

Welcome to
AIM's bi-monthly
newsletter

Directors pictured left to right
Andy Reid,
Jackie Palmer &
Stephen Cruse



Newsletter

6th EDITION • AUGUST 2015

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How AIM can help

At AIM we provide support for amputees and their families throughout the UK, we can offer help and advice with benefit forms, education, employment, sports and hobbies. We can also visit amputees at home, hospital, prosthetic centres or alternatively at our office based in St Helens.

We take members on days or evenings out encouraging social interaction between amputees, helping each other find common ground and sharing experiences, learning from each other and motivating each other.

We are also starting a "Buddy-Buddy" program, enabling amputees to be paired up with another amputee of similar amputation, age, gender, activity level or hobbies and interests etc.. Please do contact us for more information on this and place your name on the Buddy-Buddy list so you will be able to be paired up.

We now have a list of amputees awaiting to be paired up, please contact us to help find you a buddy.

If you have already contacted us regarding the "Buddy-Buddy" program, please be patient as it may take time to pair you up with somebody suitable for you.

Summer Tip

Residual limbs (stumps) need a lot more maintenance during the warm weather, it is essential that we take our prostheses off several times a day and wash our stump(s) and liners or socks that cover the stump(s) with anti-bacterial soap and rinse thoroughly, this preventing a build up of bacteria that can get into our skin through our hair follicles which create cysts or other infections. This will prevent us from wearing our prosthetics, these lumps of infections will require antibiotics or even surgery to remove them and will result in not being able to wear any prostheses until any wounds have healed and the swelling has reduced, normally 8-12 weeks.

This Newsletter

We would like to send future copies of this newsletter direct to your home address, if you would like to receive your own copy every other month then please contact our office with your name and address and you will be placed on our mailing list.
Phone: **01744 808 100** or
email: **info@weareaim.org**

This newsletter and all future editions can be found on our website **www.weareaim.org**. This newsletter is created for your benefit, your comments and ideas will always be welcomed.

Your Day Out

We have made a shortlist for an outing and would like your preferred choice.

1. Coach trip to Blackpool - do your own thing during the day then meet back up for a meal, then back on the coach in the evening and go through the lights before returning home.
2. Theatre trip with meal.
3. Coronation Street Tour with meal.

Get in touch with your preference as soon as possible

email **info@weareaim.org**

Phone **01744 808100**

The trip will be heavily subsidised by AIM and a small contribution may be required.

Advertising

AIM would like to offer advertising space to corporate businesses that provide specific services for amputees, rates will vary depending on the size, nature of business and the frequency of using the advertising space, please contact **marketing@weareaim.org** for more information.

Coffee Mornings: *Free Coffee and Cakes!!*



Friday 28th August 10.30am

Friday 25th September 10:30am

Great chance to come and meet some new friends, inspire others and be inspired. Everyone is welcome to attend for a coffee and a chat.

August coffee morning will be giving you a presentation from "Disabled Holidays" and also a young lady "Emma" will be talking about exercising as an amputee and demonstrating some simple and fun chair based exercises.

If you are a business that has services to offer amputees please email info@weareaim.org if you would like to make a presentation at one of our coffee mornings.

All coffee mornings will now be held in the Pavilion Bar at Ruskin Leisure from 10:30 until 13:00

Motivational Speaking:

AIM is planning to run a motivational speaking course for 5 amputees, this will be held towards the end of the year. Anybody that is interested should contact AIM to express their interest, full details of the course will then be distributed to the people showing interest.

Sponsors:

190 Mile Cycle Ride:



During the weekend 3rd – 5th July a Mr Jon Dobson of St Helens along with 31 others done a major fundraising charity bike ride totalling 190 miles, starting in Yorkshire following the Tour De France route, then heading to Blackpool and finally cycling back to St Helens, this was done in aid of AIM and also a charity called "Debora"

It has not been made clear how much money was raised but both AIM and Debora are very grateful of these guys pushing themselves to their limits and taking time out of their lives to raise money for two amazing organisations that help others through difficult times.

St Helens College Fundraiser:

As regular and committed sponsors of AIM, St Helens college do a fundraiser for AIM in return for motivational work with its students, originally working with sports and public service students in 2013, this has now gone on to working with several departments at the college and there will also be more departments to follow. The success of our work not only motivates the students to work harder, but also motivates them to push themselves to their limits, raise money for good causes and create a greater understanding of disabilities and people who are less fortunate than others.

This term the students at the college raised almost £800 in one day, truly amazing, and to total the money raised over the full academic year is close to £3000 from three separate fundraising days.

A massive **thank you** to all students and tutors involved.

Knowsley Active 5k Challenge:



Part of raising our profile within the local communities, AIM have had a team of people running the Knowsley Active Challenge for us this year and last. Last year was a great success as we had a group photo that was used for the entry forms this year, and this year was even bigger and better (and dryer).



A huge thanks to all that run wearing AIM T-shirts promoting AIM. We hope to see you all again next year, or maybe even at the St Helens 10k in March.

If any amputees would like help getting involved in running or any other sports please do get in touch and we will do our best to get you the help and support you need, connect you with a club, and get you advice for prostheses that will enable you to do the sport you wish to do.

Championship Boxing:

On June 27th AIM took four amputees and two carers to watch some championship boxing at the Hilton hotel in Blackpool, these tickets were provided by Neil Marsh (boxing coach, manager and promoter), two of Neil's up and coming boxing talent were fighting on the night and both won their fights by unanimous decisions. A massive well done to both fighters and also a massive thanks to Neil for the tickets, everybody that attended this event had thought they would not be able to attend such events since losing limb(s) but with Neil's help this has helped change the way our amputees think and a great night was had by all.

Also on the night AIM director Stephen Cruse was able to get in the ring and tell everybody about AIM, the work we do and the people we help, this short talk about AIM encouraged the audience to help and the generosity of people in the room was outstanding, a whopping £1100 was collected by the ring girls and handed to AIM, along with £500 received from an auction on the night.

Thank you Neil for your continued support to AIM and your help in raising £1600 on the night.

AIM's Family Fun Day:

On the run up to this event on June 28th we were all worried at AIM, the weather forecast was shocking, so many people had put so much organising in to this event and we didn't want the rain to spoil the day, as we were setting up between 9-11 am there was some light showers and the sky was black, this was not looking good, but once the stalls had set up and the very popular Bucking Bronco was ready to go the weather made a dramatic change for the better, the sun shone bright over Ruskin Leisure and the people started to flock through the gates, numbers almost doubled last years event and we estimate around 600 people of all ages came to show their support and enjoy the day.



This amazing cake was made by amputee and AIM member Kerry Cowan, it was raffled off and the winner was not around when the raffle was drawn, we tried and tried to contact the winner but unfortunately we had no luck in tracking this person down, before the cake became unfit to eat we decided to take it to the staff at St Helens college who continually support AIM, the cake did make over £60 through raffle tickets and was absolutely fantastic, Thank you so much Kerry, you have such skill with your cakes and cant wait to try one ourselves, as the staff at St Helens College said it tasted even better than it looked.

While on the story of cakes, we had these two amazing ladies Wendy Tyrrell and Diane Edge baked hundreds of cupcakes, brownies and other cakes, these went down a treat, they were priced very cheap and raised plenty of money for AIM, sadly due to them being extremely popular they sold out by 2:00, only halfway through the day. Well done ladies, and thank you so much, donating the ingredients, the baking and your time to sell them for us was extremely kind.



Other things going on at the fun day included donkey rides, a Bucking Bronco, a DJ (thanks to Al Shea), plant a sunflower in memory of our deeply missed Harrison Ledsham, bouncy castles, tombola stall, guess the name of the teddy and much more.

We did encounter a few problems at this event but rest assured they will all be corrected for next year's event.

THANK YOU TO EVERYBODY THAT HELPED OUT AT THIS EVENT, WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU.



South Wales Visit:

On Thursday 9th July, Stephen drove down to Swansea to meet an amazing young boy called Alan who is nearly 10 years of age. Alan was born with several problems, one of which being his heart, he had had many operations but following an operation on his heart at the age of 3, he caught an infection that spread through his body causing his hands to turn black and stiffen up, the hospital had no choice but to amputate this young boys hands.

Although Alan has coped amazingly well without hands from age 3 until now nearly 10, life for Alan is increasingly difficult, especially as the only



prosthetic limb Alan has ever been offered through the NHS was extremely heavy for him to cope with, very bulky and impractical for Alan's needs, as you can see in the picture (left), the NHS have tried their best through the funding they have but unfortunately it's not suitable for everyday use, especially as it will only hold a pen and will not give Alan any other benefits other than writing.

Alan's mum, Hannah Jones has set up a GoFundMe page:

<http://www.gofundme.com/oi9fyk> to raise £60,000 to help purchase new hands for Alan, Hannah has researched all the products on the private prosthetic market and these will be the perfect hands for Alan to help him pick things up, play games, write and progress through school, not to mention being able to fit in amongst his peers and feel the same as everybody else. You can check out Alan's progress through his Facebook page **Hands for Alan**.

Stephen met with Alan, Hannah and Alan's siblings on Thursday 9th July offering help and support for Alan and his Family, and learning more about Alan. Then on Friday 10th Stephen took Alan and Hannah to see another special boy in Cardiff called Romeo. This meeting was going to be great for both families and both children, although Romeo isn't quite 4 yet, he lost both his legs below the hip earlier this year, the same age Alan was when he had his hands amputated.



Romeo also has his own GoFundMe page: <http://www.gofundme.com/lzphe0> as Romeo will need on-going treatment, care, support, prosthetics and more for the rest of his life, you can also follow Romeo's progress through his Facebook page **Brave Romeo**.

On arriving in Cardiff, Stephen, Alan and Hannah where welcomed into Romeo's family home, both families where finding out about each other and how they cope and deal with the issues faced by the different amputations and the daily living issues, both families found so much in common and are now able to support each other in their future life challenges.

Both families will be asked to write an article for future editions of this newsletter so you can here how successful both families have been with their on-going fundraising.



Please do check out their facebook pages and also their fundraising pages and if you can spare some change or even a note please do help out, these boys are going to need help outside of the NHS for the rest of their lives.

If you or your family would like to be paired up with similar amputees or families please do get in touch and we will do our best to pair you up with somebody that is experiencing the same difficulties as yourself.

Children are our future, please do what you can for these special people and prevent them from suffering.



SHARONS STORY:

My name is Sharon Stone yes!! just like the Hollywood star, I'm slightly younger and she has a lot more money than me!!!

I was involved in a car accident in 2003. I completely smashed my right ankle and snapped my tibia and fibula on my left leg. I was told I would be very lucky to keep my leg. This was a massive shock as I had not long begun to run 3 miles a day. At the time I was not quite sure how I was feeling, I was certainly numb and obviously devastated. I thought my life was never going to be the same.

Four years after the accident I was still on crutches. I kept getting infection after infection. My leg was held together with external fixators, my ankle had been fused and I also had my leg lengthened due to having an infection and the bone being cut out.

My confidence was at an all time low at this point. I was completely devastated. It was the toughest time of my life since losing both parents. I had 3 sons under 10 and was a single parent. I really don't know how I would of coped without my sister, she was my rock!!

In 2008 after continuous infections and a lot of pain I asked my surgeon if he would amputate my leg. This was a very hard decision but I knew if I was to have any sort of future without pain this would have to be done. I was then booked in for the amputation. I woke up one morning minus 1 leg. Everyone on the ward in hospital was gutted for me but inside I was dancing as I knew my life was about to get better, I could go shopping on my own, start driving but most of all I could spend time with my sons and get back to the gym.

Before my amputation in my early 20s I started body-building and had competed in many shows. After my accident I didn't think I would ever get back to this but in 2012 I was asked if I wanted to do a guest spot for the Nabba Northwest Bodybuilding show in Southport and the Mr Liverpool. This was now something to focus on. I trained as hard I could spending lots of time at my local gym working round exercises to compensate for my disability, beaming through the blisters, fatigue and the phantom pains. This was exhausting training and was much harder than before my accident, you use much more energy wearing a prosthetic limb.

In May 2012 I was ready for the show. I was excited yet so nervous. I got on the stage and did my routine and for the first time in a long time I felt absolutely amazing. The crowd stood up and cheered and clapped, I very nearly cried it was so emotional. I found it hard to believe they were making so much fuss over me!! I will never forget that day. I have continued training and most days you will find me at my local gym.



One day I was at my local shops and a lady approached me and asked me about my leg (as I often wear shorts and skirts as im proud of my prosthetic leg) she told me about this organisation AIM and that I should get involved. This happened to be Andy Reid's mum Barbara. She was such a lovely lady and an amputee herself. She told me about the coffee mornings AIM holds every month were amputees and carers get together for a coffee and chat. I was interested to find out more but rather shy to go alone so I went along for the first time with a friend and was overwhelmed at how friendly everyone was. I really enjoyed meeting new people. I had never mixed and chatted to other amputees before and found it inspirational.

I plan now to compete in a body-building competition in 2016 and I have the full backing of AIM. I feel proud that I am doing something for the amputee community, showing people what can be done if you put your mind to it! I will be getting involved in many future events AIM are planning and hope to meet a lot more people.

Since meeting with AIM, Sharon has been coming and getting involved with everything going on at AIM, she is such an inspirational lady and many female amputees can gain a lot from talking with her, Sharon is a regular at the AIM coffee mornings and she would love to talk to others about how she has coped and achieved so much since her amputation.

Every amputee has a story and we would like to hear about it, please do come along and meet the AIM team and all of its members, share your experiences with others and learn many other things from so many amputees.

AIM consists of members of all ages, from beautiful young children to adorable pensioners and everybody in-between, AIM is for the amputee, the carer and the families connected with the amputee, we know that the people connected to the amputee equally need the help and support of others in the same position.



Gala Ball:

Auction prizes so far include a signed Steven Gerrard Liverpool Football Shirt, Everton signed football, IPAD, Manchester United signed Football Shirt, signed Frank Bruno boxing gloves, signed and framed No7 Kenny Dalglish shirt plus many more money cant buy goodies.

We are also looking for more auction and raffle prizes and would ask anyone that they may have something they can offer to please contact marketing@weareaim.org



This is a fundraising event and we would like any companies that have some form of involvement with amputees to get involved with this event, whether that be sponsoring some part of the event, buying a table, donating goods to be auctioned or raffled, or being part of the event helping with selling raffle tickets etc... please contact marketing@weareaim.org and let us know how you would like to help.

Thank you:

During June and July we have had amazing support from so many people, prosthetic centre's and businesses throughout the UK, in no particular order we would like to thank the following people for their support, their belief in AIM and the work we do.

- Burd Ward Solicitors
- Kevin Edwards Costs
- Family Fun Day Volunteers
- St Helens College
- Jon Dobson and friends
- Print Solutions St Helens
- BMF Liverpool
- Proflex Gym and Running Club Liverpool
- Manchester Specialist Ability Centre
- Preston Specialist Mobility and Rehabilitation Centre
- Liverpool Prosthetic and Wheelchair Centre
- Ruskin Leisure
- NCM UK

Future Projects:

As some of you may be aware, AIM have been in and around several prosthetic centre's asking for information from amputees as to what sort of help they would like AIM to offer them, we have run a course in Preston SMRC for Employability Skills and not many people have shown an interest but for the people that did it was a success, we are now looking to be able to put on a course in Liverpool, Preston, Manchester, Wrexham and Clatterbridge, but we need to know what it is that you would like us to do. This can be anything from crafts to vocational qualifications, so please email AIM on info@weareaim.org or phone 01744 808100 with your ideas and the reasons that might make it difficult for you to get involved with a course run by AIM.



Volunteers:

Volunteers are a vital part of any charitable and not for profit organisation. If any of our readers are interested in volunteering or helping AIM please get in touch via email on info@weareaim.org or phone 01744 808100.

Fundraising:

If you have any ideas on how you can raise money for AIM to continue the work we do, can you please write to us or email us with your ideas and we will help and support you with your challenges.



Phantom Limb Pain:

Phantom Limb Pain is a sensation/feeling that a lost limb is still present and moving. The limb may have been removed because of an accident or because of disease.



Around 60-80% of people who have had a limb amputated will experience phantom limb pain. 20% of those will experience severe phantom limb pains. The easiest way to explain phantom limb pain is that it is the same as when you have tooth ache and your tooth is removed but you still feel like the tooth is there. Phantom limb pain is similar but on a much larger scale.



Some of the symptoms of phantom limb pain are:

- * The missing limb, whilst feeling it is still there, can feel like it is shorter
- * The missing limb may feel like its distorted and in a painful position
- * After getting out of the bath/shower you may feel like the missing limb is wet and needs to be dried
- * The feelings can be burning pain, cold, itching, tightness and tingling.

There are three main theories on the causes of Phantom Limb Pain:

- * The Peripheral theory - this theory argues that the pain may be a result of nerve endings around the stump forming neuromas generating abnormal electrical impulses that the brain interprets as pain.
- * The Spinal theory - this theory suggests that the lack of sensory input from the amputated limb causes chemical changes in the central nervous system. This causes confusion in the brain triggering the pain.
- * The Central theory - this theory argues that the brain has a memory of the limb and its nerve signals and therefore the brain is trying to recreate this memory but it cant because its not getting the responses it expects.

Opting for an amputation can have a severe psychological impact for the following reasons:

- * You have to cope with the loss of sensation from the amputated limb
- * You have to cope with the loss of function from the amputated limb
- * Your sense of body image and other people's perception of your body will change



I have been advised by a client that when he opted for a below the knee amputation of his leg, the hospital recommended that he have a burial for the amputated leg to allow him to grieve for the loss of the leg. Unusual, it would seem, but there would seem to be some mileage in it, psychologically.

Phantom Limb pain can be made worse by stress, anxiety and weather changes. If someone has experienced a traumatic amputation, whereby they have come round from surgery to be told that a body part has been amputated, then this can often result in a more severe reactions and an increased risk of developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Treatments for Phantom Limb pains vary, as the sensations and experiences vary between people. People can be prescribed antidepressants, spinal cord stimulation (SCS)*, acupuncture*, hypnosis or vibration therapy.



Research carried out in Liverpool in 2008 found that if people spent 40 minutes imagining using their phantom limb, such as stretching out their fingers or bunching their toes, they experienced a reduction in pain syndrome.

* Spinal Cord Stimulation can be effective treatment. An electrical stimulator is implanted under the skin and an electrode is placed next to the spinal cord. The electrical current stimulates the nerve pathways in the spinal cord. The electrical current disrupts the impulses travelling towards the brain and lessens the pain felt in the phantom limb.

- Acupuncture is the use of small needles inserted into the skin at specific points on the body to stimulate the nervous system and relieve the pains.

By Alisha Butler-Ward - Catastrophic/Serious Injury Solicitor at Burd Ward Solicitors



Alisha predominately specialises in Serious and Catastrophic Claims, including Spinal Injuries, Brain Injuries and Amputation claims, often with awards being in excess of £1 million.

Alisha also has experience in:

- Medical Negligence
- Claims against the Military
- Accidents abroad
- Equestrian accidents

*Burd Ward Solicitors are also official sponsors of AIM and are offering the following services to our clients with **10% off Fees** – just quote “**ABW10**” – see enclosed flyer.*

Our Services:

- Catastrophic and Serious Injury
- Personal Injury
- Family Law
- Domestic Abuse
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Call – **0800 019 0324**

Or email: abw@burdward.co.uk



At Burd Ward we have a dedicated Tenant team helping those on private and social tenancies. We can offer expert advice in the following areas, and more;

- Tenancy deposits
- Notice seeking possession/Notice to quit
- Court possession proceedings
- Eviction
- Disrepair
- Anti-social behaviour

One of the most common problems at present is failure by landlord to protect tenant’s deposit and give the correct information relating to it properly, or at all. The consequences of this are that your landlord may struggle to remove you from the property and you may be entitled to make a claim for the return of your deposit plus compensation.

We are happy to deal with your telephone or email enquiries, or meet face to face.

Contact Paula Suckley on 0151 639 8273 or ps@burdward.co.uk

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