



within Reach

The Official Magazine of the Association for Children with Upper Limb Deficiency



Lucy Martin is fast becoming a familiar figure presenting the weather reports on BBC television.

“I was warned that hurtful things can sometimes be said via social media,” she said, “But people’s reactions so far have been great.” See page 9

It's
Ability not
disability
that
matters

within Reach

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Registered charity no. 1134544

Comments, articles, requests, ideas: We welcome comments, articles, requests or suggestions, for future editions of Within Reach.

Letters: Any letters for publication should include the name and address of the sender, but these can be withheld from publication if requested.

Advertising: Within Reach has a print run of 1,600 and is distributed to members, subscribers, health services and specialists. If you need to reach this key audience, we would be delighted to consider including your advertisement.

Contact Jane Garrett on 01483 203237

The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of Reach and are not intended to reflect or constitute Reach policy, or in any way portray an official view.



Editorial deadline:
Material for inclusion in the WINTER issue must be sent to the editor by 31st OCTOBER 2016

Reach membership

Membership of Reach is open to parents of children with upper limb deficiency and other individuals of 18 years and over who are interested in furthering the work of the association. Junior membership is given to children who have an upper limb deficiency. The UK subscription is from £36. You will receive three issues of the magazine a year by post or email if you live overseas.

Reach Insurance

Reach membership entitles the Reach child/adult from aged two - 85 to benefit from our limb insurance for up to £50,000.

Please call Head Office for more detail from the schedule of insurance.

SHARED EXPERIENCES

This book, published by Reach, is extremely useful for families who have discovered they have, or are about to have, a Reach baby.

Shared Experiences is a collection of accounts by Reach families of their own real life experiences of having a child with an upper limb deficiency. Their stories are shocking, saddening, funny, inspiring and captivating. All in all, a brilliant realisation of life with an upper limb deficiency.

Contact Jo Dixon at HO to order your copy.

Within Reach magazine is printed and distributed by NRG at Aldwick Road, Bognor Regis PO21 3QG

NATIONAL COORDINATOR

I'm back at my desk after taking part in the Scottish Family Activity Weekend at Loch Tay.

We had a fabulous time and met lovely families. The benefit of the weekend for the children and parents was so clear to see - in fact the impact was powerful. The little ones really looked up to and learned from the fantastic teenage role models who made sure that every minute of the weekend was worthwhile - Reach children really are INCREDIBLE.



Thanks to all you Scottish Members for welcoming us and MASSIVE thanks to Steph and Mags for organising the event. See you in 2017. For photos see page 22.

Jo Dixon

TIME TO GIVE OUR REACH BRAND A MODERN MAKEOVER

Three big changes we're getting really excited about! At Reach, we're committed to supporting our members and their families in any way we can.

That means we can't stand still - we need to move with the times, innovate and make sure we can compete for attention and funding in a very crowded market.

With that in mind, we're making three big changes this year that we hope you'll be as excited about as we are:

1. First, we're changing the way we run the family weekend, based on your feedback. It's going to be more interactive and give you the chance to focus on the things that are relevant to your family, as well as giving you more time to get to know each other.
2. We're also updating our website, to make it more relevant and useful to current members, and to people who find their way to Reach for the first time.
3. And finally, we've got a brand new look which ties everything together.

Why do we need a new look, you might ask? Well, the current Reach logo has been in use for 38 years and has begun to look a little dated. And if we want to compete for grants and funding, we need a credible brand that makes us stand out from the crowd.

Our new look is modern and positive and we're confident it will really help boost our profile. We can't tell you more as we don't want to ruin the surprise. All will be revealed at the family weekend in October, so make sure you book your place!



EVENTS DIARY 2016

FAMILY WEEKEND and AGM at Glasgow Marriott GLASGOW 21st - 23rd October

The weekend is about meeting up and sharing experiences and this year there will be more time for informal and relaxed socialising and sharing of experiences. Friendships for life are forged here and the atmosphere is electric.

The children's activities are tailored to their age group and include an evening meal in the hotel or snack in the evening, plus drinks and either a packed lunch or hotel lunch during the day. Adult delegates are provided with lunch and refreshments on the Saturday.

Friday night reception - join us for a complimentary drink between 7-9pm where we will welcome new friends to the event, and meet Reach staff, childcare leaders and volunteers. This is the place to pick up vital information and timings for the weekend. All are welcome, just drop in!

Saturday - the conference and business meeting will be wrapped up by lunchtime. It is now FREE to all Reach members with a limb difference.

Saturday morning creche and workshops will end at lunchtime.

Saturday trips will be to Treezone (10-16yrs) or Reach Football Academy 5+yrs. These groups will leave the hotel in the morning and arrive back at around 2.30pm.

Saturday afternoon is a chance for families to join a range of 'workshops', including 3D hand construction, adapted musical instruments, cycling and information desks offering ideas and opportunities, solutions and services.

Saturday evening will have a Scottish theme. While the children party, adults will enjoy the Gala Dinner, and then at 9pm we all come together again for a night full of dancing with a Ceilidh to kick off the entertainment, followed by our Reach DJ Cyrus Bourne.

Sunday - watch this space for an optional family activity to enjoy on Sunday morning!

BOOKING FOR THE FAMILY WEEKEND

Booking is now open with us and with the Marriott Hotel in Glasgow, and as in previous years, please book with the hotel separately. The hotel is about 15 minutes by bus from Glasgow Airport, and is within walking distance of the city centre and local greenspace. Parking is charged at £9 per 24hrs.

To book your hotel accommodation call Pauline Molloy direct on 0141 226 1514 between 9am and 5pm. Prepare by using the form attached before you call!

Please complete the Reach booking form and email/mail Reach Office, or give us a call and we will gladly take bookings and payment over the phone. Prices have remained static for four years and we try very hard to offer value for money.

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



The board of trustees met on 9th July in Bristol. Since I joined the board nearly three years ago I have always been thankful to work alongside a team of people who are so passionate about our organisation and never afraid to contribute ideas and support one another.

Just as importantly, however, we challenge each other and add constructive critique which ensures we don't become distracted or drift too far from our key objectives. What was equally satisfying at this particular meeting was the genuine energy, enthusiasm and indeed excitement throughout when considering the future of Reach.

Over the past 18 months the board has spent a lot of time and energy bringing to life the strategy we created in November 2014, the focus of which was around our revised Charter:

We aim to Reach out to...

- Raise awareness of upper limb difference
- Help children reach their potential
- Families in need of support
- Promote the interests and needs of children affected by limb difference
- Ensure the charity is widely known and accessible

All these aims draw inspiration from our charity's positive approach to supporting each other and are encapsulated in our motto 'it's Ability, not Disability that Matters'. These aims, our strategy and our motto should always be at the forefront of our minds as trustees when we make decisions on behalf of all of us associated to Reach and it certainly was throughout the Bristol meeting.

The final year of our three year strategy, will be the most critical and exciting period of its lifespan. In the coming weeks leading up to the annual family weekend and on into the new year, there will be a number of exciting developments in Reach. We are nearly ready to launch our new website which will be much more modern, user friendly, interactive and regularly updated with new stories, information and resources for our members. The website will also be better integrated with our social media communication, in particular our popular Facebook pages and twitter feeds. The website launch will coincide with our re-branding, which brings to a climax our strategic aims and we believe embodies the culture of our organisation as we continue to support our current members and look towards how best we can serve our future members.

All of our decisions are made with the above aims in mind. I hope as we launch the website and re-brand, that the positive and optimistic outlook that Reach has always stood for comes across loud and clear. As I write this the build up to the Rio Paralympic games is in full swing. I firmly believe there is no other sporting spectacle on the planet that is as inspiring and uplifting as the Paralympics, indeed my son Ewan saw a trailer for the games recently which used the slogan 'Yes I Can'. He was immediately transfixed. He spent the subsequent afternoon picking up various items in the house, lifting them above his head using his little hand and shouting 'Yes I Can!' He is already inspired and the games have not even begun.

If we at Reach can be part of that inspiration to just one child we support, then it is all worth it. And as long as that is the case, I shall continue to do what I can to help.

Lee Gwilliam Vice Chairman

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EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED

Darren Calpin has published a rare man's account of the rocky ride towards fatherhood. Breaking a few taboos along the way, he deals with issues ranging from infertility fears to the discovery that his partner was expecting a Reach child, Ellie.

His book includes an epilogue (written just after Ellie turned two) to ensure the reader gets an idea of what happened after the 'main event' was over. Amongst other things, it details how their lives were changed by Ellie's arrival and how she exceeded (and continues to exceed) all their expectations. It also includes their thoughts on toe-to-hand transfers and highlights their concerns about teasing and name-calling when she gets older. Expecting the Unexpected is available from ferrelcalpin@gmail.com.



HARD DECISIONS AND NO RIGHT ANSWERS

A quick survey of topics routinely discussed on Reach Facebook pages shows that there is no magic solution. Each and every family will go through the same agony of indecision, weighing up pros and cons while constantly reminded by their child that Reach children find their own ways of coping. One of the most common surgical procedures offered to parents of children with symbrachydactyly is a toe to hand transplant. Laura and her partner were faced with this decision for their son and went ahead. This is their story:



TOE TO HAND TRANSFER

"When our beautiful son Jon was born three years ago, we noticed straight away that his left hand was different. He had three small nubbins, a partial index finger and a thumb. Naively, we thought his fingers would grow, or with modern medicine being what it is, that some routine surgery could be performed to give him a 'normal' looking and functioning hand. In the year that followed, we learnt that the fingers would never grow. Jon also underwent numerous tests to ascertain the reason why he had been born this way. The conclusion was that the blood supply to the foetus had been interrupted at the time that the hand had formed and it was just 'one of those things' that occurs in approximately one in 32,000 births.

"As we began to come to terms with the fact that our son had been born different to other children, we started to research his options. Great Ormond Street Hospital's website became a valuable research tool and we learnt that the main options open to us were a toe transfer (which consists of the removal of one or two toes (the second toes from each foot), which are then transferred to the hand), or a free phalangeal transfer. The latter option involves removing one bone from a toe and transferring it to the finger sack. Lastly, there was the option of doing absolutely nothing and leaving him to learn to adapt with his hand the way it was.

"Whilst I would say the first year we were focussed on what could be done to 'fix' his hand, as we watched Jon grow and adapt very well using his left hand, our perspective started to shift and we thought that maybe it was in his best interests to avoid surgery altogether.

"However, we continued to explore our options and when Jon turned one, the Consultant Plastic and Reconstruction Surgeon at our local hospital referred us to Prof Kay at Leeds General Infirmary. We were invited up to Leeds to talk through the options with him and their resident Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Dr Maggie Bellw, who specialises in hand surgery. Prof Kay's name had cropped up when we had googled toe transfers and our local hospital had referred us because they were aware that he specialises in hand surgery and has extensive experience in this area (<http://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/a-z-of-services/plastic-and-reconstructive-surgery/professionals/>).

"When we met Prof Kay we were told that Jon was a good candidate for a toe transfer, as this option is not available to all children born without fingers. However, we were also told that he would continue to adapt, cope and thrive even if we decided against surgery. There followed an agonising year when my partner and I had to decide whether to go ahead with the surgery or not.

"We really struggled with the decision. Just when we thought we had decided to go ahead with the surgery we would watch incredulously as he performed a task one handed and then would think again. We felt lucky that he was eligible for this type of procedure, but equally weighed down with the enormity of what this sort of surgery would mean for him.

"We had no doubt from our research that the surgery would give Jon more function in his left hand, but two factors weighed heavily on our mind. The first was putting him through the surgery itself, which both my partner and I feared as we knew that it would be five to ten hours of micro-surgery, followed by possible further operations later down the line. We didn't want our happy, healthy toddler to go through anything that would cause him distress or pain.

The second factor, was the effect on his feet. We struggled to deal with the fact that currently only one of his limbs was affected by his

missing fingers, whereas a double toe transfer would mean that both feet would also be affected.

"Leeds General Infirmary showed us a brief video of a child who had the surgery, but we really struggled to find before and after photos of children who had had the surgery. In the end I posted on the Reach Facebook site and was lucky that some parents were willing to share photos of their child's hands and feet post-op, as well as their own experiences of the surgery itself, which we found extremely useful.

"We also requested a copy of the research paper entitled **Toe to hand transfer in children: Ten year follow up of psychological aspects** from Leeds General Infirmary so that we could assess the psychological effect of such a procedure on the child and parents. We felt that we owed it to our son to research all the possible options and so we also looked into free phalangeal transfers as an alternative to a toe transfer. However, we dismissed this procedure as we were concerned about the failure rate of this type of surgery and put off by the fact that the fingers do not have joints and so don't bend.

"In spite of all of our research, it was a chance event that finalised our decision making process when we came across a child in our local area who had recently undergone a double toe transfer. It was only by seeing how good this child's hand looked and functioned post op that we were spurred on to opt for surgery. We could also see the effect on the feet and how the surgery had been carried out in such a way as to close the gap where the toe had been taken.

"After being on the waiting list for a year, Jon had his double toe transfer shortly after his third birthday. Our fears as to how he would be after the operation were soon allayed, because despite eight hours of surgery, he was sitting up in bed playing with his toys and asking for his dinner an hour later! We have been astounded at how well he has accepted and coped with the cast on his arm and the bandages on both feet, which will need to stay on for six weeks.

"He has all the same energy as he had pre-op and was only on painkillers for about ten days. Whilst it is still early days, his new fingers are healing nicely and we are looking forward to seeing him start to use them over the coming months. His feet have also healed well and don't cause him any discomfort and he's still the active toddler that he was before the operation.

"My partner and I are aware that when Jon grows up he will ask us why we chose for him to have this surgery. We have no doubt that he would have adapted perfectly well with his hand without the surgery. However, we believe this surgery will improve the appearance of the hand and thus our son's body confidence as he grows up. Furthermore it will give him greater hand function, so that he can carry out day to day tasks more easily and with greater dexterity. In the long-term we also hope that this surgery will give him the greatest range of career options possible."

VIRTUAL REALITY PROSTHETICS CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

IF YOU GO TO A BAKER HE WILL OFFER YOU BREAD AND IF YOU GO TO A SURGEON.....

One parent said this was the best advice she was given when she was considering surgery. "We didn't opt for the surgery in the end ourselves. Don't feel pressurised to do something just because a surgeon can do it - wait until you are sure it's right for you and your child, and never feel you have to remove their nubbins to 'neaten them up' - love them exactly as they are right now.

"Surgery is moving on so fast, along with technology, and it will not be too late if they choose to have it themselves when older. We were told we had to decide before he was two and we weren't ready for that. Now he is almost 10 and we don't regret it - he can choose himself if he wants surgery when he is older. Take as long as you need to decide."

Another parent said: "Our little girl is five now. We decided to wait a bit to see how she develops. We are now 99.9% sure we won't go for surgery as she manages to find a way around almost anything. We went to a limb centre which gave her things to help with using a fork and to ride her bike. She really doesn't need the surgery to be honest. I'm sure the surgery has helped many young people with the same issue but I'm really glad we decided to wait a bit."

Great Ormond Street Hospital's website fact file is a useful starting place for your research. It states:

"The transferred toe can either act as a thumb or allow the thumb to have something to pinch against. It has a nail, and joints which can bend and straighten, although not as much as finger joints.

"The toe next to the big toe is usually the most suitable and contains the joints, tendons, tissues and nail to make a good finger. The toe is removed from the foot, taking with it all the associated blood vessels, nerves, bones and tendons, and then is transplanted to the hand. A toe from the other foot can also be transplanted in the same way, either in one longer operation or separately. It is important to remember that, even after the transfer, the new finger will only have the range of movement of a toe.

"If there are no digits on the hand at all, the operation is usually more successful if the child can 'cup' the palm of his or her hand. Removing one toe leaves a foot reduced in width, with four toes present. The gap where the toe was removed is closed. Removal of the second toe does not have any functional impact on walking, running or jumping."

EASY FUNDRAISING

Shopping via the www.easyfundraising.org.uk website is a great way to raise money when you are buying online. You don't pay anything extra. So far it has raised over £9 million for causes throughout the UK. Perfect for Christmas shopping! Just select Reach.

Reach have been approached by a group of researchers and scientists from Sheffield Hallam University who are looking for volunteers to take part in a film. The group has been awarded a Wellcome Trust public engagement grant to develop an exhibition about upper limb loss/deficiency, the biology of movement of the arm, and prosthetics.

As part of this exhibition they are making a short film to highlight the lived experiences of people with upper limb deficiency. The team have already made contact with a few people through Reach and are actually filming someone who chooses not to use a prosthetic this month, however they are still keen to hear from one or two people who do use an upper limb prosthetic.

Ideally the team would like to film volunteers at work or enjoying a pastime which illustrates how their prosthetic upper limb enhances their day to day life. The team have confirmed that they would be able to reimburse any expenses incurred and would like to hear from you! If you think you would be able to help, or would like some more information about the project, please get in touch with Judith Higginson j.higginson@shu.ac.uk Tel: 0114 225 4536. To find out more, please visit our website <https://vrprosthetics.shu.ac.uk> or follow us on Twitter @VRProsthetics.

The film will feature in exhibitions both in Sheffield where the team is based, and in London, at the Millennium Gallery, Sheffield: 25-27 October 2016 and Weston Park Museum, Sheffield: 12 and 13 November 2016. Additional venues in London/ Sheffield tbc, July and August 2017

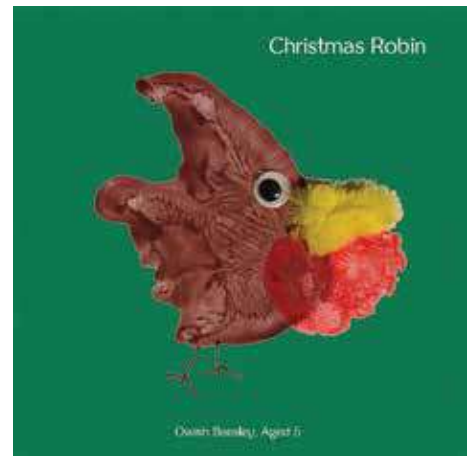
This Wellcome Trust-funded exhibition showcases Sheffield Hallam University's cutting-edge biomedical and technological research. It aims to help people understand more about how your mind controls your body, how you might adapt if you were born without an arm or lost your arm, and what it's like to wear a prosthetic now and in the past. Using the latest Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Technologies, visitors will experience some real-life challenges, hear from people who have or haven't chosen to use a prosthetic arm, and find out how research is transforming the lives of people who use and don't use prosthetics.

SSSH.....DON'T MENTION CHRISTMAS....

But we do just happen to have the new batch of Reach Christmas card designs almost ready! And the jolly robin card has been created by Reach member Owain Beesley, who is just five years old. He clearly enjoyed making it!

This is a painless way to help raise money for Reach as everyone needs to buy a few packs of cards each year!

All cards are 121mm x 121mm, and cost £3.50 per pack of 10, plus £1 postage for up to 2 packs and £2 for 3+ packs. Packs can be pre-ordered or you can wait for an email telling you when they are available to purchase through our website. They should be available early October and will be on sale at the Family Weekend.



ottobock.

Electric Hand 2000 for Children

Ottobock recognises that children are precious; functionality and flexibility are important features to each individual child. The Electric Hand 2000 incorporates several impressive features combined with a natural shape and excellent contours giving a very natural appearance.

Quality for life



A CAREER IN TELEVISION FOR LUCY MARTIN



When my friend's mum spotted the BBC's training scheme giving people with a disability an opportunity to learn weather presenting, I never thought I'd actually end up getting up in the middle of the night, dressing like I was going to a wedding and telling people all about the weather!

I don't really see myself as disabled. I can do almost everything - and only ask for help when I absolutely have to or am feeling lazy! But I guess that highlights the need to address the stigma that goes with the label.

After a rigorous interview and workshop process I was sent on a training programme at BBC Nottingham. My degree in Geography meant I am familiar with aspects of meteorology but there was a lot to learn, plus green screens, cameras, mics, cues and, of course, talking without interruption despite a whole load of gallery noise in my ear. The BBC team were fabulous in teaching me how to manage it all.

I was warned that hurtful things can sometimes be said via social media, but people's reactions so far have been great. My first video was watched 31,000 times on Facebook (admittedly half were probably my mum!). There have been loads of positive comments and from what I see, there's quite a lot of discussion about what counts as supportive and what is patronising. I have received feedback from others in similar situations that seeing me doing well bought them comfort - that's such a bonus.

The London Paralympics and the fantastic Superhuman's campaign promoted and normalised disability. I hope to continue to positively portray disability and that we reach a stage where firstly I am known for being good at what I do and secondly for having one arm.



ADAM IS ON A WINNING STREAK ...



Adam Moran, 14, has had a successful couple of months. In May he was awarded his President's Badge and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh at the Boys Brigade Awards Ceremony. To gain these awards, Adam did volunteering in his church, improved his drumming skills and took part in his local football team, Westwood Rovers as well as completing two overnight camping and orienteering expeditions.

Calderglen High School also awarded him the "Courage Over Adversity" plaque. He was nominated by teachers for his positive attitude and refusal to let his medical conditions and limb difference stand in his way.

Adam has improved so much in his drumming that he is now in the Senior School Band. Many of the Teachers, and those attending the School Concerts and Competitions, are amazed that someone with a limb difference can play the drums so well and achieve so much. Once again, this proves that it is ability, not disability, that matters!

WITH GUTHRIE ...



Guthrie ended Primary School at the British School in Manila winning the top sports award! He competed in the Primary FOBI-SIA games (between British International Schools in South East Asia) in Bangkok in Athletics, Swimming, Football and T-Ball (like baseball), winning a stash of medals: Gold for the 60m, Silver for Triple Jump, Silver for T-Ball, Bronzes for Swimming & Football. And the all-star award for best all round performance, boys under 11. One chuffed boy! And one proud mum!



... AND BENNY AND ELSIE AND MOLLIE



Gold for Kingston in London Youth games para swim, well done Benny!



The Under Fives Coaches Award for Old Rishworthians RUFC 2015-16



Dressage success for Molly Bowen-Morris. She won her RDA Grade IV title. Molly is hoping to be selected for the British Equestrian Federation World Class programme that prepares riders for the Paralympics.

Calling Disabled Musicians



Bader's Big Band

Needs You!

The Douglas Bader Foundation is looking for disabled musicians to join **Bader's Big Band**. A core line up of vocalists, drums, bass, piano, saxophones, trumpets, trombones – but all instruments considered.

The band will perform together at airshows, festivals and other events.

Please email charleydbf@hotmail.com
or call 07805 172204 for more information



douglasbaderfoundation.com

A disabled person who fights back is not disabled ...but inspired



The Douglas Bader Foundation exists to advance and promote the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of persons who are without one or more limbs or otherwise physically disabled

www.douglasbaderfoundation.com



Bader Braves offer:

- Bader Young Aviators Days
- A variety of events and challenges
- Introductions to new sport and activities
- Inspiration and encouragement



Bader Grants assist disabled individuals and groups throughout the UK to achieve personal goals in many diverse areas

"Don't listen to anyone who tells you you can't do this and that. That's rubbish" Douglas Bader



- An information resource for amputees and those suffering limb loss or limb deficiency.
- A forum and a wealth of useful links.
- Limb Line: One-to-one contact with amputees for advice and support



Team Bader encourages amputees and other disabled to take up sport and experience the social, psychological and physical benefits that being involved can bring while supporting and encouraging them as they learn



DJ DARREN PERFORMS AROUND THE WORLD

"I was born without my right arm from the elbow down and was a member of Reach with my family growing up," said Darren. "I have become a well known DJ and music producer on a global scale in the Drum & Bass music industry and I regularly perform around the globe at some of the biggest events and festivals, as well as releasing music with some of the most prominent record labels in the genre, including DJ Hype's Playaz Recordings, DJ Marky's Innerground Records, DJ Hazard's Radius Records and many more.

"My music is also played on BBC Radio 1 & 1xtra and also KissFM. I went from being shy and conscious of my disability when I was growing up, to being able to perform in front of thousands, proudly showing me and my arm to the world, as I am now a firm believer that **"It's Ability Not Disability That Matters"**.



Reach one handed recorders have been in action this year at an adaptive music camp in Cincinnati thanks to the OHMI Trust, as well as a taster day in Guildford.

The 2016 OHMI competition was brilliant! Winners included The Chapman Stick guitar where notes are generated by a tap of the string on the fretboard. Note selection and actuation of the string are combined in a one-handed action.

Maarten Visser's Tenor and Soprano Saxophones uses 'reverse action' springs which close the upper holes at rest. Extra keys near the lower keys open the higher keys. This allows the entire range of the instrument to be played with one hand. The soprano follows the same principles but was created using, in part, 3D printing techniques.

John Lunn's Flute Mount securely holds and positions the flute with the lip plate in front of the lips.

A cello stand allows individuals to play the cello with their feet. It is fully adjustable: the cello can rotate about its long axis and be tilted in from pin to neck, allowing cellist to achieve proper bow to string contact.



SINGLE HANDED GIRL POWER

Hi! My name is Emily and I was born with my left arm missing just below the elbow. Although my left hand is missing, my right arm is unaffected and I have a fully functioning right hand. I'm 22 yrs old and I have dealt with many arm-related struggles throughout my younger life. I want to share my experiences to teach (and hopefully inspire) those who are experiencing the same difficulties.

This particular column is aimed at those of you who are going through or heading towards that most awkward time of life - puberty. I wish I had had something like this I could have read to help me out when I was a teenager. I hope so much that this will help you.

OH NO! YOU'VE HIT PUBERTY

MOOD SWINGS

Puberty comes at a time of change in almost all aspects of life. You're probably heading off to high school, getting your first weekend job, spending less time at home and more time out with your friends. And, on top of all of that, comes puberty. This is when having an arm deficiency started to get difficult for me; in fact, I wish I had had something like this I could have read, to help me out!

I was bullied during high school and this upset me so much; emotions were flying all over the place. I would get the odd comment, followed by more upsetting things such as threats and stalking. My whole attitude to my arm changed from acceptance to frustration and even despair. The heightened emotions I was experiencing completely threw me off balance. I used to hide my arm up my sleeve every day because I didn't want anyone to notice, afraid that taunts would be hurled my way. I even wore a long sleeved jumper during the summer when it was boiling hot outside. I would have suffered in my silent sweat rather than have my arm be noticeable to anyone who could potentially say something mean. And in my eyes, that could have been anyone, so the jumper stayed on.

Just smile! Smiling is great because it confuses people

But I got through it. And since then, I have fully embraced having one hand. So what to do? If you are being bullied, feel ashamed or upset, telling someone about it is the best thing to do! But reaching out to peers, parents or finding a support network can be extremely difficult so here are a few coping methods to deal with stress and change that may help. When I was younger I used to practise faking confidence in the mirror almost every day and I am extremely confident now (maybe a bit too confident at times)! I also kept a journal where I would write down my negative feelings so I could come back to them and draw logical conclusions (I still do this now). If people were staring at my arm I have learned to break the silence by either asking if the person was okay or explaining why I have one hand, or I would just smile! Smiling is great because it confuses people who expect me to be ashamed and/or embarrassed about my arm. The best thing to do is make light of the situation. Comedy is great and learning to laugh at myself definitely puts people at ease.

PERIODS

I used sanitary towels for the first few years after starting my period, as these were the easiest option for me at the time. All you have to do is stick them down into your underwear. Pretty easy to do, regardless of how many hands you have. Tampons were far trickier; in fact, I despised tampons. I remember reading the instruction leaflet inside the box and attempting the insertion again and again. As you can imagine, this caused so much frustration and a lot of wasted tampons! I stuck with pads until Tampax bought out Tampax Pearl applicator tampons. Unlike the tampons with cardboard applicators, these have a much softer, smoother applicator, which makes inserting them much easier. My mum wasn't too happy as these ones were expensive compared to the other brands and types (trust me), but they



were suited to using one hand. After getting the hang of these, it became easier for me to transfer to other types. However, I now use something called a Mooncup. A Mooncup (sometimes called DivaCup) is a small silicone cup that was designed to be an eco-friendly, money saving alternative to sanitary towels and tampons as it can be washed and re-used. It was strange at first but I am so glad I invested in it. I find it easy to insert with one hand.

SHAVING

I hate shaving! It's so tedious. My mum taught me how to shave but I actually used to get my dad to shave my right armpit - haha! Remember that razors are sharp and you have to be careful not to cut yourself. Getting a professional to wax your unwanted hair is a much easier option. Plus, it lasts longer so it's efficient in more than one way. Or try an epilator. I have never used one but I believe they are quick and easy to use. I sometimes use hair removal cream. It's by far the most painless, easiest way to remove hair. Recently I have decided to completely stop shaving my armpits. I'm hoping that I'll start a hairy armpit trend. I'm not too sure it'll catch on, though! It's probably important to mention though that if you don't want to shave, you don't have to. But, if you do, practise makes perfect!

SOCIALISING

Moving on to high school means making new friends. I used to hate meeting new people because I knew they would be inquisitive about my arm. I would sometimes prepare for questions about my arm before I even knew I was about to meet anyone new. Again, comedy is a good way to break the ice. I find that most people tend to feel awkward about it so by showing them you don't feel awkward (even if you do), it's more likely to clear the air.

It's almost as difficult when my friends sometimes completely forget that I have one hand. This is almost as strange as being stared at, because no matter how hard I've tried to forget in the past, I can't. I think it has something to do with my arm being attached to me. Even my family forget sometimes too! This can be frustrating if you're in need of help with carrying things, opening doors, etc.

Don't be afraid to remind people you need help. Most people don't understand when we do or don't need help. Being vocal about this is a good thing, and it'll get easier over time. As people get to know you better, they'll figure it out themselves. Sometimes in public if I'm too afraid to ask for help, I like to make it blatantly obvious by pretending to struggle a little more than I actually am and making my arm completely visible.

Conversations with people you've just met about your arm can be little daunting and you'll find yourself repeating the same story over and over again. Tedious! But I usually just shrug it off with a smile before saying "Yes, I do have one hand, it might seem strange to you but this is the way I was born and it's completely normal for me, so if you want to be my friend, it should be completely normal for you too"

Yes, I do have one hand, it might seem strange to you but this is the way I was born and it's completely normal for me, so if you want to be my friend, it should be completely normal for you too

REACH BURSARIES ARE THERE TO HELP YOU

Reach Bursaries are available to help with the purchase of adaptations so that members can fulfil their potential. Typically they are used to help fund special adaptations to enable people to learn to drive a car, play a musical instrument or engage in sport. Contact Head Office for details.

Susie Bannister showed such promise as a paraclimber that she was awarded a £2,000 Reach Bursary that has enabled her to train with a coach and compete in the British Paraclimbing Competitions last year. But this is not just about climbing. It is about giving young people with a limb difference the confidence to live life to the full.

Susie's dream is to become a member of the British squad. "I could not have done that without the support and training from my coach Belinda Fuller," she said. "She is one of the most amazing people. She inspired me to realise my potential by teaching me to use my little hand and helping me to discover my limits are far beyond what I believed. To some climbing is just a hobby but to me it is everything I want! I need to climb as it gives me confidence.

"Climbing reminds me that I am able to achieve more than I think I can and more than people expect! I am proud of coming third in the British Paraclimbing Series. During the competition I received comments about how fast I had improved and what a huge change from last year. Without the incredible support from Reach I would never have been able to achieve what I have."



THIS GUINEA PIG CRACKS EGGS HER OWN WAY

Karen Larmour was one of 10 children with an upper limb deficiency chosen to trial the first prototype of the Myoelectric arm. As a result of the trials, Myoelectric prosthetics were introduced to the UK and have been used by generations of children since.

"I remember enjoying the trials," said Karen, "I mean what child wouldn't like making a mess cracking eggs with an electric arm! As a result of the trials the Myoelectric was brought to the UK and I was one of the first children to receive it.

"I was always brought up with 'there is no such word as can't' and I believe that upbringing has made me the person I am today. Of course there are some things that I genuinely struggle to do, but on the whole I lead a very good independent life! I must admit though that I haven't worn prosthetic arms for a lot of my life, certainly not since starting High School as I actually found them more restrictive than helpful. I have wrist movement and do use my little arm to carry things, even though sometimes it's more like balancing than carrying.

"I did appreciate though, having a doctor and fitter who tried very hard to make adaptations for me when I was younger and of course to be given the opportunity to do the trials was amazing.

"My attitude to life is be positive, no matter what! At my career meetings I remember talking about options. I always wanted to work with children, I am now a Nursery Nurse. I wanted to drive, I do and passed my test first time at the age of 18 (my car is automatic.) I am very happily married and have a son (9) and a daughter (7.)"



A BIG WELCOME TO OUR NEW REACH MEMBERS

Our Reach babies are happy chatty people. Tom has multiple issues but doesn't let anything stop him. Emilia is doing really well after a very premature birth and 13 week stay in hospital. She is wearing a dress her mum wore as a baby! Layla loves strawberries and her Jack Russell dog!



Emilia



Ciaran



Tom



Layla Rose



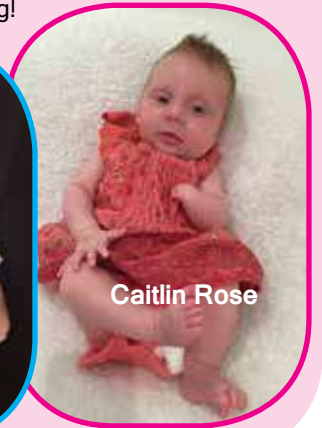
Nellie Rae



Harrison



Oisín



Caitlin Rose

THANK YOU

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU

Ben Washbrook from The Canteen, Newport raised £395.

Alicia Yarr from Penarth donated £106.

Mark Brown and the team at Glasgow Balfour Beatty held a race night and other events, raising a total of £1,615.

Reach members' used stamps have raised over £100.

The Darts Team at the Brents Tavern in Faversham raised £1,000 by winning the Darts League in 2014 and 2015 - Shane Clemmence, a member of the darts team, is Olivia Lawrence's uncle.

Keri Lewis's grandfather, Piotr Kalinowski, donated £60.

Heather Snelling raised a grand total of £1,375 at her 6th annual garden party in aid of Reach. "The weather was perfect," she said. "Sixty two people attended and a good time was had by all. My grandsons Jack and Toby Eden each ran a stall and managed to get people to part with their cash on the tombola and book stall. We also had a very popular cake stall and enjoyed a two course lunch." £500 of the proceeds will go to the Kent and East Sussex branch.

Kate Meneghetti raised £260 through the Waitrose in-store token scheme.

£30 was raised by Kayley Pitfield with a collection box at Riverside Takeaway.

Dink Bradnock from Exeter raised £181.20 at a bingo night.



Cecilia Cand donated £150 as a thank you to her friend Claire whose oldest boy has an upper limb deficiency. "We are expecting our first baby," said Cecilia, "Claire has been very generous in giving us baby stuff which she no longer needs. She suggested that we make a donation in lieu of reimbursing her."

Hilary Jennison held a collection at her Aqua Class to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and raised £40.

Chingford Lodge donated £50 "to assist with your good works."

Members of Emanay School of Dancing in Newcastle upon Tyne donated £80.70 from their Christmas Raffle collection. Reach was nominated as a charity by Gillian Crow.

The Grove Tennis Club in Saffron Waldon raised £940 at their annual charity tennis tournament and lunch.

Lara Pincott raised £113.18 by organising a sponsored silence at her school in February.

Elm Class at Punnetts Town Community Primary School in Sussex made bags, scones and butter and sold them to their parents in aid of Reach, raising £159.

Pupils at St Thomas CEP School in Westhoughton, Bolton, did a sponsored Tough Guy course and raised £479.20

Wyn and Peter Saunders and Exeter Moose raised £500. The cheque was presented to Frank Letch



CONGRATULATIONS!

When Matthew Smith and Jenna Banks were married on 28th July, they made it a very special occasion. They donated a total of £710 to Reach as Maisie, one of their children, is a Reach child. This is Maisie stealing the show at the ceremony! The sum was the result of fundraising and in lieu of wedding favours.

Over £500 was contributed by Maisie's Grandad John Smith and great-uncle Ricky Thomson. They raised nearly £400 in sponsorship for getting their hair braided on Matt's stag night (obviously after several beers), and the balance was raised by John when he did the Ice Bucket Challenge earlier in the year.



"The hair challenge was briefly mentioned as a joke," said Matt, "However when they realised people would donate if they did it, they went straight ahead and had it done."

"We had a fantastic wedding thanks, it's all just calming down now."



LEGACIES AND DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF LOVED ONES

If you, your family or friends have a connection with Reach, remember that when you make your Will, you can nominate the charity for a legacy, or for donations in lieu of funeral flowers. We can supply Donation in Memory envelopes which enable us to collect Gift Aid. Just let HO or your funeral director know and we can send them direct.

£30 was left to Reach by Peter Grace (Jessica Grace's late great-uncle)

Mrs J Eagles made a donation in memory of her husband Derek who was a Reach member.

A total of £323.51 was donated in memory of the late William Bullock.

THE DUBLIN WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

In June, Lorraine O'Farrell Mackey and two of her besties, Grainne Corcoran Byrne and Siobhan Corcoran completed the Women's Mini Marathon in Dublin.

They have raised €800 and counting for the Irish Branch. Well done!



JUST LOOK AT YOUR FABULOUS FUNDRAISING!

CARDIFF HALF MARATHON

Michelle Evans and her mum will be running Cardiff Half Marathon for Reach.

Michelle started running in January and has already completed a 5 and 10k. Her aim is run a full marathon before she turns 30 next year and also a sky dive - raising funds for Reach.

Michelle and Simon learnt that their son Jake had a little arm before he was born a year ago.

"He is a cheeky mischievous little boy, whose toothy smile brings happiness to the crappiest days. Jake copes really well with his disability and even though it may take a little longer he is soon able to adapt to do the things he needs to do," she said.

We are supporting Reach as over the years we will need their support and Jake will attend get togethers with other Reach children.



WHAT A GREAT IDEA - THE SWEETIE TOMBOLA

Helen Bathe organised this one at Rottingdean near Brighton in June.

A GENUINELY TOUGH MUDDER



The Tough Mudder was held on the 26th June at the lovely Drumlanrig Castle. It was five miles of muddy obstacles, some with names that filled you with fear such as Kiss of Mud, Birth Canal and Everest. I myself have a fear of water and two members in the team had fears of heights.

The obstacles were very testing but thankfully we had a good team and we supported one another through it. The obstacle which we all agree was the hardest was Everest. It's the last stop so at this stage you are very muddy, tired and cold.

The aim was to run up a steep plastic slope approx the size of a double decker bus and try and grab a team mate's hand. All five of my team mates managed to get up and I was the last...I was close to tears trying to run up and seconds away from giving up when my team mates made themselves into a human ladder and let me climb my way up on their shoulders with my very spiky trainers.

Even though it was tough it was so lovely that we teamed up together for a charity close to our hearts. That itself was what brought us through. The team raised around £600.

Sophie Wright

THE DUMBARTON LADS BEN NEVIS CLIMB

A team of nine intrepid climbers including Reach dad Steven McLaughlin, whose little boy Daniel, aged three, was born with a missing hand, tackled Britain's highest peak on July 30 and raised £2,035 for Reach.



Chris Reilly, Mark Joyce, Stephen Scott, John Paul Lusk, Kevin McGinley, Martin O'Brien, Crispin McAlpine, Stephen Watt and Steven McLaughlin conquered a very murky summit of Ben Nevis and said their determination to support Reach was certainly what pushed them through the gruelling last quarter of the climb.



THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE

Sam Danson, Phil Corns and Alex Corns are tackling the Three Peaks Challenge, climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Mount Snowden, to raise money for Reach. Please support their efforts <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/threepeakfor-reach>.

FAB FAB FABULOUS FUNDRAISING!



WHAT A MARATHON EFFORT!

Reach had a really strong team entered for the London Marathon this year and the runners raised £7,547.

Jessica daughter of former Reach chairman Nigel Tarrant said she had an absolutely fantastic day, completing it slow and steady in 5.06hrs and exceeding her target of £1500 for Reach.

Emz Hunt said she had a fantastic weekend but was pretty stiff the next day - no injuries but definitely tired!

Other team members included Martin Coll and Kamal Bhandari, one of the Nepalese Sherpas who helped Nigel and Robbie Tarrant on their epic trek to Everest Base Camp in November 2014.



WELL BOTH GAMES USE BALLS.....BUT

Reach dad Kevin Moyes had an illustrious team-mate for his fundraising event in June - former Wales and Ospreys star Ian Gough.

Gough switched from rugby to golf to take part in the testing challenge - playing nine golf clubs in the Swansea area in just one day to raise money for REACH.

The plan was for the team of five - made up of employees from Education Staffing Solutions Recruitment & Training supply teaching agency, for whom Gough is now a schools ambassador - to take it in turns to play a hole each until all 162 holes across Pontardawe, Mond Valley, Morriston, Swansea Bay, Fairwood, Clyne, Pennard, Gower and finally Langland Bay had been covered.

Gough, who plays off a 25 handicap, admitted he was a bit rusty after dedicating his life to professional rugby for so long.

He said: "We have been absolutely humbled by the support we have had from the different golf clubs, players, supporters and even schools in the area who have put things on and donated money to the cause.

"We now hope to raise around £5,000 and there will be an auction to win the gold bag, balls and other items used along the way."



RIDE LONDON 2016

David Elliott completed Ride London for Reach and said: "Whilst roaming around London & Surrey today, I had many compliments about the slogan and how wonderful it is." Great feedback - thanks!

LONDON TO CAMBRIDGE HALF MARATHON

Sue Cable, whose niece Toni Shaw is a Reach child, took part in the 50k walk as part of the London to Cambridge Ultra Challenge, raising a total of £675.

Caroline O'Sullivan raised £746 running the Vitality Reading Half Marathon in April 2016



YES - IT'S LIPBALM FOR REACH

Jo, who works for Forever Living, is raising money for Reach by donating £1 from each sale of Aloe Lips lip-balm during September. Aloe Lips with Jojoba cost £3; Sun Lips £4.26 including SPF30 sun protection. Email: jolivings@flp.com. Website: <http://www.jolivings.flp.com>.

We love these unusual ideas for raising money for Reach so keep that inspiration going and don't forget to contact HO for all the fundraising kit that you will need to make your event or campaign a success.



LONDON - BATTERSEA PARK SOCIAL

Come for a picnic in Battersea Park on Sunday 4 Sept at 12 noon at the Pagoda. If you would like to Go Ape, book tickets individually for 11 am so everyone can do it together at the same time.

We will have a picnic (please bring your own), explore the playground and we could go to the zoo if we fancy on the day. Contact Nicola Romberg and Clea Ingram SouthLondon@Reach.org.uk to say you are coming please.

AND SPORT

GOLD FOR MATTHEW AT WORLD PARACLIMBING CUP



Matthew Phillips 15, has won gold at his first international climbing competition.

He was a member of the GB Paraclimbing Team competing in the World Paraclimbing Cup in Italy. Matthew, who is a student at Salesian College in Farnborough, said: "Competing was daunting at first when I began to realise it was against the whole world but to win gold in my first international competition feels amazing."

The competition consist of two qualifying climbs and a final climb on the new ADEL Climbing wall at Campitello Di Fassa in the South Tyrol district of Italy. Matthew completed each of the three climbs with a perfect score making him one of the top climbers in the world in his category.

The team of five came home with three Gold and one Bronze medal making it a good start to their competition season. His father Gary, Reach Chairman, said: "Matthew has done extremely well. What most people don't realise is that there is not a junior and senior paraclimbing team. There is only one paraclimbing team. And all the other competitors are older than he is."

His coach at Surrey Sports Centre, Robin O'Leary, who is also the GB Team's Head Coach said he was extremely proud of Matthew and his efforts. Climbing is entering an exciting stage at the moment as the IOC Executive Committee have recommended it and four other sports to be accepted into the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. It will go to the IOC member vote in August.

If anyone with disabilities are interested in finding out more about climbing, contact your local wall. If you interested in following Matthew's next competitions then go to his website www.matthewphillips.me.uk.

ONE VERY DETERMINED LADY

Francesca Jones, 15, achieved her dream of playing tennis at Wimbledon this year, competing against able-bodied athletes despite having three fingers on each hand.

The Yorkshire teenager has had to deal with many operations on her hands and teasing. She has a small right hand - her racket hand - and is missing several toes as well as fingers. But Francesca is absolutely driven. From the age of nine, she has been living by herself at a tennis academy in Barcelona, hundreds of miles away from her family in Bradford.

She credits her success to her condition, saying it has made her more determined. Francesca told journalists: "I have had so many people criticise me and say things. That just motivates me more. I just think: 'Watch me do it.' You have got to keep on using it to your advantage.

"People say that I can't grip the racket properly and I get called names. I don't take much notice of it, but again it is using it as a positive. Everything's mental and everything's work, so if you keep at it then eventually it's going to work out for you."

"If people can see that I am where I am now and hopefully where I will be in the future with my condition then I am proving a point that I have always wanted to prove."

She has had three operations on her wrists in the last year alone so her appearance at Junior Wimbledon was a massive tribute to her determination and courage.



Matthew was among several Reach members to star in the amazing We're Superhuman trailer for the Paralympics with the great slogan **Yes We Can**.

Our Paralympian hopefuls in Rio this year include Hollie Arnold, javelin, Claire Cashmore and Susie Rodgers, swimming, and Lauren Steadman, triathlon. Claire qualified for Rio in her first trial and went on to win a gold and two bronze medals in the European Championships. But as she told Within Reach, "Rio is the one that counts!"

The Games start on September 7 and run to the 18th and are definitely not to be missed! Our Reach ambassador Alex Brooker will be adding his humorous take on each day's events in the Last Leg on Channel 4.

PARACLIMBING DATES

The BMC ParaClimbing Series 2016 is a national open climbing competition for those with disabilities. Anyone with a disability can enter from the age of 12 years old.

Each round consists of three Boulder problems and three climbing routes. There is a podium for each event and the last round includes the overall series podium. You don't have to enter all rounds but you must attend at least two rounds to be included in the overall series winners.

This event is used to select the GB ParaClimbing Team 2017 if you are 16 years or over in 2017. The dates are:
3 Sept - Edinburgh; 18 Oct - London
8 Oct - Manchester; 10 Dec - Newcastle
Registration is currently open for the Edinburgh round at www.mcofs.org. All other rounds check www.thebmc.co.uk

THE GOATFELL CHALLENGE

Martin Ireland recently completed a hill running challenge and raised £1210 for Reach.

The 'Goatfell Challenge', took place on 21st May on Arran. Martin ran 15k up Goatfell which is an 870m climb!

It was described as a classic Scottish hill race, with a bit of everything: road, trail, rough hill track, and a scramble up steep granite boulders to reach the dramatic summit. Then a tricky descent and fast run off to return the same way back to Brodick.



I think he was beginning to wonder why he was doing it and if he'd complete it so we decided the best plan was to get sponsors and raise some money for a brilliant cause.

RAW

2016.....

Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you!!
Charlotte had the time of her life!



Please can I go again next year?

Best week of the year - I'll go again next year!



"Last week was an amazing experience," said RAW leader **Tom Crow**. "I am so thankful I got the opportunity to be a leader this year. Bude was my first camp as a child 11 years ago. I wasn't sure about going at first but my parents really encouraged me to go. After the 11 hour coach journey it didn't take me long to realise how special RAW is to people like me. I found my spot in the Reach family.

Coming back as a leader five years after my last camp meant there were a lot of new faces for me, and one very ugly one for the majority of the children. The older children were the youngest on my last camp and they were now onto their last camp! What a shock! All of the Reach children are out of this world. To be able to watch, help and advise on individual ways to complete activities and normal day to day things was so so rewarding.

"We had a exceptional group of kids and adults who made up this year's RAW family, not to forget Rascal the Cat. I would like to thank them all for the week, the laughs, the tears, the injuries, the sunburn after care and the friendly family feeling. The last week has reminded my what is important in life, and made me rethink a lot of things.

"I encourage anyone thinking about coming to RAW as a child or adult to 100% go for it. There is nothing else in the world that can compare to this, Reach and RAW are truly a one-off. We are all so lucky!"



.....WENT TO BUDE IN DEEPEST CORNWALL

"What an amazing week! We welcomed new children, celebrated and shed tears with those who completed their final year. It has been a pleasure and privilege to see you all grow into young adults."

Organiser Claire Hermon



Fantastic week with the most amazing children I've met in my life.



Words really can't describe how good this week is.



In May prospective Raw Mentors attended the second Mentor training weekend, held at Pen-y-Garreg, the mountain cottage owned by St John Ambulance near Corris Uchaf, Gwynedd - deep in Snowdonia.

The weekend provides the Mentors with the knowledge and skills they will require to make RAW such a success.

They explore RAW's aims, structure, and leader's responsibilities. Sessions covered a wide range of group management skills such as group formation and motivation, the needs of young people, leadership styles, plus child protection and safe-guarding.

The emphasis is on keeping it fun, and included a team building exercise held on a mountainside beside Dol-Goch waterfalls.

All who attended said they really enjoyed the weekend and that they felt much more comfortable with the responsibilities of being a RAW mentor and an inspiration to our young members.



Joshua loved it! Over the years he has met lots of friends and had loads of fun.

CAMP TYNCAE

2016 starts without us knowing it is to be the year of uncertainty. Whatever has this got to do with the Reach camp? Let me explain... Imagine driving for half a day and then climbing a steep, never-ending mountain track through mist and possibly rain. You avoid the sheep as the children gaze at the scenery in disbelief, finally arriving at a place where dragons may lurk but children can run free with new found friends for three days. This place is not imaginary, it's the Reach Camp Tyncae.

This was the 19th year in which the wonderful Davies family headed by Rob and Dawn put together an amazing, fun filled and jam packed long weekend of things to do for all ages. The energy they showed before, during and after the event is truly inspiring and is for us what makes the camp so special.



Camp started on Friday night to the sound of a huge thunder storm with mud slides and forked lightning. Luckily, on Saturday the rain began to clear fairly early in the morning. We started with an open air breakfast by our tents and a hot mug of tea or coffee. Ready to start the day! First thing on the agenda, fun and games in the large tent. A lego competition with prizes to boot, brilliantly organised by Jamin and Mel. Making lanterns with Delph. Superhero costume-making and cake decorating organised by the rest of the Davies clan.

No time to stop! Into the car and off for lunch at the Rugby Club. Time now to relax and make new friends. Then a quick drive down the road to the leisure centre and it's time for the children to burn off some of that energy on the bouncy castle and climbing wall, basketball, bowls and table tennis. Luckily for the dads, there's a football and a five-a-side goal! Next up the swimming pool for a dip and a lovely hot shower. Outside, the rain is at it again as we make our way back to the camp for a fantastic BBQ.

Sunday started with a glorious sunrise and the smell of sausages cooking. We set off for one of the oldest and deepest mines in

Wales. There are three tours: a dragon hunt for the younger ones, an educational tour showing how hard conditions were for the miners and a scary horror tour! After a spot of panning for gold, we met up for a picnic in the sun.

We were then whizzed off to play football golf! Teams of five kicking the ball round the 9 hole course. Beautiful scenery, great fun and another chance to chat with new friends. Back to camp for jacket potatoes and hot soup. Then Roger 'the auctioneer' Davies works up a frenzy in the room with an auction before we launched into the much anticipated Reach Camp quiz, hosted by Jay. The evening was brilliant and crowned with a beautiful gift from the genius, Tony Glass. Everyone was wowed by the detail, effort and craftsmanship that had gone into making the individual presents given to every family that attended the camp.

The last day started with bacon sandwiches to set us up for the medal ceremony. All the children were given special 'survivor' medals. Then it was time for the group photographs with the Welsh mountains as backdrop.

So, what have all the terrible things this year got to do with the Reach Camp? It's quite simple, it doesn't matter how bad things are, there will always be this wonderful corner of Wales for families to look forward to once a year. The Davies family have showed us the greatest two commodities you can have in life, are love and time together.

James Elliott

THREE CHEERS FOR THE DAVIES FAMILY

And special thanks to: Morrisons, Aberystwyth for the full picnic lunch and rolls; Prize Magazine, Oxford, for the auction items; The Silver Mountain Experience, Ponterwyd; Capel Bangor Golf Club; Glenys Jones, Tregaron Rugby Club; Tony (Glass) for the 'prezzy's' to campers; Rebus Cymru Glan Yr Afon, Aberystwyth, who helped and provided material for the manufacture of the gifts this year for all the children and families; ICY for the marquee erection; Jamyn Beesley; Jason Hockenhall; Martin Jones; Daniel Rees; Rhydian Wilson; Rhun Gamer; Paul Langridge for clearing and tree cutting; Jay and Katy Munson; Lindsey Wilkins; Jo Currie; Roger, Steven and Michael Davies; Eli Leigh-Jones; Ed Davis and Delyth Jones; whose help both in camp and behind the scenes was greatly appreciated.

Thanks for all the donations from: Chris and Monica Rose, Mr and Mrs Halcrow, Mr and Mrs Havercroft, John and Alice Storey and Francy Broxholme.



RAISE YOUR GLASSES TO SIAN, QUEEN OF THE REACH MAY BALL



This was Sian's swansong May Ball and the best ever. The most spectacular room decorations and the most money raised - a magnificent £18,300. Over the last seven years Sian has raised over £100,000 with her May Balls. This is the reward for incredible dedication and hard work. Who will now take over the baton and run with it?



Sian started her fundraising years ago with Ladies Nights but a charity ball she attended in Harrogate opened her eyes to greater possibilities. "You know what? I could do that." She thought. And she was right. Her first ball raised £7,500 without any sponsorship. The following year sponsorship began to play a role which enables the balls to have extra entertainments and activities. These events have contributed significantly to Reach funds and given pleasure to hundreds of people.

A HUGE thank you to Sian.

Over the last 18 years, Sian has given thousands of hours to Reach families. She has done countless stints on the helpline reassuring parents in distress; she has worked hard as a trustee steering the organisation and been tireless in organising a fabulous night to celebrate at the Family Weekends. And this is ON TOP OF masterminding the May Balls. Such energy! Thank you isn't enough really!

"I would like to take this time to thank everyone who has supported the Reach May Ball since I started arranging the event seven years ago," said Sian. "My first May Ball was in 2009 and started with 100 people at the Padbrook Park Hotel in Cullompton raising £7,500 which I was so thrilled about. Over the years it has grown and grown and the support has been amazing. They have all been great in their own special way but I must say this year I think it was the best one ever and I am so pleased that you were all part of it.

"Thanks to everyone who was involved, donating and buying raffle prizes, giving up their time to help arrange the event, attending it and supporting me over the last 8 months. Big hug and cwctw to everyone."



ROUND THE BRANCHES



THE SCOTTISH WEEKEND ADVENTURE

Abernethy Ardeonaig is an outdoor activity centre in the heart of Perthshire on Loch Tay with fantastic views across the water. An amazing 49 people attended the Scottish family weekend and so much fun was had by all!

The weekend was shared by Jo Dixon our national co-ordinator who was astounded at the amount of people there and what our branch was all about! Looking forward to seeing everyone at the AGM in Glasgow.



NORTHWESTERN



North West families had a great time at the Ice Cream Farm in Cheshire. There were new babies to welcome, the younger children played in the Play Barn and the older kids had access to the Loft Room for fun and games. Everyone met up in the party room for a picnic lunch. Cheryl Danson said "the exciting part was making our own ice cream and choosing the toppings! It's a lovely place for a day out, and the families went outside after lunch as it was such a sunny day. Many thanks to Jane Crook for once again organising us another wonderful day out."

WESSEX BRANCH MEMBERS

The next branch event will be at Surrey Sports Centre climbing wall on Saturday 10th September. We have two sessions arranged split as 4-7yrs and 7yrs and over. Session 1 is from 2-3pm and session 2 from 3-4.30pm.

This is where Mathew Phillips trains and he will be there to share his knowledge and show us how it's done! The cost for this event will be covered by branch funds but I will need to know confirmed numbers as soon as possible. No previous experience is needed! We will also have a room available for us to use as a social break out room. There is also a Starbucks on site for refreshments. Contact **Kate Meneghetti** at wessex-reach@live.com.

NORTHERN IRELAND FUN

Northern Ireland branch family day was spent at Carfunnock Country Park with eight Reach families enjoying a picnic together before the kids tried out the puffer train, zorbing, trampolining and the adventure playground. Thanks to everyone for coming and making it such a great day.

Lynne McKinley

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH



Reach members attending the Open Day at Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast.

EAST ANGLIA

A successful outing to Thetford Forest



"And big Thank You to Vicky and Carl McGranachan for organising a great afternoon trampolining, or Little arm party as Eva put it. The girls loved it, although they still appeared to have energy left!"

Emma Cooper



Alastair Hume aged 9 was given the opportunity of a free charity flight at our local Leicester Aerodrome in June. He went up for a 50 minute flight over landmarks including Rutland Water, our house, Leicester City Football Ground, and the film set of an episode of Top Gear at Bruntingthorpe Airstrip.



Chris McCormack, the pilot, was kind and made Alastair feel thoroughly at ease, not nervous at all. He even helped to take control at one point. Alastair wore headphones to hear air traffic control instructions. He said it was his best experience ever, and he could now say he really did have his head in the clouds. He told his class all about it, so he felt very special. Thanks again for this wonderful day out.

Alexandra Hume

TAITUM'S GOLDEN AWARD

Taitum Pitfield is one happy little lady.

It has been sports week at school with the children taking part in such sports as archery, go-karts, netball, cricket, rock climbing wall etc etc (no work only sports).

At the closing ceremony, Taitum was awarded a special trophy for never giving up no matter what she was faced with.



IRELAND BRANCH

"We went to the the Arabian Gym <http://arabiangymnastics.com/birthday-parties> in April and also booked an entertainer." The kids ran amok in the gym using all the equipment under supervision and the parents had a viewing room to the side with tea and finger food.

"We had a big crowd, around 20 families with Reach kids and their siblings from four weeks to 13 year old who had travelled from all over Ireland to be there."

Lorraine O'Farrell



SOUTH WALES

South Wales Summer Get Together was on a wet day in July at Hendrewennol fruit farm. Lots of fun on the bouncy castle but we kept the hay bale jumping to a minimum as the misty rain was a little off putting. But in true Welsh style we braved the weather and enjoyed our picnic tea in our tent!

So lovely to meet new members and to welcome some gorgeous baby siblings to our group.

Melissa Beesley

Anna and Emily about to take off on a Bader Braves Flying Day flight from Manchester Aerodrome in July



BADER BRAVES FLYING DAYS

Joe Coll had a fantastic time - a teensy bit scared when he took over the control! A great day if you ever get the opportunity!



BADER BRAVES YOUNG AVIATOR DAYS

The next event takes place on Saturday 17th September at PEMBROKESHIRE FLYING CLUB

based at Haverfordwest Airport, Fishguard Road, Haverfordwest SA62 4BN

For details, go to:

www.douglasbaderfoundation.com

within **Reach**



It's
Ability not
disability
that
matters

