

Spelthorne

Committee

Access

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1992 – 2023



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Man Born With Missing Limbs After Chernobyl

<https://metro.co.uk/2022/11/22/man-born-with-half-a-body-after-chernobyl-works-out-and-walks-his-dog-17805101/>

Tim Mason, 25, was born, without legs and one arm, in Moscow, Russia, after his mum was exposed to high amounts of radiation during the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, .

He was put in an orphanage and adopted aged three by American Virginia Mason. They warned Virginia, now aged 80, that Tim would not have a good quality of life, but she knew he would be fine when he looked over and made 'fish faces'.

She took him over to Hartford in Connecticut, raising him on her own when her partner died four years after the adoption. Tim was given prosthetics and a walker to help him move around but he eventually decided to go without. 'I really didn't like them – they weren't me – I wanted to be myself without them,' he said.

He learnt to speak English and 'skyrocketed' in school where he was always 'really active on the playground'. Tim only started feeling the social impacts of his disabilities when he became a teenager. He said: 'Growing up was like a rollercoaster. I would get asked: "Who would even date you?"' But Tim managed to get through those difficult years and now lives a happy life.

He said: 'There is a lot of doubt in what I can do – it can be discouraging. 'But I am here and making it through. I have seen so many positive comments and it means the world to me. I am frequently asked how I go to the bathroom which I find hilarious. 'I really strive to prove people wrong, so a lot of my hobbies have come from that.

Tim is able to live fully independently and loves to walk his dog, cook, dance and work out on his treadmill - despite having no legs. 'People thought I wouldn't be able to take care of a dog, but he is my best friend – I love to walk my dog. I fully take care of him and take him on three walks a day. The only thing I need help with is driving him to the vet.

'People think that disabled people cannot exercise, but we can all do it – exercise is for anyone. 'I love exercise and it keeps me healthy both physically and mentally. I wake up every day and fight on. My independence is the thing I'm most grateful for.'

Tim, who works as a student success team member at the Napa Valley Wine Academy, says the only thing he still struggles with is dating. 'Dating is hard in this generation, people see disabilities on your online profiles and base you off that. They don't see the powerful person I see.'



Racing Driver Who Lost Both Legs Epic Challenge

<https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/celebs-tv/surrey-racing-driver-who-lost-27751497>

Billy Monger is best known as a talented racing driver but shortly before his 18th birthday, he was involved in a crash during a race that led to both his legs being amputated. Billy, now 24, was forced to learn to walk again using prosthetic limbs and has even returned to the race track in a modified car.

Billy and Bonny competed against McFly drummer Harry Judd and his mum Emma, Good Morning Britain weatherman Alex Beresford and his dad Noel and All Saints singer Mel Blatt and her mum Helene on the backpacking challenge. But the pair's parents didn't think they would be able to last 30 days travelling together without their phones.

"I think we've proved them wrong," said Billy "I hope they'll be pleasantly surprised by what we were able to do." But Billy was shocked to find how difficult it could be to travel and work in different countries due to the lack of infrastructure for disabled people. On their first day in Morocco, the brother-sister team took on work at a tannery but Billy was unable to do the same work as Bonny.

Bonny was tasked with dyeing animal skins and was forced to climb into huge wooden tubs filled with pigeon droppings and ammonia. Billy was unable to carry out the work and was given a different role. "I ended up carrying a lot of dried goat skins around the place for a little bit," he recalls. "There were a lot of cobbles, I was trying to make sure I didn't stack it in front of everyone on day one of the trip. I think considering what Bon had to do, I feel like I got away with it." He also explained how the 30-day challenge was tough on his stumps. He said: "You have to know your body. Over the six years I've been a double amputee, I know when I need to ease it back for like a day or two, but that was the one thing we didn't have on this trip."

The pair also had to adapt to some unusual food. "I ate a camel burger, it wasn't nice," Billy said. "I thought I was being really cultural. And it was a burger, how bad could it be? It made me feel pretty rough." Bonny, on the other hand, tried to avoid food she thought she wouldn't like. "I get very angry and if I'd paid for something that was a bit weird I would have lost it, so I kept it safe with Oreos and Pringles," she said.

Despite surviving their epic journey together the pair haven't yet braved a holiday together since. "We've not been away together on holiday since being back, I think we're both a bit scarred," said Billy. Bonny added: "I went to the south of France a couple of weeks ago, and I saw these buses that we used to get on. I sent

Billy a picture and I was like, 'I've tried to come on holiday and it's following me around.'”



Mum's Message To Morrisons Staff After Daughter Starts Screaming In Shop

<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/mums-message-morrisons-staff-after-27648598>

Laura-Jayne Brennan, 37, was overwhelmed by the response from staff at a local Morrisons when she and her daughter ran into difficulty. Laura's almost three year old daughter is non-verbal and has autism as well as hearing issues in both ears, meaning she needs special attention.

This attention has not always been forthcoming, according to Laura, who told the ECHO about multiple instances when people have not understood her daughter's special needs - including at a place specifically designed for childcare.

However, nurse Laura, who has been off work for three months as she seeks a place in childcare suited to her daughter, was surprised and 'overwhelmed' by the actions of the staff at the Morrisons during her weekly shop.

Laura, who lives in Ellesmere Port, told the ECHO: "Mia was absolutely fine in the shop to start off with, until we got past the baby food pouches. Then she just started screaming the place down. "So I back track to let her find a fruit pouch." Mia sat in the trolley at the time and Laura gave her the pouch to eat, but after she got it she wanted to get down. The pair then sat on the floor as she ate it.

"Many years ago, I was in an Aldi in Liverpool and gave her older sister some biscuits as we were walking around and a security guard said we couldn't do that, but when you have a screaming kid what are you going to do?

"Then when we were at the tills in Morrisons and a worker there was talking to her and distracting her, letting me scan the items." Laura told the ECHO about her daughter's previous childcare which ended three months ago as the nursery "couldn't meet her needs"

Laura described how on the last day of the childcare she had been told Mia hadn't eaten anything. When she asked what had she been offered, they told her spaghetti bolognese, but mixed together, which her daughter cannot eat properly.

"She's not fussy, she just needs the bolognese pureed. It's so annoying because that's a setting for childcare - but then a supermarket get it spot on. "It was lovely of [the Morrisons staff]

Laura shared her heartwarming story, and to thank "Morrisons for

being an inclusive supermarket considering the needs of all customers," including those with hidden disabilities like her daughter. She added: "They turned what could have been a chaotic experience into a pleasant one."



Disability And Illness Benefit Changes Proposed

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-66725232>

In October BBC news published details of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) consultation on proposed changes to the work capability assessment - the test aimed at establishing how a disability or illness limits a claimant's ability to work.

The proposals include:

- Updating the categories associated with mobility and social interaction
- Reflecting flexible and home working - and minimising the risk of these issues causing problems for workers
- Providing "tailored support" for those found capable of work preparation activity in light of the proposed changes

The consultation is expected to run for eight weeks, and the Government hopes the reforms will come into force by 2025 - which will be after the next general election.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr Stride said there had been a huge shift in the world of work over the last few years that has "opened up opportunities" for disabled people and those with health conditions. He continued: "The work capability assessment doesn't reflect how someone with a disability or health condition might be able to work from home, yet we know many disabled people do just that. "Our plans include taking account of the fact that people with mobility problems or who suffer anxiety within the workplace have better access to employment opportunities from the rise in flexible and home working.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said "work transforms lives" and the proposed changes would ensure "no one is held back from reaching their full potential through work".

However, disability charities have warned the new plans could be "catastrophic". James Taylor, executive director of strategy at disability equality charity Scope, said if people are forced to look for work when they are unwell this could make them even "more ill". "If they don't meet strict conditions, they'll have their benefits stopped. In the grips of a cost-of-living crisis this could be catastrophic," he added.

Jeremy Hunt announced plans to completely scrap work capability assessments when he announced his first spring Budget.

The DWP says these latest proposals are "designed to help pave

the way towards the landscape of support and work incentives that will be offered" when the assessments are eventually scrapped.

Figures have shown around 2.5 million Britons are missing from the jobs market because of medical conditions.

The government's pledged £2 billion worth of investment to help those with long-term illnesses and disabilities get into work.



Anger About £250,000 Cuts To Disability Support

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/politics/council/protesters-gather-at-county-hall-to-voice-their-anger-at-ps250000-cuts-of-support-for-people-with-disabilities-4334249>

As of September 30, West Sussex County Council will end its contract with disability advocacy charity Impact Initiatives, which each year helps more than 450 vulnerable people with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, sensory disabilities and acquired brain injury.

Some of their number met up on September 1 to make it perfectly clear to the council what they thought of the decision and to hand over a petition from more than 870 like-minded people. People heading for County Hall were greeted with cries of 'stop ignoring us', 'support us' and 'we're people like you' from the protesters, whose number included those with mobility and developmental issues.

Lisa Benson, who has two sons with autism, said the £250,000 was used to run six advocacy groups – four for people with learning disabilities and two for those with autism. She added: "These people are not only vulnerable but also isolated from the community. "I know personally, that without these groups many of our members would have no friends, no support and wouldn't leave their homes. For some it is their only lifeline and as a parent there is nothing more heartbreaking in this world than witnessing your children be bullied and friendless.

In a statement issued after the protest, Amanda Jupp, cabinet member for adult's services said: "I appreciate that it has been an extremely difficult time for many people following the news that the contract with Impact Initiatives will cease on September 30. "I would like to reassure everyone involved that we will ensure there is ongoing advocacy support for those who need it, especially people who have substantial difficulty in exercising choice or representing their own interests due to a disability, health condition or communication difficulty, or where processes are particularly complex to navigate.



London Mother Shows Off Groundbreaking Bionic Arm

<https://www.itv.com/news/london/2023-09-06/first-ever-mind-reading-ai-bionic-arm-given-to-woman-run-over-by-tube>

Sarah de Lagarde was travelling home from work on 30 September 2022 when she fell asleep on the train and missed her stop.

Rushing for the train on the opposite platform, she lost her balance and fell through the gap between the platform edge and train. She was run over by two trains at High Barnet station before being found and airlifted to hospital.

After being treated at Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital, Ms. de Lagarde starting fundraising for a prosthetic arm that could 'read her mind.' She said, "It learns and that's the beauty of it, so every time I use it, it adds data to its database which means eventually it's response will become smoother and faster. "My big dream would be to be able to ride a bicycle with it or a car and if I was allowed, that would be awesome".

Sarah, from Camden, is already using her new arm in her daily tasks like making coffee and watering the garden. The arm uses AI technology which can detect muscle twitches in her upper arm, with the software converting those impulses into arm movements.

Sarah explains: "I have to think I want to make a movement and then I twitch a sequence of muscles, and it creates a series of electrical movements in the server which is the forearm which equates to moving the fingers."

Following her accident, it took eight months of physical training to get her shoulders strong enough to bear the weight of the bionic arm. Sarah said the first thing she did when her new arm was up and running, was hug her kids. "They think it's super cool," she said.

The cutting edge technology used in Sarah's prosthetic limb doesn't come cheap. She had to fundraise £250,000 in order to fund the machinery. But Sarah hopes that by showing how much of a difference it can make, the NHS may consider buying these bionic limbs for other amputees in the future.



Kew Gardens Walking Tours for People Living with Dementia, Sight or Hearing Loss (incl. BSL)

The final walks of the 2023 will start from Victoria Gate and last around 60 minutes. The walks are led by their volunteer walk leaders. Support workers, friends or family are very welcome and will also receive free entry to the Gardens. Please Check with Kew for any changes to the schedules

Forthcoming BSL Tour Dates

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/monthly-british-sign->

[language-tours](#)

Sunday 12 November 2023 11am to 12pm

Forthcoming Dementia Friendly Tour Dates

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/health-walks-for-people-living-with-dementia>

Wednesday 8 November 2023 11am to 12pm

Forthcoming Sensory Tour Dates

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/sensory-guided-walking-tours-for-visitors-with-sight-loss-and-their-carers>

Sunday 12 November 2023 2-3pm

Walking tours have a limit to the number people who can participate for any of their Events and Walking Tours so it is essential that you register in advance for ALL walks and events at Kew. Email discovery@kew.org or Telephone 07341 114533.



Man with Heart Problems has No One to Cut Grass

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1815455/disabled-dad-dispute-over-grass-cutting-housing-discrimination>

A disabled dad has hit out after doctors ordered him not to cut his grass, now fearing no one will be able to do it for him. The dad-of-two was diagnosed with heart failure and was initially given five years to live. However, after being fitted with an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) last month - a small battery-powered device placed in the chest that detects and stops irregular heartbeats by delivering shocks to the heart - he said his life expectancy has increased to 10 years.

He has been advised to go out walking to maintain general fitness but his doctor has strongly advised against any strenuous activity including mowing his lawn.

He then contacted Clyde Valley Housing Association for help but he claimed that he was told that they don't offer a grass-cutting service to tenants unless they are in a wheelchair or pregnant.

He said: "When I got diagnosed my neighbour was cutting the grass for us, but I can't keep expecting her to do it for me and it's costing us a fortune to pay to have it done. "The grass was so tall we couldn't even let our dogs out the back. I need to try and get something set up for the garden so my wife isn't left dealing with this when I'm gone as she's also disabled and both my children have disabilities. We need someone to help us."

Clyde Valley Housing Association told Lanarkshire Live that grass cutting and garden maintenance isn't a service that they provide to tenants. A spokesperson added: "We continue to be available to Mr McLelland should he require any further advice or support from us."

Collette Stevenson MSP wrote to the council requesting access to the free Care of Gardens scheme if they wouldn't reconsider giving occupational therapy approval to Clyde Valley to install low-maintenance paving. However, grounds service manager Colin Reid responded by saying that Mr McLelland would need to pay for the garden service, adding: "The council already have some Housing Association residents on the scheme and it is the tenants who pay for this service."

Collette Stevenson said: "I can totally sympathise and understand Mr McLelland's plight. He's been trying to do the right thing to reduce the burden on his family to allow them to stay in their home. Clyde Valley rightly expects their tenants to maintain their gardens, but circumstances such as these require a tailored approach. "Similarly, if they were South Lanarkshire Council housing tenants, Mr McLelland and his wife would meet the eligibility criteria to have their garden maintained. Mr McLelland's circumstances are unique and I urge Clyde Valley Housing to reconsider his situation and find a compromise to benefit everyone."



North Surrey Sports Association for Disabled People (NSSADP)

has been established by local volunteers to facilitate the provision of sports for disabled people within North Surrey and adjacent areas. The association will initially focus on Boccia, with coaching for disabled people, training for coaches and arranging some competition.

It is intended that the association will extend this principle to other sports, both paralympic or mainstream, facilitating the creation of other clubs aimed at providing sport for disabled people.

Membership is open to both individuals and organisations interested in furthering the association's work. For more information please contact nssadp@gmail.com



Spelthorne Boccia Club

Boccia is a disability sport that is similar to bowls and petanque.

The aim of the game is to propel leather balls, coloured red or blue, close to a white target ball (the jack).

It is played from a seated position and the ball can be moved with players' hands, feet or an assistive device eg a head or hand pointer.

Our club is aimed at people aged 16+ with disabilities (young

people aged 14+ may join with an adult carer present)

Where - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines

When - Every Thursday 6pm - 6.55pm

Cost - £3 per week (no need to book, just turn up and join in)

For more information please visit the council's web site

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/boccia



Staines Shopmobility

making staines accessible



**Two Rivers (West Car park),
Mustard Mill Road,
STAINES, TW18 4BL.
Telephone 01784 459416**

The service will be available Tuesday to Saturday from 9.30am until 4.15pm, with the last equipment hire time of 3pm.

All equipment is to be returned by 4.15pm.

stainesshopmo@gmail.com

www.stainesshopmobility.com

www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility

Membership Charges

Membership is available on a daily or annual basis. Please contact manager for details

Holiday Hire

Wheelchair- Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 6 weeks.

A Cash Deposit Of £50 Is Required.

Scooter - Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 4 weeks.

A Cash Deposit Of £100 Is Required.



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Drivers Who Cause Danger For Visually Impaired

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1816302/drivers-danger-crackdown-visually-impaired-guide-dogs>

Clare Williams, from Smethwick in the West Midlands who owns guide dog Quita, said pavement parking has turned day-to-day tasks into a “scary obstacle course”. She explained: “It is not just a nuisance, it’s dangerous for all pedestrians but especially those of us with visual impairments. In my experience, simple tasks like going shopping can turn into a scary obstacle course as my guide dog helps me to negotiate cars parked on the pavement, meaning we have to walk in the road.”

Pavement parking is a daily battle for blind mobility chair user Julie Pilsworth and her guide dog Maeve. When drivers park on the pavement, the 45-year-old, from Grimsby, often cannot fit her chair through the gap between a parked car and a wall. Maeve is trained to stop if she does not believe the chair can fit through so Julie often has to turn back to find a drop curb to exit the pavement. She said: “I am not able to step into the road like other guide dog owners. It would be dangerous because the chair would tip. “Sometimes I have to go 20 minutes the other way before I find somewhere suitable.

Ministers must crack down on dangerous pavement parking that can affect the safety of around 85 percent of visually impaired pedestrians, charity Guide Dogs insists. It claimed vehicles obstructing footpaths cause major difficulties for people with a vision impairment – and has launched a petition calling for the law to be toughened up.

The charity, which trains dogs to support people with a vision impairment, said despite the Department for Transport holding a consultation in 2020, no progress had been made. Eleanor Briggs, from Guide Dogs, said: “Cars blocking the way undermines those with impairments’ confidence to get out and about. “This daily threat can mean people can’t safely get to work, education or to see friends. “We welcomed the Government’s recognition of the problem but now is the time to make good on their promise and give local councils the power to tackle problem pavement parking in their areas.”

According to YouGov, some 95 percent of local councillors in England said pavement parking created a safety risk for pedestrians with a vision impairment, and 70 percent admitted the problem exists in their area.

The Government had more than 15,000 responses to their consultation on pavement parking back in 2020, including one from Guide Dogs. And yet three years on, there has been no response. It is time the Government took tangible action to tackle this dangerous practice.



I Was Mocked For My Disability

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/09/26/i-didnt-think-id-be-mocked-for-my-disability-after-moving-to-the-uk-19542769/>

It was 2018 and friends and family came to take me and my brother, Waseem, to the gate of the Za’atari refugee camp in Jordan. But it was bittersweet because we had to leave the rest of our family behind. That’s because Waseem and I were prioritised for the UK Syrian Resettlement Programme due to our disabilities – we were born with phocomelia, a rare congenital disorder involving malformation of the limbs.

Growing up with my disability was tough. I only liked to go out at night because no one could see my hands or legs in the dark. In the daytime, people would laugh and say 'Penguin! Look, he walks like a penguin!' Then our whole life turned upside down in 2011 when I was 17. Our village was a safe place to get to Jordan from Syria, so it was bombed.

It was in Za'atari that I discovered my passion for theatre. I met a British woman called Arabella who was working for a Spanish NGO. We put on shows like one called 'I Can', which was an aspirational show with disabled young people in the refugee camp. Another was called 'Window of Hope' about life in the camp, which I performed in and played the tabla (a drum). I would teach and support disabled young people in a theatre group, too.

I started applying for resettlement in 2015 – to the UK, Canada and the US. The rest of my family applied too, but only Waseem and I eventually got interviews to come to the former.

I came to Gateshead in 2018 and now it's my home. I could only speak a few words of English when I arrived and I certainly couldn't speak any Geordie, but after a few months I started to understand the accent.

When I first arrived in the UK, I thought that the reaction to my disability would be different. That I could walk the way I do and nobody would look at me because people are more educated here. But they still laugh. Everyday, they look – it's just more hidden. Teenagers secretly film me and take pictures when I'm waiting for the bus. I know they're doing it so I pretend I'm a celebrity and strike a pose.

Despite that, my life is generally good. I feel more confident now that I can speak English, and I can go anywhere I like. In the summer of 2018, our resettlement caseworker put us in touch with Curious Monkey, which is a theatre company that runs a project called 'Arriving' for people seeking sanctuary in the North East of England. I didn't speak much English at the time so I was just smiling and nodding, but I threw myself into the workshops.

Five years later, we are about to go on a national tour with my show, Penguin – which is the story of my journey. As a disabled man, I want to show the audience what I can do and that I am able to achieve whatever I want. I love music, so there's lots of dancing and movement in the production. I hope people come away thinking: 'Don't give up, just keep trying'. My only regret is that my family won't get to see the show, but I will try to send some video footage to them. I hope one day that we can all be together again, but it's not safe for me there.

I have big ambitions for the future. After the war, there will be lots of children in Syria with disabilities. I would like to set up a charity

to support them and to show them that they can do things. By sharing my story, I hope to inspire and motivate others. But for now, I just want to get on stage and tell my story.

Penguin is touring to Sheffield and Washington until 30 November. You can find out more about the show on the Curious Monkey website: <https://www.curiousmonkeytheatre.com/penguin>



French Airport Dispute Over Disabled Passenger

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/09/26/ryanair-and-french-bordeaux-airport-arguing-over-disabled-passenger-19556842/>

A flight from Bordeaux-Mérignac Airport to Edinburgh Airport was delayed for two hours in September 2023 after a passenger in a wheelchair was 'left behind' at the gate. The plane had started moving towards the runway for take-off when the error was discovered. But Ryanair blamed the airport, claiming it was the fault of the ground staff.

The airline said in a statement: 'It is unacceptable that Bordeaux Airport failed to provide this passenger with the special assistance required to board this flight from Bordeaux to Edinburgh despite Ryanair paying for this service. 'Not only did they fail to board this passenger, but they misinformed the crew on this flight that all passengers had been boarded when in fact this passenger had not, and the aircraft began to taxi on to the runway. 'Ground staff at Bordeaux Airport realised their error and notified the crew who returned to stand in order to board the passenger. It is abysmal that Ryanair customers requiring special assistance are being let down by Bordeaux Airport and we are working with them to ensure that this does not recur.'

But Bordeaux-Mérignac Airport has hit back, claiming that the budget airline's statement was 'false and defamatory'. A spokesperson said: 'It should be clarified that throughout this time, the passenger remained the responsibility of the airline which organised her transport. 'The airport is only an infrastructure operator. When boarding for the flight to Edinburgh began, all passengers were directed to the plane by Ryanair's service provider. 'The passenger in a wheelchair and her companion were present in the departure lounge at that time, visible to Ryanair staff and under their responsibility. 'When the escort assistant took charge of the passenger and her attendant to accompany them to their plane, they realised that the Ryanair teams had closed the plane doors and that the plane was moving.'



Kate Garraway's 'Fears' Over Husband's Care Needs

<https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/kate-garraway-derek-draper-good-morning-britain-mbe-ranvir-singh-b1109953.html>

Kate Garraway has spoken frankly about her husband Derek Draper's health, admitting that she and her family have been unable to shake the fear of him dying.

The former political adviser, 56, requires full-time care after suffering serious complications from Covid-19 in 2020, which left long-lasting damage to his organs.

Earlier this month, the Good Morning Britain star, also 56, revealed how Draper recently developed a new condition that sees him choke and "turn blue". Now, the TV star said because of her husband being "rushed back to hospital so many times" she and her family constantly fear for his wellbeing.

Kate said "I'd love to be able to tell you that, since Derek has been home, everything has been easy, that the miracle of him being at home has turned the day-to-day challenges into a breeze. "But because we keep having emergency setbacks and he's had to be rushed back into hospital so many times, the fear of him dying has never left us.

The presenter also said she has been "experimenting with ways to take control of my own happiness" and now makes sure to "carve out" time for herself. I've been experimenting with ways to take control of my own happiness. I now deliberately carve out time to give myself the gift of doing something that only helps me. It might be only 10 minutes of something physical, such as stretching, pottering in the garden with a mug of tea, or reading something not related to work and I've put some fun girls' nights in the diary with (GMB presenters) Charlotte Hawkins, Ranvir Singh and Susanna Reid."

She has made documentaries detailing her family's life as Draper battles the long-term effects of coronavirus, with both programmes winning National Television Awards in the authored documentary category.

She has also brought out several books to help others by describing her experience, including The Power Of Hope: The Moving Memoir From ITV's Kate Garraway. Her new book also follows Draper's health struggle and is called The Strength Of Love: Embracing An Uncertain Future With Resilience And Optimism. She said: "I can't promise to have all the answers – my struggle is a work in progress – but in the book I've shared what has helped me so far and things that have set me on a happier path. I've tried to keep things hopeful, but I've also written about the darker moments, too."



Sir Billy Connolly And His Parkinson's Diagnosis

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/09/30/sir-billy-connolly-parkinsons-serious-fall-balance-19582892/> Sir Billy Connolly, 80, was

diagnosed with Parkinson's disease a decade ago on the same day he found out he had prostate cancer, which he later received the all clear on.

In the years since, he's been open about what it's like to live with the degenerative disease, sharing earlier this year that although there were difficulties, he had a 'jolly life' with 'no complaints'. However now, Sir Billy and his wife Pamela Stephenson have spoken about the toll it's currently taking. 'It's very difficult to see the progression exactly, because a lot of things come and go,' he said.

Recently I've noticed a deterioration in my balance. That was never such a problem before, but in the last year that has come and it has stayed.' He added: 'For some reason, I thought it would go away, because a lot of symptoms have come and gone away ... just to defy the symptom spotters.'

Sharing that 'the shaking has reappeared...', his wife then added that his 'balance issue' had become a 'significant' hurdle. Especially since, unfortunately, it resulted in you having a couple of serious falls,' she added

Sir Billy responded: 'It's funny, that fall I had when I landed on my jaw reminded me of a thing I used to do on stage. 'I used to say: "I fell out of bed, but luckily my face broke my fall..."'. He then said this was 'adding to the list of things that hold me back'. 'I feel like I want to go for a walk, but I go for 50 yards and I want to go home, because I'm tired,' he explained. 'It's creeping up behind me and stopping me doing things. It's a cruel disease.'

Speaking about how their relationship has changed in the wake of Sir Billy's diagnosis, he shared how his wife now needed to help him get dressed in the morning and how he needed to now 'get lifts everywhere' as he 'can't drive any more'.

Back in 2021 Sir Billy detailed how Parkinson's had 'taken a lot' from him, including no longer being able to play the banjo. It's just a noise. I can't yodel anymore. I can't smoke cigars. It's taken more and more of what I like – it's kind of painful,' he shared. But he said his approach was to 'have a Glasgow attitude' and 'deal with it'.



Current Scams

<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

So Just Who Can We Trust?

Well, we have to trust our own judgement for a start. It's how to gather information that allows us to make an informed

choice; say when buying online.

For there's a lot of bad guys putting in a heap of effort to entice us to part with our hard earned. It may be for a Black Friday deal, for that time of year is fast approaching. It's maybe a statement of the obvious to say let's buy from a name we trust, for buying for the first time from someone we don't know, just has to be less safe. If it's a retailer whose name we know then we'd best be sure that we are buying from their real website. Not a very close version of it that we've spotted on social media say.

Scam websites promote very low prices to attract our interest and then sell us fakes or goods that do not exist. They will also exert pressure to buy before the bargain is sold out. And we know, don't we, that getting poorer quick is easier than getting rich quick.

We know too by now that paying a stranger by bank transfer is a no go. Paying by credit or debit card offers us some rights to get the money back, but if we pay by bank transfer then it's best to assume that it's a goner if all turns sour and we end up with nothing for our purchase or dodgy goods.

Clicking on a link in an email is NOT how to reach the well known retail name. Nor via social media.

It is of course time consuming to carefully check what is being offered and by whom, but it can pay off in discovering just how fraught is the deal for us. Buying slow is far far safer than buying quick.

If the website has no 'contact us' section that is a pointer; similarly clarity about our contractual rights. And there has to be a real business address and landline phone number. If there are reviews that are wall to wall 5 star, and fairly recent and worded somewhat similar then beware too. You cannot please everyone and even excellent products can get the thumbs down from some people. Also the old cliché applies; that if it is a deal that looks far too good to be true, then!

According to Action Fraud there were some 3.5 million fraud offences in the year ending March 2023 and 46% of internet users have engaged with fraudsters. 25% of them then losing money. So let's be careful.

REPORT: Action Fraud

Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime where you should report fraud if you have spotted a scam or have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cyber-crime.

You can visit the website (www.actionfraud.police.uk) or call Action Fraud on 0300 123 20 40.

ADVICE: Citizens Advice Consumer Service

Citizens Advice Consumer Service can offer support if you or someone you know has been scammed. They will give you advice

on what to do next.

You can visit the website (www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or call Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 or 0808 223 1144 for a Welsh-speaking advisor.

If you have received an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS): report@phishing.gov.uk

Reporting Spam Text Messages

You can report spam text messages to your mobile phone provider free of charge by forwarding the text message to 7726. You may get an automated response thanking you for the report giving you further instructions if needed.



North West Surrey Drop-In Hubs

Addlestone – 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each Month

KnapHill – Every Monday

Shepperton – 1st and 3rd Wednesday

of each Month

Surrey Downs Hubs

Epsom - 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each Month

Hersham - 2nd and 4th Monday of each Month

Leatherhead – Every Friday

To contact Action for Carers Surrey, Telephone 0303 040 1234

Email CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk Text 07723 486730

Web site www.actionforcarers.org.uk



Disability Rights UK (DRUK)

Disability Rights UK Helplines

Our helplines are operating as normal:

Personal Budgets Helpline

Opening hours: 9.30am-1.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0330 995 0404 personalbudgets@disabilityrightsuk.org

Disabled Students Helpline

Opening hours: 11am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0330 995 0414 students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Welfare Rights Helpline for Member Organisations

Opening hours: 10.30am-12.30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0203 687 0779 ken.butler@disabilityrightsuk.org

PLEASE NOTE – *The news Bulletins received from Disability*

Rights (DRUK) and the Surrey Adult Social Care Information & Engagement Team is now being distributed as enclosures with each monthly SCAN Newsletter.

Please contact me if you wish to receive these enclosures by sending a text message (with your name and postal address) to 07859 639025.

If your preference is for an electronic copy then please email me on info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or use the 'Contact SCAN' form on www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/



Disability Empowerment Network – North Surrey & Surrey Wide

Administration and management of the Disability Empowerment Network (DEN) meetings is arranged by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (SCDP)

All Empowerment Meetings Continue To Be Held Via Zoom unless otherwise noted

North Surrey Meeting Dates 2023

Monday 6th November at 1pm

Surrey Wide Meeting dates for 2023

Monday 13th November at 6pm

For more information, please contact:

involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk or Tel/SMS 07492 249 513 for details of how to participate in meetings remotely.



SCAN is registered with **EASYFUNDRAISING**, which means you can help us for FREE.

Please remember to use easyfundraising every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us, including all the big names like eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS, Expedia, M&S, Just Eat, Uswitch and many more!

This means you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying. If you haven't signed up to support us yet, it's easy and completely FREE. These donations really help us, so it would be great if you could take a moment to get started!

You can find our easyfundraising page here:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/>?



SCAN and Spelthorne Physical, Sensory & Cognitive Disabilities Forum (SPSCDF)



The meetings bring together service providers and users to influence the solutions to any problems or access issues

encountered by people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities.

Due to Circumstance beyond our control we had to cancel our AGM and Forum meetings last month. The council scheduled maintenance work for their meeting rooms and lobby and we were unable to find a replacement venue at short notice.

Send your news or reports to info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on our website pages at www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/

Further details for Spelthorne's Physical, Sensory and Cognitive Disability forum are on SCAN's web site at

www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spscd-forum/



Donations for SCAN's Newsletters

This project will require new sponsorship from April 2024 as demand for paper booklets continues to evolve after the pandemic. It had been intended to increase distribution in 2020 and funding was applied for and approved, but the pandemic meant we couldn't use the award and the demographic also changed.

Sponsorship and membership subscription packages are available to any individuals, councillors or organisations interested in supporting SCAN's newsletter project – please use the contact options below for information about making donations.

If you have news that you would like included in the newsletter or on our web site, or to be reported at the quarterly meetings, please send an email to info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on SCAN's web page where you will also find more details about SCAN's work www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/



From A Former Contributor to SCAN's Newsletters

Richard sustained a severe brain injury in a motorcycle accident in 1983 and he felt that although people tried to relate to his situation, they often couldn't understand.

He put his thoughts and experiences together as a collection of poems and articles about his life after his injury to help others in a similar situation to realise that they're not alone, and to try to give 'able-bodied' people a small insight into the world of disability.

Richard died in 2014, and his son shared his father's book with Headway who provided a link to the book from their website <https://www.headway.org.uk/>.

Richard's personality and wit shines through the book. Some of the poems and the, often very poignant, drawings that went with them will be difficult to publish as the local artist who drew them for Richard's book has also died. Electronic versions of Richard's book can be viewed on the Headway website

I'M ONLY HUMAN

*There is no need to shout,
my hearing is fine,
the injuries I've got
are in my spine.*

*I know I look strange,
cos my body don't work,
but there's no need to treat me
like a mindless jerk.*

*I won't go berserk,
or throw a fit,
bite off your hand
and swallow it*

*Try to talk to me,
don't be afraid,
you'll really be pleased
with the effort you made.*

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