I can call: Write the daytime number in the box
The next edition and get in touch...

The next edition will be from the Midlands and South West. If you can’t come to the meeting you can still tell us your stories. You can send them to Sarah at the national office, pass them to your volunteer or worker, or ask someone who is coming to the meeting to bring them along.

That’s all for this time! If you have anything you would like to see in the paper or on our social media pages please send it to: Sarah Hatch at sarah.hatch@keyring.org.

For an audio version of the paper phone 020 3119 0960.

**NOTICES**

**WELL DONE ALASTAIR**

During volunteer week Darlington hub awarded Alastair, one of their Members, a certificate for being great at mutual support. He has helped Members with shopping, when they have not been able to do it themselves and he does anything he can to help others.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY REBECCA!**

Rebecca, who helped edit this edition of the newspaper, has just had her 31st birthday.

**ROtherham Hub**

Every Friday the Rotherham Hub has a joint lunch with Speak Up at GALAT Centre where Speak Up is based.

**Homes Not Institutions**

Jimmy Smith is a Member in Gateshead. Last month he went to Newcastle to take part in a protest about the treatment of people with learning disabilities in institutions. Photo: Thanks to Media Savvy CIC