

Helping children with upper limb differences live life without limits

# within Reach<sup>★</sup>

SPRING 2022 | ISSUE 149

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Where to Begin?**

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Okay to Struggle**

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Meeting the Dalai Lama!**

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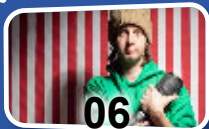
**+ James Barnes-Miller:  
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Our front cover star Hero (age 5) as 'Ash' from Pokémon

  
Reach

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# Meet our Wonderful Branch Coordinators

3 Counties Herts, Beds & Bucks



Jennifer Davies  
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Berks, Oxford and Wilts



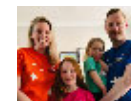
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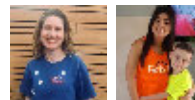
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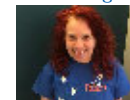
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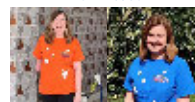
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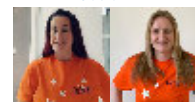
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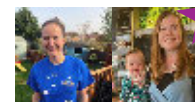
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Mags Millar & Stephanie Tennant  
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South London



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# Events 2022

**MAR** • 12th - South London Branch Meet Up  
• 26th - North London Branch Meet Up

**APR** • Limb Loss/Difference Awareness Month  
• LimbLoss Awareness Challenge  
• 23rd - North West Branch Meet Up

**MAY** • 14th - 3 Counties Branch Meet Up

**JUN** • 2nd - 5th - Tyn Cae Camping

**JUL** • 15th - 17th - North West Family Weekend  
• 24th - 31st - RAW

**AUG** • R5ach Charity Challenge Fundraising Month

**OCT** • 2nd - London Marathon  
• 21st - 23rd - Reach Annual Family Weekend

For details contact reach@reach.org.uk or the branch coordinator.



Stay up to date

All event news is on our website [www.reach.org.uk](http://www.reach.org.uk) and facebook page [www.facebook.com/reachcharity](http://www.facebook.com/reachcharity).



## Hello!

From the Editor & Designer of withinReach  
We're Max & Tom Swinhoe. We welcome comments, articles, requests, or suggestions for future editions of withinReach. Email us at [withinreach@reach.org.uk](mailto:withinreach@reach.org.uk)



## Reach Membership

Membership is open to parents of children with upper limb difference, and individuals of 18 years and over who are interested in furthering the work of the association. The UK and Ireland subscription is from £36 (£35 via direct debit) and the International subscription is £40.

Views expressed in withinReach are not necessarily those of Reach and are not intended to reflect or constitute Reach policy, or in any way portray an official view.

April is **LIMB LOSS & LIMB DIFFERENCE AWARENESS MONTH**

Share stories  
Raise awareness  
Raise funds

Find out more on how to get involved by visiting:  
<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/Reach>

South Wales



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South West



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yorkshire@reach.org.uk

## A Warm Reach Welcome

to our new branch coordinators Sarah Chaplin and Laura Kayley for the South West & Hannah Harrington joining Jessica Schmidt in South London.



I love this time of year, it seems like everything is possible when the days get longer, bulbs start blooming and buds start appearing on the trees.

It's going to be an exciting year for Reach, hopefully we'll be able to get back to our normal cycle, with branches having events in the spring, summer, and winter. Some branches have already got meet-ups in the calendar, so if you want to talk to your branch coordinator, please email head office [reach@reach.org.uk](mailto:reach@reach.org.uk) and we can pass on their direct email address.

We have lots of exciting things planned this year, kicking off with **Limb Loss & Limb Difference Awareness Month** in April. This year we will be working with India Sasha, a wonderful advocate of 'Living Life without Limits,' India shares her stories through Instagram [@indiashasha](https://www.instagram.com/indiashasha) and YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/c/IndiaSashaYoutube](https://www.youtube.com/c/IndiaSashaYoutube).

Kate and I have just had a meeting with Claire Hermon the leader of **RAW**, and are excited that we get to use a brand-new activity centre in the West Midlands. The Pioneer centre [activity-centres.naycacuk.co.uk/pioneer-centre](https://activity-centres.naycacuk.co.uk/pioneer-centre), is situated in stunning countryside on the edge of the Wyre Forest, offering an opportunity to learn new skills, conquer fears and have plenty of fun!

Our bespoke **R5ach charity challenge** will take place again in August, where the whole family can get involved - everyone who takes part receives a R5ach medal.

We're planning our **Annual Family Weekend on 22nd to 23rd October**, which is taking place at Woodland Grange, Leamington Spa ([makevenues.co.uk/woodland-grange-learnington-spa](https://makevenues.co.uk/woodland-grange-learnington-spa)) with lots of activities for parents, young people, children, and families. Book your rooms now at [enquires@makevenues.co.uk](mailto:enquires@makevenues.co.uk) or 01926 336621 (please mention 'Reach Weekend' when booking). Payment is required upfront but it's fully refundable up to 24 hours before the day. Family rooms with one child start from £100, £130 with two children and if you need more space, please talk to the hotel directly.

I wanted to remind you that most branches have a **WhatsApp group** where you can talk directly to other parents, as well as our members-only Facebook group where you will always receive support and celebration of you or your child's successes.

Reach has gone from strength to strength in the last year, with over 75 new members joining the Reach family. Check out our website: [reach.org.uk/page-2/](https://reach.org.uk/page-2/), to find out all the **benefits of being a member**.

**Our Reach children tell us what makes Reach awesome** - [reach.org.uk/children-show-us-what-makes-reach-awesome](https://reach.org.uk/children-show-us-what-makes-reach-awesome)

If you would like to join Reach, it's only £36 a year. This can be paid, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, or annually via PayPal, or via direct debit per annum. However, Reach wants to be inclusive so if you are struggling to pay the membership fee, please contact Head Office **0845 130 6225**.

We're also in the middle of developing a **new website** which will make navigation even easier! If you would like to get involved and write some content it's so important to us that parents see themselves reflected in Reach and can see the understanding and support that other parents can offer them.

I hope to be able to meet some of you this year at branch events, but in the meantime, I am always available to chat on **0845 130 6225** or email [debb@reach.org.uk](mailto:debb@reach.org.uk)

*Debs*

Debs Bond  
National Coordinator  
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Reaches Board  
of Trustees

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Lorraine Mackey  
[lorraineo@reach.org.uk](mailto:lorraineo@reach.org.uk)

## Spring has sprung... and it looks as though covid restrictions are reducing across the UK and Ireland - at last!

The Trustee Board is keeping everything crossed for lots of Reach meet-ups this summer. Having branch activity and RAW fully back up and running will make such a difference to the sense of community. We know that the Branch Coordinators' brains are exploding with ideas of things they would have liked to do but covid got in the way and we can't wait to see pictures of everyone getting together again.

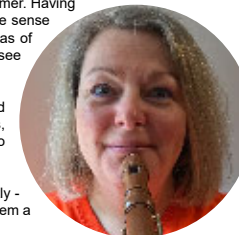
In terms of what the Trustee Board has been up to, we're continuing to work hard getting **Reach Ireland** set up. It's taking a while to get through the registration process, but hopefully it won't be much longer. Thank you to Reach members in Ireland who have patiently put up with the delays in making this possible.

We've completed our review of the **bursary scheme**, and will be re-launching it shortly - watch this space. We've also been reviewing our **strategic priorities** to try to make them a bit more focused and make clear why these are important to the work of our charity.

One of the things we're particularly keen to do this year is have a proper think about whether Reach currently provides the right type of support and activities for people in their teenage years. Or actually, we're already pretty sure that we haven't got it right yet, but we need your help in working out what 'right' looks like. So, **if you're a teenager with a limb difference, recently were one, will soon be one, or have one in your family please get in touch** to let us know what sort of support is most useful to people of your age. You can write to the head office team on [reach@reach.org.uk](mailto:reach@reach.org.uk) or feel free to write to me on [clares@reach.org.uk](mailto:clares@reach.org.uk).

By the time *withinReach* hits your inboxes, it will be LimbLoss Awareness Month. This is a really big opportunity for Reach to help raise awareness of limb difference and also a great springboard for our own fundraising, which has taken quite a big hit over the past couple of years. Every single one of us can use that month as a chance to spread the word - in our schools, our workplaces, our communities and our social media. I look forward to seeing the airways turned orange and blue in April.

*Clare*  
Clare Salters  
Chair, Reach Board of Trustees  
[clares@reach.org.uk](mailto:clares@reach.org.uk)



Check out the  
Reach Shop!

As well as Reach merchandise including t-shirts, hoodies, masks and bags, you can buy books, inspirational posters, charity artwork and Christmas cards.

Just visit [Reach.org.uk/shop](https://Reach.org.uk/shop)



## Contact Reach

Address: Reach, Tavistock Enterprise Hub, Pearl Assurance House, Brook Street, Tavistock, PL19 0BN  
Tel: 0845 130 6225  
From a Mobile: 020 3478 0100  
Email: [reach@reach.org.uk](mailto:reach@reach.org.uk)

Office hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm  
Website: [www.reach.org.uk](https://www.reach.org.uk)  
Twitter: [@reachcharity](https://twitter.com/reachcharity)  
Instagram: [@reachcharity1](https://www.instagram.com/reachcharity1)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/reachcharity](https://www.facebook.com/reachcharity)  
LinkedIn: [Reach Charity Limited](https://www.linkedin.com/company/reach-charity-limited)  
Registered charity in England and Wales no. 1134544  
Registered charity in Scotland no. SC049805

## Free Reach Family Photoshoots for the NEW Reach website!

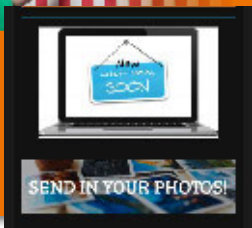
A new Reach website is coming soon and we need your photos and stories to populate its pages so we can share the authentic voices and beautiful faces of our community. Email [Reach@reach.org.uk](mailto:Reach@reach.org.uk) if you would like to get involved.

Reach adult Ste Whiteoak and his family at Oak Photo are offering free photoshoots for Reach families until the end of July. "No catch, no hard sell of prints", Ste and his family are kindly offering their services to help Reach and give you some great family photos.

Ste says: "Promotion of organisations is always on going and costs are rising all the time. As a Reach family, we have decided to help and use what we do as a family business to push Reach forward in these tough times. As an artist, I want to capture the family spirit of Reach by capturing its wonderful families in fun smiley family portraits. By doing so we can give the organisation a huge stock of vibrant high-quality photos that it needs to promote how awesome it is to be part of Reach, and the families that take part in the project will get some great family photos, totally free. Some have already said they are bringing furry family members too - it's going to be so much fun!"

The studio is in County Durham, you can find out more or book your photoshoot by contacting Ste at [oakphoto.ste@gmail.com](mailto:oakphoto.ste@gmail.com).

<https://www.oakphoto.co.uk/>

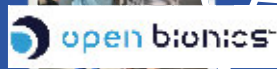


## Open Bionics - Experience Days

2022 experience days:

- Friday 25th February
- Friday 26th August
- Friday 22nd April
- Friday 11th November

The Open Bionics Hero Arm Experience Day is an informal event that lets guests ask questions, meet members from the limb difference community, and see cutting-edge technology in action making Hero Arms. Children are welcome to attend. For more information about the event, please see here: <https://openbionics.com/en/try-the-open-bionics-hero-arm/>



## Lauren Steadman awarded MBE

Congratulations to Reach Ambassador and Tokyo Paralympic gold medal winner Lauren Steadman, awarded an MBE for her services to sport in the 2021 New Year Honours List. We asked Lauren what her MBE award gives to her role as an ambassador for upper limb difference and whether it changes her mindset regarding the work she does for the community?

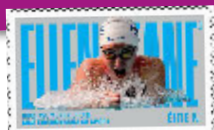


"With or without an MBE I continue to strive to motivate others to pursue their goals and push their boundaries. It is natural to feel limited in one way or another and usually it's a leap of courage or sense of confidence that aids us in achieving our goals. It is wonderful to be honoured and recognised for my commitment and dedication to elite sport. This is only the beginning and I hope to continue motivating others to push their boundaries."

## Ellen Keane. A Representation Queen!

Ellen has been passionately representing upper limb difference on the dancefloor on Dancing with the Stars Ireland 2022, going from strength to strength. Go Ellen!

Not only that, Ellen is representing para swimming on a new stamp by An Post, which celebrates Irish women in sport. Find them here: [www.anpost.com/Shop/Special-issue-stamps/Irish-Women-in-Sport/](http://www.anpost.com/Shop/Special-issue-stamps/Irish-Women-in-Sport/)



## Successful Bursaries

Fred Palin

For Fred driving has been a passion since he was very small and is something that's very important to him:

“ It's quite unbelievable all the things that need to be considered and the time it takes to get organised to drive if you want to start when you are 17, as I do. The Reach bursary is going to be such a great help for those of us within Reach that cannot access the Motability scheme. When I experienced the Lodgesons control during my assessment with RDAC it was one of the few times that I have found an adaptation helpful without any compromise, as I have found with other prostheses.

Thank you so much to Reach for helping me to access the best there is to help me to drive and to be independent!

”

Sophie Place

Sophie's bursary has enabled her to have a laptop at home which helps her to develop her typing skills and speed. Sophie's mum Sarah told us why:

“ Sophie was awarded a Reach bursary to purchase a laptop. Sophie has an unusual hand and wrist difference which means she's unable to hold a pen in her right hand (her dominant side.) Although she can write left-handed, she struggles with fatigue and letter formation. She has access to a laptop at school but not at home. Thanks to the bursary she now has her own laptop at home and is making great progress with her touch-typing skills. This is benefiting her at school as well as she's able to increase the speed at which she's typing.

”

Thank you Reach!

## Christmas parties

We celebrated the return of our Reach Christmas parties in full swing. In the lead-up to Christmas our branches held fantastic events and everyone had a wonderful time finally being able to meet up and get festive in person!



# Welcome to Reach

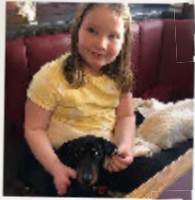
Seth



Annabella



Katie



Olivia



Ara



Harry



Harrison



Sarah



Discover obstacle courses, walks, monthly step challenges and more, to help us support children and their families affected by upper limb difference.

We'll give you help and support right up to race day and if you pledge to raise at least £250 and you'll get a Reach t-shirt or running vest.

Find your race at:  
<https://runforcharity.com/charity/reach-charity-ltd>

## Run for Reach



## Providing soft shell prosthetic arms for UK children

**Project  
Limitless  
Campaign**

Our aim is to supply children in the UK with a prosthetic arm **COMPLETELY FREE**

Thanks to your generosity, every day of this year one child with upper limb difference has received support through Project Limitless providing them with a revolutionary new tech prosthetic; one that is easy to wear, soft to the touch and grows with the child adapting to their changing needs such as eating, riding a bike, playing an instrument and even surfing!

We were able to avoid the need for hospital visits as the children received their new prosthetic by post. Each child has also been provided with peer-to-peer support, with limb buddies guiding them through their journey every step of the way.

To find out more please contact: [david.bickers@douglasbaderfoundation.com](mailto:david.bickers@douglasbaderfoundation.com)



### YOUNG AVIATORS DAYS

A big part of Bader Braves is the Young Aviators Days which provide youngsters from 6-18 affected by limb deficiency and other disabilities with the opportunity of experiencing flight in a light aircraft. This incredibly popular and successful initiative has been created to make the children feel special, give them a sense of achievement; increase their self-confidence and hopefully inspire and empower them to go on to other experiences and achievements.

### VENUES AND DATES

Sat 16th July, Bodmin, Cornwall  
Sat 30th July, Manchester  
Sat 24th Sept, Sherburn in Elmet

To find out more please contact Keith Delderfield:  
[douglasbaderfdn@btinternet.com](mailto:douglasbaderfdn@btinternet.com)

### THE RETURN OF OUR BADER BRAVES FAMILY SAILINGS DAYS with SAILABILITY

OPEN TO CHILDREN WITH LIMB DIFFERENCE AND THEIR FAMILIES

### VENUES AND DATES

All-Aboard Watersports, Baltic Wharf, Underfall Yard, Cumberland Road, Bristol, BS1 6XG  
24th July 10.00 - 12.30 & 1.30 - 4.00pm

London dates to be advised

Sailing and Powerboat experience – morning and afternoon session – snack lunch and soft drinks – experienced instructors

To find out more please contact:  
[david.bickers@douglasbaderfoundation.com](mailto:david.bickers@douglasbaderfoundation.com)

# HOW TO: Start Your Journey into Para Sport

Para Athletics is the leading Paralympic sport in the UK and performances from elite athletes on the world stage continue to excel and inspire the next generation of young athletes.

The British Athletics Paralympic Performance Pathway aims to identify, develop, prepare and support potential Paralympians towards World Class level, and significantly also supports programmes at grassroots level.

British Athletics work closely with the Home Country Athletics Federations (England Athletics, Welsh Athletics, Scottish Athletics and Athletics Northern Ireland) to provide progressive learning squad environments for performance athletes to grow and develop in a safe, but challenging and inspiring setting.

## So, how do I get involved?

- Join a local athletics club, typically from 7 or 8 years old: Club finder: <https://www.uka.org.uk/get-involved/club-search/>
- Get in touch with the Paralympic Pathway team: [www.uka.org.uk/performance/paralympic-performance-pathway/](http://www.uka.org.uk/performance/paralympic-performance-pathway/)

## What key events can I get involved in?

- Activity Alliance National Junior Athletics Champs - 7 to 19 years old [www.activityalliance.org.uk/](http://www.activityalliance.org.uk/)
- London Mini Marathon - 11 to 16 years old, free entry. [www.tcs.londonmarathon.com/the-event/mini-london-marathon](http://www.tcs.londonmarathon.com/the-event/mini-london-marathon)
- Mainstream athletics competition with a club
- [Parkrun.org.uk](http://Parkrun.org.uk) and Junior ParkRun



By Gareth Burrell at UK Athletics



# Reach Teens on the Para Sport Pathway

## FRED PALIN - England Amputee Football

Fred has been selected for the next generation England Amputee Football squad. Fred's mum Hannah told us about his journey into Amputee Football:

"Fred's biggest success to date is being selected for the next generation England Amputee Football squad as a goalkeeper."

According to the FA.com in Amputee Football 'outfield players are either above or below the knee single-leg amputees whilst goalkeepers are single-arm amputees.'

Hannah says: "To play Amputee Football in goal you must have only one hand, so to save goals you can only use your one arm. Players on the pitch play on crutches in the main, although at lower levels you can play with a prosthesis but there can only be one player with a prosthesis on the pitch and they have limits on the number of touches."

For Fred it all began when he was 12 whilst away on a family weekend away through the Douglas Bader Foundation:

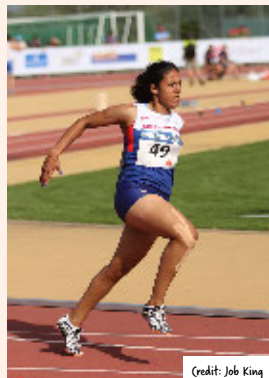
"We met lots of families with shared stories and experiences. There we met a young man who played Amputee football and Fred's football story started there. We got in touch with Owen Coyle, the England Amputee Manager, went to a training session at West Bromwich Albion, and started going to junior England camps based in Nantwich at Reaseheath college - the home of Amputee Football.

"Fred has had two trips abroad on tour with the junior England set up and is now the West Broms goalkeeper but he was recently called up to begin his England journey. He is one of the youngest in the squad and one of only 3 goalkeepers selected."



Photos by: AA Photography

# How did these athletes get involved in para-athletics?



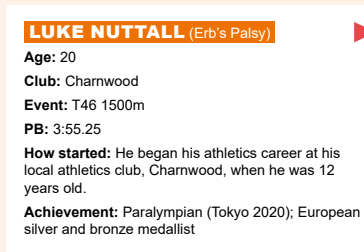
Credit: Job King

## SIMRAN KAUR (Arm amputee)

**Age:** 19  
**Club:** Bristol & West  
**Event:** T46 100m  
**PB:** 13.21

**How started:** The Limb Power games at Stoke Mandeville first sparked Simran's interest in athletics. The event is for anyone who's lost a limb to try out a number of sports, including seated volleyball, wheelchair basketball, and archery. She was spotted by the British Athletics coaches on the athletics track and told that with the right training she could go far.

**Achievement:** World Para Athletics Junior medalist



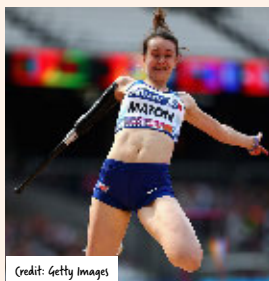
Credit: imagecommis

## LUKE NUTTALL (Erb's Palsy)

**Age:** 20  
**Club:** Charnwood  
**Event:** T46 1500m  
**PB:** 3:55.25

**How started:** He began his athletics career at his local athletics club, Charnwood, when he was 12 years old.

**Achievement:** Paralympian (Tokyo 2020); European silver and bronze medalist



Credit: Getty Images

## POLLY MATON (Dysmelia)

**Age:** 22  
**Club:** Devizes  
**Event:** T47 Long Jump  
**PB:** 5.27m

**How started:** She began athletics at age eight at a free trial session at her primary school.

**Achievement:** Two-time Paralympian; World silver medalist; multiple European medalist

## HOLLIE ARNOLD, MBE (Dysmelia)

**Age:** 27  
**Club:** Blackheath and Bromley  
**Event:** F46 Javelin  
**PB:** 44.73

**How she started:** She took up the sport at age 11 at Cleethorpes Athletics Club in England.

**Achievement:** Paralympic, World, European and Commonwealth Champion.



Credit: Getty Images

## JACOB WOOD - Para Swimming

In February Reach teen Jacob shone at the National Para Swimming Championships in Aberdeen, winning a medal for being the highest point scorer in his age group in the 50m freestyle.

Jacob's mum Sam shares how his swimming journey began:

"Jacob started swimming at Water Babies and loved it. They used to use him as a demonstration in the lessons as he was always so happy in the water!

When he got a little older, he had one-to-one and group lessons with a lovely swimming teacher who got him through all the stages, completing his gold badge when he was almost 8."

Sam says that Jacob then joined a swimming club but that "he was the only swimmer with a disability" and whilst "the coaches were lovely, he didn't really progress here".

"When he was 12 years old, we changed to Gloucester City Swimming club and the progress in his swimming since has been brilliant. They have their own para squad which Jacob started swimming most of his sessions with but he also swam once a week with able-bodied swimmers.

Now Jacob swims with an able-bodied squad at all sessions and also helps coach some of the younger swimmers.

"With Gloucester he went to his first Nationals in 2019 and got a bronze medal for the 200 IM (Individual Medley) and was due to swim at Internationals but unfortunately this was cancelled due to COVID. Since October and getting back to competitions, he's got PBs in every competition which is around six so far with more to come.

He competed at Nationals last December in Swansea and made all of the finals for his classification, racing against all ages and even Paralympians in some of them."

Just before Christmas though, the Wood family got a very exciting email:

"The email was to say he'd been selected for the Para Swimming Talent Programme!"

Sam says that "athletes are chosen on their performance", having to collect a specific number of points to be eligible for selection which "Jacob comfortably achieved in Swansea".

"Jacob and his coach are now under a Para Talent Coach who will support them with his training and competitions. There will also be education sessions and camps for Jacob to attend."



Credit: Jacob

Photos by: George Kerr / British Swimming

# Meet Hero Arm user Phoebe Sinclair!



When Phoebe, 10, received a ring light for Christmas she immediately wanted to try the Ring Light TikTok challenge with her Hero Arm. The 10 second clip immediately went viral and within weeks amassed over seven million views.

**Phoebe, how does it make you feel knowing so many people have seen your TikTok video?**

I was really surprised how well the video did! It makes me very happy knowing so many people have seen my Hero Arm in action with my lovely gold covers!



**You are very confident on TikTok, do you ever get anxious or nervous in real-life?**

I used to get anxious almost all the time when meeting new people because I know they will ask questions about my limb difference and I struggled to give good answers. But with the Hero Arm, people usually just want to see it working and it amazes them which makes me feel confident and the worry goes away.

**What's your favourite thing to do with the Hero Arm?**

Firstly, just turning up to parties and stuff wearing it feels amazing. Especially when my outfit matches the arm. And of course, baking and cooking is a favourite thing to do!



**We saw your Hero Arm covers matched your shoes when you attended the award ceremony in London where you met Prince William, what was that like?**

Meeting Prince William was very exciting and really overwhelming. I didn't know what to say at first! Then he started asking me questions and before I knew it, we were talking.

**Phoebe's dad Daniel has also noticed a huge difference in the 10-year-old:**

"Phoebe wears her Hero Arm every day. She loves to wear it at school and only takes it off during break time because she doesn't want to accidentally damage it when playing. She's the first to reach for things from the shelves when shopping, she's even practising playing violin with her Hero Arm!

Phoebe has always been a vibrant, confident girl, and I always worried her limb difference would hinder that. However, since having the Hero Arm, I've noticed her confidence has grown massively which I didn't know was possible. On top of that, I've noticed she is able to talk a lot more freely about her limb difference when asked about it, which is always amazing to see."

Read the full interview with Phoebe Sinclair here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9xyrd7>



## Do you qualify for free Hero Arm funding?

Download our latest brochure to find out about funding support available, the new Hero Arm Sidekick App coming in 2022 and latest technical specifications of the Hero Arm.

Scan to download brochure



# April is LIMB LOSS & LIMB DIFFERENCE AWARENESS MONTH



Tom making a nest, peeling an orange without the full use of one hand.

**This year Reach is encouraging people to get involved in the 'Walk in My Shoes' Challenge to spread awareness of upper limb difference and share insights into what it's like to live with a difference and overcome some of the challenges that come with everyday tasks.**

Whether you're a Reach member or not, we all do things differently and in our own way, even within Reach there are many different upper limb differences, so now is the time to challenge yourself and walk in somebody's else shoes.

### Inclusion takes from no one, and benefits everyone.

We challenged Tom, the withinReach designer, to carry out some 'everyday' tasks using just one hand and without the full use of the other. We asked him to do things like prepare breakfast, zip up his jacket and tie his laces.

### Tom, how did you find your everyday tasks?

Having known Max for 13 years I have tried carrying out tasks or activities with a simulated limb difference before, but every time I do it's a reminder of how many things in day-to-day life are designed for two hands.

### **Was there anything you found harder than you'd expected?**

Peeling the apple and chopping it up was tougher than I thought it'd be. Things just took longer than expected, which made me realise that it must take more energy when it comes to carrying out the many tasks we do on a daily basis.

### **Would you recommend the 'Walk in my shoes' challenge?**

I think everyone should try to 'walk in the shoes' of others sometimes as it allows you to see life from a different perspective. I take it for granted that I have two hands and that there are some things I would never think of as a struggle but are for some people. It also makes you realise how much problem solving is involved in a Reach member's every day.

You can watch Max and Tom's challenge here: [shorturl.at/owGP5](https://shorturl.at/owGP5)



# The 'Walk In My Shoes' Challenge

### **Share a video or photo of you, friends or family members taking part.**

If you're a Reach member show us how you carry out everyday tasks and if you're not, step into the shoes of a Reach child or adult and do your tasks with limited functionality, perhaps wear a sock over one hand, or over both and experience what it might be like to overcome an everyday task like:

- Tying shoe laces
- Putting socks on
- Doing up buttons
- Catching a ball
- Eating a snack



Max shows Tom how it's really done :)

**Tag Reach in your posts or email your videos and photos to: [reach@reach.org.uk](mailto:reach@reach.org.uk) and we will share them for you.**

Add a donation button to your Facebook or Instagram posts or ask people to sponsor you (e.g. £2 per task). Every penny goes to helping Reach children live a life without limits.

➔ <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/Reach>

Let's Raise Awareness, Celebrate and Educate  
**#BornIncredible #NoLimits #LLDDAM**



Tom finds out that it's not very easy to do up a jacket zip using only one full hand.

# Massive Thanks

£1000

**CO-OP Bank**  
A huge thanks to CO-OP Bank for their donation!

£500

**Robert Davies and Tesco**  
Big thank you to Robert Davies and Tesco and their Community Fund towards this years Camp Tyn Cae.

**Mark Weaver**  
'Fire & Ice Photography Presentation at Hereford'

£92

Thank you to friend of Reach, photographer Mark, who gives talks to local groups and always donates his fee and any money raised during the night to the Reach West Midlands branch.

**Joseph Strong Frazier Trust**

£1500

£245

**Funeral donations Made In Memory of Mrs Rita Sheldon**

£235

**Amazon Smile**  
Donations from July to September 2021

**The Watch Ashore**  
The not-for-profit social organisation providing support and friendship to partners and families of Merchant Navy personnel. Reach's Debs and Kate recently visited them as guest speakers for the members as part of their monthly lunch get-together.

£87

**Barbara Collis** in lieu of sending Christmas cards to her friends at church

£40

£25

**Linda Stokes**  
Did a talk to her WI and donated her fee to Reach.

**West Cross Bowls Club** in lieu of Christmas cards

£25

£107

**Donations Made In Memory of Mr Albert Hannen**

£75

**Geradine's collection tins** in Newport Pembro, Wales

**Taylor Wimpey West Midlands** for the West Midlands branch

£375

**Janet Douglas**  
Birthday donation from our oldest Reach member, Janet Douglas, who turned a fabulous 85 in March. Thank you and happy birthday Janet!

£64

Make your purchases through

**amazon smile**

Same Amazon only a percentage of your purchase goes to charity.

1. Go to [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk)

2. Select Reach

3. Shop as normal

Fundraise through Facebook!



It's quick and easy to 'add a donate button' to your Facebook posts so you can raise funds and spread awareness about Reach any time of year.

Just post, click 'Add Donate Button' & select Reach from the list.

# Fundraisers

**Ashley Dugdale**

**Raffle & Wreath Making Class**

With Ashley's special thanks to Hayley Leigh, Jackson Stephen LLP and Cathie. They held a beautiful Christmas wreath making workshop, raising funds for Reach.



£574



**Rachel Spencer**  
**'The Boys Big Sleep Out'**

Henry and Dylan along with friends Henry and Ben spent the night at St Johns Church to raise money and awareness for Reach after being introduced to the charity by their friend's mum who has a limb difference herself.

£605



**Jane Kayley: The Wessex Weaver**

Ongoing fundraising; beautifully handwoven items in Jane's Etsy shop, like this Saori wrap, scarf/shawl – currently on sale – Jane intends to always have one 'fundraising product for Reach' in her shop. Inspired by grandson Finley, born August 2021 with amniotic band syndrome.

"Reach have provided ongoing support and information which really has been useful to us all... I wanted to do something to help fundraise to thank Reach for being there for children and families having similar experiences."

▶ <https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/WessexWeaver>

£150

**Natalia Ager**  
'One cut a day will be donated away'

£1660



**Reach Community Fundraising Campaign**

Every penny that is donated to Reach Charity goes to ensuring that each child with an upper limb difference is able to meet with others, develop lifelong friendships, develop a positive sense of self-worth and to live life without limits.

**Hilary Barrett**

Hilary joined the Reach Community Fundraising Challenge in December for her Vhi Virtual Women's Mini Marathon 2021

£286

**Sarah Jane Whitty**

Mum of Aurora, Sarah wanted to share her appreciation for the support she's received from Reach so asked for donations on Facebook.

£210



£25

**Rachael Durham**  
People, Development & Comms Team - Virtual festive drinks

£35

**Julie Detheridge**  
Julie made some delicious Rocky Roads and held a bake sale!

**Team Reuben**

**James Cook**

Ran the Great North Run 2020 for Reach for nephew Reuben.

£105

£73

**Alice Cook**

'Helping kids like Reu Reach for the stars!' Alice ran the Great North Run for the 1st time for Reach, for her little boy born with cleft hand.

**West Midlands Reach branch raffle**

£125

**Vicky & Ally Purdie**  
Congratulations! Vicky & Ally, parents to Reach child Roman, Damiano and Lois, got married in January, fundraising on their big day with favour boxes.

£103



**Jem Tisshaw**

Mum of adult member Emily, held a garage sale and a car boot sale in Norfolk.

£100



# It is okay to struggle

**“It plays on my mind every single day. Like a churning feeling in my stomach which I can’t shake off.”**

Reading these words from Reach mum Elis Brown it struck me how brave it is to share such raw feelings of vulnerability and worry. To put yourself out there and say ‘I’m struggling’, to a community of people you don’t really know.

But to struggle, and to admit it, is nothing to be ashamed of. This is what the Reach community was created for. To be a non-judgemental space of support and understanding; a safe place to share the good and the bad moments, and to remind each Reach parent and child that they are not alone.

I believe it’s through the struggles that we learn the most poignant lessons and when it comes to having a new baby, whether it’s a Reach baby or not, I believe in the importance of kindness to yourselves, time required for processing and creating connection with others.

For Elis and her husband, they didn’t know about their son Wiif’s limb difference before he was born.

“I will never forget the moment of looking down and being the first one to spot it. All I could whisper to my husband was: ‘His hand.’ I felt an overwhelming feeling of shock. I had dreamed of this moment for so long, being able to hold my baby - and I felt sadness. Then guilt for feeling sadness at what should have been one of the best moments of my life.”

Elis says her worries weren’t around Wiif’s physical ability, saying that she only has to search ‘Reach’ or ‘Lucky Fin Project’ to see that he will cope absolutely fine. But she worries about how Wiif will feel about his hand as he grows up, admitting though that she also worries about her daughter:

“My biggest worry has always been how this may affect his self-esteem, confidence and mental health but I also worry about him being bullied. That being said, I worry about my daughter being bullied too so I think part of being a mum is to worry about your kids, whether they have a difference or not!”

Reach mum Rupinder & son Sahib



In Elis’s post she says: “My little boy is 10 weeks old. I was hoping the feelings would have settled by now but they haven’t.” But if both mums learned anything during these tough times, it’s that you need to find your way of coping, to be kind to yourself and most importantly, give yourself time to process it all.

“These feelings have subsided over time. I remember growing up really disliking my freckles and red hair. Now these features are a positive part of me... Wiif’s hand will be the same for him.”

Rupinder says she was given “the best advice from a Reach mum who’d found out about her child’s limb difference at her 20-week scan: Give yourself at least 20 weeks to get your head around it, do research, and come to terms with it.”

Time seems plays a vital role in dealing with what can seem like a daunting road ahead, but so can connecting with other Reach parents.

**“ 20 weeks - that really hit me” says Rupinder. “It felt like I was being seen and heard, and given the grace by someone who understood, that I just needed time to accept what had happened. I was able to lighten the load with another mother who understood! ”**

Fast-forward a few months into Elis’s journey and she says all she feels is “happiness and an overwhelming amount of love” for baby Wiif.

“Reach has been a big part in helping me feel like that. Not to mention because we really DO have the perfect baby!”

I asked Elis what prompted her to share her struggles with the Reach community. She says that despite having a very supportive family, Reach is “the only place” she feels she can share her feelings “where other parents truly get it”.

“There comes a point when you seek the support of other parents who have been through or are in the same position as you.”

For Rupinder she felt that she didn’t have to hide or pretend with Reach parents:

“What I love about the Reach family is you can take the mask off and be fully transparent about how you’re feeling because it’s such a safe place... I didn’t even have to explain how I was feeling, they just got it.”

For Elis, connecting with other Reach families has been life-changing:

“Sharing my feelings with the Reach community was actually a real turning point for me and completely altered the way I viewed Wiif’s hand”.

“Without the support of Reach I would still be going through a grieving process. My son’s limb difference would still be in the forefront of my mind had I not stumbled across this wonderful charity.”

Rupinder remembers her feelings of isolation and recognises now, more than three years later “the uncertainty, the reassurance and the hope that’s needed” at what can be for many a really hard time.

“I felt really alone and like no one understands how I feel in this moment, but the minute you connect with a Reach family, for me another mum, I visibly relaxed.”

“There was no judgement. I could say openly how sad I was feeling, how unexpected this was, how guilty I was feeling... being able to voice those concerns in a place where you are being held and people understand is something truly incredible because that for me was when my healing started.”



Despite being at different places on their journeys, our Reach mums offer some comforting advice to new Reach parents:

Rupinder says she was told: “Be kind to yourself, take all the time you need to come to an acceptance of what is.”

“Sahib has brought something with his uniqueness to our lives... Compassion, empathy, and understanding that we thought was there before but has now been absolutely amplified.”

For Elis she’s learning that “limb differences, or any difference, should be something to be embraced and empowered by.”

“Allow yourself to feel how you feel. It’s okay to not be okay. It’s a grieving process and the healing takes time. The limb difference was not your fault, but I understand the guilt feels heavy right now; that fear and uncertainty are clouding your joy - but I promise these emotions will clear. Eventually you will see more than just your child’s limb difference.”

“Whenever you feel adrift, talk to Reach members, because they are likely to have felt exactly how you feel at some point. But just know, everything will be fine. You will be fine, and your baby will absolutely thrive. In fact - they will probably be even more resilient, even more determined in life because of their difference - how amazing is that!”

The Brown family



# Reach's Karate Kid



Mason Palmer recently starting Karate but despite facing some challenges along the way, he's thriving – being awarded Student of the Week back in January and even Man of the Match in Football - Mum Louise couldn't be prouder:

"Mason astounds me with his strength and determination. We have an ongoing challenge with his sparring gloves because gloves for karate have individual holes for each finger so this doesn't work for Mason. We're currently trying a pair of boxing gloves which he has to try and push his stump into as far as he can and tie the Velcro around tightly!"

Mason also had to deal with a child who didn't want to be his partner in Karate:

"The children were asked to pair up to spar. Mason went over to another boy but he said "I don't want to be your partner because of that", pointing to Mason's arm. It broke my heart to see this because as Mason gets older, he becomes more aware.

The Sensei was great and at the end of the class brought Mason up to the front and told the whole class that he was born missing his left hand which means if he hits you with it, it will hurt. He said this in a jokey way but he then told them that if anyone refused to be his partner again, or was unkind to him, they would be asked to leave the club as he wouldn't stand for any form of bullying. He also told me that he'd be speaking to the boy's mother.

The Sensei really helped Mason feel better, and he's actually raising money for Reach at his next martial arts seminar in April."



# Finlay's School Learns About Limb Difference

Reach member Finlay Shepherd is 5 years old, his Mum Georgina says: "he's very adventurous and is full of natural confidence, loves swimming and gymnastics, and is even on his 'school council', so it was wonderful to see his school celebrate differences."

Lara Croft is the SENCO Designated Safeguarding Lead at Finlay's school, St John's Meads CEP primary, she told us how:

"We often fundraise for charities and causes that are relevant to our school community. We teach children to celebrate and value diversity in all its forms (cultural, linguistic, neurological, physical, etc.) and part of our vision statement is 'loving one another as God loves us' and 'caring for our whole community'. One way we do this is to teach about and celebrate differences, through books, assemblies, fundraising and events like this one with Claire Cashmore.

On this occasion the whole school learnt about upper limb difference, REACH and Claire Cashmore, through a whole school assembly prepared by Miss Chloe Lever (Finlay's teacher) and Claire did a video call with Finlay's class. Following this, the children wrote reflections on what they learnt. Claire's book was also read to each class by their class teacher.



Miss Lever feels that the most prominent message the children took away from the assembly and speaking with Claire was that anyone can do anything. They don't see Finlay as having any limits to what he can do and I think they really understood that message when talking to Claire as well and seeing and hearing in person what she has achieved.

Georgina said: "Hearing Claire Cashmore speak was inspirational, she came across as a warm and friendly person who shared her sense of humour. She really engaged with the children. And through the assembly, fun-run and video call with Claire we have been able to help share the message that being different should be celebrated and not hold you back. Both Claire and Finlay are great advocates of a "can do" attitude!"

The school fun run took place in on the 10th Feb, raising £184.50 for each of the two chosen charities.

Finlay & brother William



Finlay's class listen to Claire Cashmore



# LIMBPOWER JUNIORS

All limb differences & siblings welcome



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# CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

Join the community email [carly@limbpower.com](mailto:carly@limbpower.com)

[www.limbpower.com](http://www.limbpower.com)

CIO RCN. 1180906 Charity No. 1132829

# Insecurities: We ALL have them.

By Emily Tishaw



I want to talk about the things that aren't always easy to talk about. Things that we generally avoid talking about and try to avoid thinking about, and that is: our bad thoughts about ourselves. I have struggled with these thoughts. I know you have too. In fact, having doubts and insecurities is a completely natural phenomenon that I know everyone experiences. It took me a long time to digest that insecurity and doubt is a natural part of life and it is actually okay to feel bad sometimes.

I have felt insecurities about all sorts of things, specifically about my arm and even now I still have moments - after all, it's only natural that I will. I used to cope by wanting to run away. Whenever I felt uncomfortable, I would want to stop myself from feeling whatever bad feeling it was. But the more I would try to escape it, the stronger and louder the thoughts and feelings would become.

*In fact, having doubts and insecurities is a completely natural phenomenon that I know everyone experiences.*

”

person and even back then I had no shame, clearly.) But of course, the rest of the group laughed along with us. I remember feeling excitingly rebellious at announcing what I was doing. It remains one of my fondest memories.

Isn't it funny that something as seemingly insignificant, if not a little crude, could become a memory of one of the nicest days of my life? It's comforting and fascinating to me that I have this memory etched into my mind, ready to bring to life whenever I need to. I also like that it was a memory I had when on Reach Camp because it's also a reminder of how important it was for me to have the charity events to attend whilst I was growing up.

To have a community of people who share similar struggles that I can laugh and have fun with and not feel like I am the odd-one-out. I have great memories of the Reach camping weekends in Wales, and the AGMs too. Away from the Reach community I have fond memories too but when things may not be so jolly, especially when it comes to problems relating to my arm, it's helpful for me to always remember that Reach is within reach.

When I learnt that everyone - literally everyone - feels this way at some point about something, I was able to accept my own doubts more. Once I was able to understand that I am not alone, and that insecurities are a natural part of life, I stopped running away from them. My bad thoughts aren't wrong, and neither are they something to be fixed. It was also incredibly useful for me to understand that my thoughts and bad feelings about myself come from exactly the same place as my good feelings and thoughts - my brain.

I want to share with you a thought I often go back to when I am feeling as though life is getting too hard. It's less of a thought, in fact, and more of a memory. It's one of my fondest memories and I keep it safe inside my mind for the trying times...



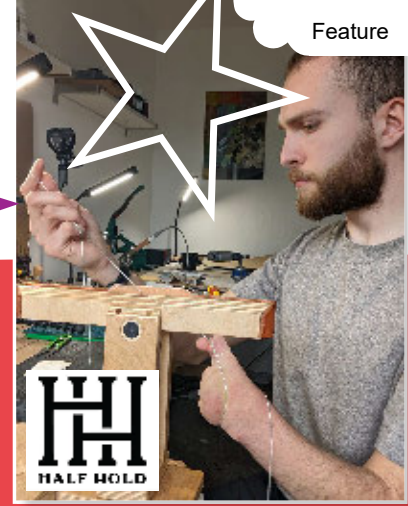
# Meet the Maker

Introducing the Founder of Half Hold

My name is Liam and I make handmade leather goods using traditional artisan methods under the brand Half Hold. Being born with a limb difference makes my craft no easy task! But it also wouldn't be half as interesting to me if it was a walk in the park.

As someone with a limb difference, Reach has played a key part in my development since birth. I have very fond memories of meet-ups and Reach camp in particular, and these opportunities to surround myself with people who are just like me really helped to shape who I am today in terms of both ability and self-confidence. It was these kinds of experiences that helped me realise that there are no limits to my abilities and that with persistence, nothing can hold me back in achieving my goals.

Half Hold is a project that I've been working on for a couple of years now, and whilst I have a growing portfolio of handmade leather goods, I often feel like I've only scratched the surface of my craft. What began as a curious 2020 lockdown hobby has now become my staple creative outlet and a growing small business that challenges me on a daily basis. The spark began after seeing online videos of artisan craftspeople build intricate and beautiful accessories with patience and precision. There was something mesmerising about watching a skilled artisan measure and cut leather to size, carve rounded corners, punch individual stitch holes, and to see each individual loop of thread being pulled together between the maker's hands.



As someone who greatly appreciates the valuable and sentimental nature of a quality handmade wallet or belt, as well as seeing other people online taking this up as a hobby, I knew it was something I wanted to pursue. Without any hesitation I bought a set of tools online and some leather, and eagerly awaited the arrival of my newfound hobby in the post - without giving any regard to how I was going to adapt these techniques to work around my hand. Funnily enough, I often completely forget about having a limb difference and I go about learning new things head first.

The tools I use are all designed around utilising two hands, such as using a hammer and stitching chisel together, as well as the fact that traditional saddle stitching is done with a needle in each hand further complicates matters. With practice I've found that I can use punches and chisels with the help of a simple wristband to hold the tool, and even saddle stitching is a breeze with a technique where I wrap the thread around my stump hand to create tension to pull on. Leathercraft is a wonderful creative hobby and I'd definitely



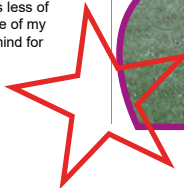
recommend it to anyone who's interested and enjoys a challenge. It's a brutally unforgiving craft that requires patience but ultimately it can be very rewarding to be able to say "I made this!".

I'm always available to chat online on my social media pages where I also share pictures and videos of how I overcome things!

[www.halfhold.co.uk](http://www.halfhold.co.uk)

@halfholdworks

@halfhold



# Embrace Your Butterflies!

By Max Swinhoe



It's not easy stepping out of our comfort zone to try something new. From societal expectations and pressures of what and where we should be at a certain age, to the fears of what might happen, what people will think and the 'what ifs' if it doesn't work out, but I'm 33 and I'm not about to give up on trying new things so I've learned to embrace the nerves that come with the ride.

Tom and I had been talking about trying climbing for months. Something we'd both done as children, myself with school and the Girl Guides so I was eager to give it another go. Instead of talking about it anymore though, one Sunday we made the decision to find an indoor climbing centre nearby and go for it. The Tide Climbing Centre in Wadebridge, Cornwall had availability for a Taster Session that afternoon so we took the plunge.

From calm and relaxed I was suddenly terrified and excited, accompanied by the usual instantaneous loss of appetite and plague of butterflies.

When I mentioned feeling nervous about an upcoming meeting to a friend recently, she said: "You? Nervous? Even after all the things you've done!"

I may have snorkelled with a Whale Shark, scuba-dived with Nurse Sharks and trekked to Everest Base Camp but despite it all, I still get a visit from those busy butterflies before anything new.

(Even as I type about my butterflies, I can feel them trying to flutter in...) But I learned a long time ago that they were my friend, or at least how to manage them. I just have to keep them at bay until I start the 'new thing', then they disappear and I'm fine. But for many people, I believe that the nerves stop them from stepping out of their comfort zone completely.

Nerves are actually there to help; they're the body's way of preparing us for a situation. They wake the brain up, make us more alert and therefore better equipped to face whatever's coming.



It was at school that I discovered the power that nerves can have and how, if allowed, they can control you. I was giving a presentation and although the content was good, it was in the delivery that my butterflies got the better of me – I was so disappointed that I had let the butterflies take over and had essentially ruined a great presentation that I had rehearsed and worked so hard on. So, from then on, I told myself that it was ok to have the fear, but to not let it stop me.

*“Nerves are actually there to help; they're the body's way of preparing us for a situation.”*

Our climbing Taster Session was fantastic; an hour with our instructor Vicky, who belayed us on the walls, showed us the auto-belay areas and then took us to the bouldering section of the centre for the rest of our session. I was exhausted, parts of my (little) left hand were rubbed raw, my right-hand tender and my shoulders felt used like never before... But I was hooked!

The very next day we booked Tide's 'Learn the Ropes' course! Three two-hour sessions learning to belay each other... "Hey butterflies! Something new to get nervous about!"

I embraced the butterflies and that Wednesday we started the course with one other couple – delighted to learn that it would be Vicky, with the added assistance of Rhys, that would be taking the course.

As soon as I stepped into the centre, the butterflies flew away and excitement took over. At the beginning of the course, I was given a different harness to the others, a full body harness. There was a moment where my heart screamed "NO I want the same



as everyone else" but I halted any irrational thoughts and reminded myself that this is about safety; about the instructors having confidence in my ability to climb safely so who cares if my harness is a little different. If that's what they advise, they're the experts - I can always try another one down the line.

Rope tying went better than I expected. I was a little slower than the others but I did it, found my way and cracked it. Then came belaying Tom.

To belay you need to be able to safely take in the slack of your climbing partner as they climb and then safely lower them back down the wall. This, I learned quickly, was going to be a little trickier as the others were being constantly reminded that they needed to keep two hands on the rope at all times. But the Tide instructors had a trick up their sleeve, they produced a Mammut Smarter belay system which makes it possible to belay with one hand. I safely got Tom up and back down the wall with no issues, and continued to build my confidence in my knot tying.

From start to finish the instructors were tactful and kind in the way they guided me. Letting me figure things out but offering support and advice when I needed it. Reminding me that there was no rush when I started to feel the pressure to get things done faster or untie my knots quickly.

The one thing that resonated was, if I'd let the fear win, we would still be talking about climbing today but instead we jumped in, butterflies and all, and a door has opened. We've learned a new skill and have discovered another sport we love to do together.



So, my message to you, if there is something you think you might like to try or a thing you've always wanted to do but have worried about. Stop thinking about it and just do it. Find a taster session, speak to someone about trying it out and just give it a go - what have you got to lose? If you like it, you'll find your way and figure out any challenges, and if not, you have no regrets and you can move on to the next adventure equipped with the confidence from the last.

*Don't let the fear win!*



Thank you Tide!



Briony May Williams

## Bake with Briony



These fruity pastries are so adaptable, you can switch up the fruit, add spices and even make them savoury with some cheeses and green veggies.

Before you start, make sure you put the butter in the freezer the day before!



### Equipment:

- Mixing bowls
- Cheese grater
- Whisk
- Rolling pin
- Baking sheet

### Ingredients:

- Pastry:**
- 250g plain flour
  - 250g unsalted butter, frozen
  - 6-8 tbsp cold water

### Filling:

- 200g cream cheese
- 1 tbsp agave syrup/honey
- 1 tsp lemon juice

### Method:

1. Place the flour in a bowl. Grate the butter and tip into the bowl. Use a spoon to mix the butter and flour together until all the butter is coated in flour.
2. Make a well in the middle and add 4 tablespoons of cold water. Use a blunt knife to mix the ingredients until they just come together to form a dough. Wrap in cling film and place in the fridge to chill for 15 minutes.
3. On a floured surface, tip out the dough and roll out to a rectangle about 5mm thick. Fold the top third of the dough into the middle then fold the bottom third over the top. Roll out again and repeat the fold. Chill for 20 minutes.
4. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan and line a baking tray with parchment paper. Whisk together the filling ingredients until smooth. Roll out the pastry to 5mm thickness.
5. Options for shaping the pastries: Rectangles, Circles or Twists
6. Spoon in some cream cheese filling, top with blueberries and egg wash the visible pastry (optional: sprinkle with a bit of sugar).
7. Place the pastries on the prepared tray and bake for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.

# Paralympian Snowboarder

James Barnes-Miller



**Did you ever have any difficult times with other kids at school with bullying?**  
Yeah, there were times it was hard but having a good support network helped massively. I went to school with my twin brother and I have a load of brothers.

**Assuming that people ask you about your arm, what is your go-to response? At Reach there's often discussion about how it's best to answer people's questions.**

I have a twin brother so I normally say that I was born without it and then to make light of it I blame him!

**You started work life as Personal Trainer and then as niche jobs go, a role-play actor for the Ministry of Defence? What did that entail?**

Yeah, once I left school, I went to college to study fitness instructing and personal training and then worked in a gym for a while. Then I fell into the casualty simulation job; we would work with make-up artists and they would make it look as though we've had our limbs blown off. We would be put into scenarios and would have to do a bit of screaming and the troops would have to deal with the scenario and treat the casualties.

**When you first started snowboarding did you ever dream that you would be competing at the Paralympics for Team GB?**

Not at all! I started because I went on a lad's holiday and at that time it wasn't an option. The first time that snowboarding was at the Paralympics was in Sochi, and the category I compete in didn't get to the Paralympics until PyeongChang.

**Fast forward just a little... How was it being the first snowboarder to represent GB at the Paralympic Games?**  
It was cool to be honest, I didn't even realise until I got to the bottom and was asked about it by the media. There were three of us that went to Korea and it was just luck that I went before the other two.

**Are you excited to head to the 2022 Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing?**

Yeah massively! I can't wait it's been a hard four years. I broke my collarbone just after the last games and had to have surgery. Then last Christmas I separated my A/C joint on my other shoulder. So, I have spent a lot of time rehabbing, plus covid has made the last couple of years a lot harder. But I can't wait to get there and show everybody what we can do.



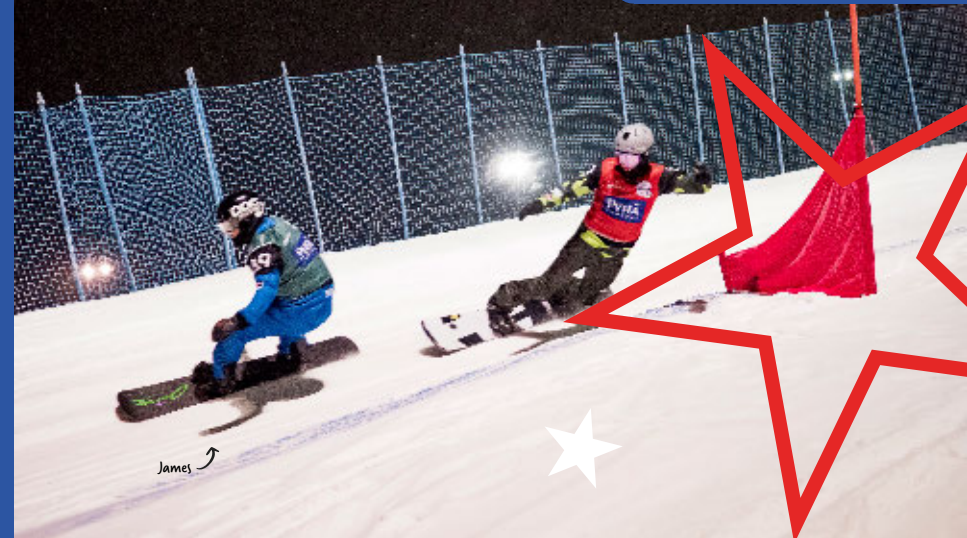
**British Paralympian Snowboarder James Barnes-Miller talks bullying, awkward moments, his job as a casualty simulation actor and the anticipation of the Winter Paralympics 2022.**

**For me, I find that humour helps to put other people at ease, especially if they haven't noticed my arm and it's clear from reading your previous interviews that you have a good sense of humour around your limb difference.... Have you always felt confident about your limb difference?**

Not at all, growing up with a disability is hard and kids can be horrible. I grew into my confidence, and I think it helped having a wicked group of mates. And making fun of everything helped me for sure.

**Have you had any awkward moments?**

I can't think of an exact awkward moment but they [awkward moments] have happened a few times...it's normally the old boys in the pub going to shake my hand, and when I put out my left hand, they say they don't mind shaking my stump. I think they think they are doing a nice thing, but I mind.



**We have a Representation Matters section in the magazine celebrating people with limb differences doing awesome things on TV, in sport and in all kinds of professions - changing perceptions and normalising difference. What does it mean to you to be a role model for Reach children?**

It's awesome. I didn't really know anyone that had the same disability as me when I was growing up. I think this why the Paralympics is so important - it really does show what can be done with all sorts of disabilities.

**What is your favourite snowboarding trick?**

I don't do lots of tricks as I race, but I did land a backflip the other day and was really happy about it.

**If you weren't snowboarding, what would you be doing?**

I worked for a building company which specialised in loft conversions and extensions so I'd be still doing that, I think.



# Tilly Meets the Dalai Lama

First things first, please tell us what it was like to meet the Dalai Lama! That's amazing! Oh, my goodness, it was honestly so surreal! I feel so privileged to have gotten to meet His Holiness. Not only to meet him, but to share a panel with him as well - just insane. I do recall it being the first time I was genuinely nervous for an event though. It was live-streamed to more than 75 countries, plus a live audience and me, so I wanted to make a good impression of course.

The Dalai Lama was so lovely, he just oozed peace and love, and surprisingly (for somebody who uses no technology (except for watching the news at 3am) thought the technology and my bionic arms was marvellous. It didn't show on the livestream, but when His Holiness arrived and walked down the aisle, he caught a glimpse of my metal arm among the human arms and gave me a high five. Not many people can say they've high fived the Dalai Lama!

How did that come about? And what was your first thought when you found out it was happening? I had done a couple of Singularity U events before in various countries including another in Amsterdam, Canada, Mexico and South Africa; the whole event was organised by Singularity U, who are such an incredible organisation. My first thought was "THE Dalai Lama?" - I think that's the best way to put it [laughs].



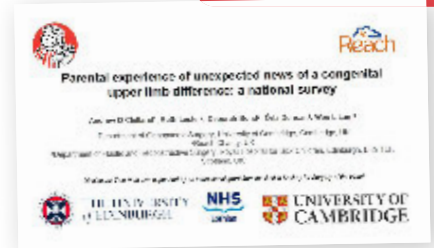
**What was it like sitting there having a chat? Were you nervous? You looked as cool as a cucumber!**  
[Laughs] Well, I'm glad I looked like that! Like I said, going up I'm pretty sure I was shaking I was so nervous, but I just kept telling myself it was excitement, it probably was largely excitement too though! I was a tad more chill when I sat down and throughout the discussion I chilled out all the way because it genuinely felt like a private conversation and every one of the other panellists were talking about their incredible inventions regarding tech for the good so I got wrapped up in what they were all talking about too. It was just such an interesting conversation honestly - the whole time I was thinking 'how on Earth did I get here?'

**“ If I can help just one person feel not only accepting of their limb difference, but proud of it too - that would make me the happiest person alive. ”**

**What did you get from the experience?**  
I got to share my story and show the world just how far technology had come to be able to really help in my life and in so many others! I feel like so many people aren't aware that we're at this point yet and so it's always great for me, to not only tell everyone but also showcase it too! I also got to ask the Dalai Lama my own question which was what he believed big companies could be doing to help support this and other technology that is truly making a life-changing difference. He told me we had to get the technology to third world countries, and from that we were able to create the Open Bionics Foundation which helps tremendously with funding now.

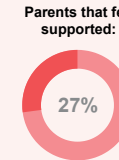
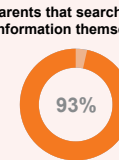
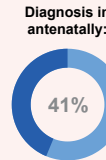
**What does representation of upper limb difference mean to you?**  
It means a lot to me. I never saw it growing up and for so many people, lack of representation like that can make you feel so isolated. That's why today, on my own social media, I'm just trying my best to be the person I would've loved to see when I was growing up. If I can help just one person feel not only accepting of their limb difference, but proud of it too - that would make me the happiest person alive. I feel like every person deserves to love every inch of who they are and what makes them who they are, the defining factor in all of us being our differences. I can't begin to explain how it feels when someone tells you you've made an impact in their own self-love journey and the freedom in the way they express themselves today. I'm so proud of every person on that journey (which I'm still on myself!) the beauty of social media and representation is that we can all do it together.

## UPDATE | Parental experience of unexpected news of congenital upper limb difference: a national survey.



Ruth Lester shared an update on behalf of the team, and a summary of initial quantitative results whilst the survey is still being evaluated.

A great thanks to the 261 respondents from all over the UK, we have had some striking results so far:



**SO, WE HAVE A LOT MORE WORK TO DO!**

We are currently upgrading the information for both new parents and professionals. We are finding the right channels to get to the midwives and other healthcare professionals to make sure they have both the right information and toolkits to help communicate this information to new parents.

We will be presenting the full results of the work at the IFSSH (International Federation of Societies of Surgery of the Hand) in June in London.

## Need some help?

Thinking about prosthetics, an adaptation for your child's bike or is there something your child is struggling with and you just can't find a solution? Reach is always happy to offer help and advice, and to point you in the right direction. Or why not speak to our partners who innovate and create to ensure everyone can live a life without limits.

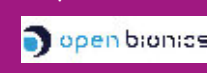
### Koalaa



<https://www.yourkoalaa.com>

Innovators of comfortable, easy-to-fit, affordable soft prosthetic arms for kids and adults.

### Open Bionics



<https://openbionics.com/>

Creator of the Hero Arm - Open Bionics is a UK-based company that develops low-cost bionic hands.

### Remap



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

Remap custom-makes equipment to help disabled people live more independent lives.

### ReVAMP by LimPower



[@rebecca@limbpower.com](mailto:rebecca@limbpower.com)

Digital, 'Joe Wicks style' workout videos specifically designed to support amputees and people with limb differences

### Team Unlimbited



<https://www.teamunlimbited.org/>

Empowering and inspiring people with limb difference through the design and build of innovative 3D printed arm devices.

### PIP-UK



<https://www.pip-uk.org/>

PIP-UK is the UK charity for Poland Syndrome a rare birth difference, dedicated to providing a network of support and education for Poland Syndrome.

# What Reach Does



Find out more by visiting: [www.reach.org.uk](http://www.reach.org.uk)

## RAW (Reach Activity Week) 'Incredible Delivery' Pack

For Reach Children aged 10 – 17 years, it's all about fun together and plenty of action; from climbing, abseiling, and canoeing to problem solving, archery and coasteering.

An extra special care pack for new parents with information about what to expect, the support available to them, and how Reach can help along the way.

## Annual Family Weekend

Our annual conference is all about sharing experiences, inspiring stories, invaluable resources, and reconnecting the Reach family.



We see the potential in all our children and celebrate their ability, never focusing on disability.



# How to Fundraise for Reach...

## Run for Reach!



Find a run. Register. Select Reach Charity. Start fundraising!  
[www.runforcharity.com](http://www.runforcharity.com)

## Work for Good



Making it quick and easy for small businesses to donate to charity.  
[www.workforgood.co.uk](http://www.workforgood.co.uk)

## easyfundraising



Fundraise while you shop on the UK's biggest charity shopping site.  
[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)



April is **LIMB LOSS & LIMB DIFFERENCE AWARENESS MONTH**

Share stories  
Raise awareness  
Raise funds

Find out more on how to get involved by visiting:  
<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/Reach>

## Birthday Fundraisers



Birthday coming up? Start your fundraiser – 100% goes to Reach.  
[www.reach.org.uk/celebrate-your-birthday-with-reach-charity/](http://www.reach.org.uk/celebrate-your-birthday-with-reach-charity/)

Reach charity are funded 100% by donations and membership subscription. Help us to continue supporting Reach families with more ideas and how to fundraise for Reach at:

[www.reach.org.uk/fundraising/](http://www.reach.org.uk/fundraising/)



Helping children with upper limb differences live life without limits

