

Sing for Recovery

By Vivienne Harkness

The *Sing for Recovery* group will have their first official "gig" in 3 wards at St Vincent's on Saturday afternoon, 28th May. This will be followed by St Georges and Royal Talbot on 11th June and then Box Hill Hospital and Peter James on 30th July. Two more rounds of gigs will follow this one, including a round at Christmas.

Each new stroke survivor and their carer will be given a "Your Recovery Resource Reference" folder from BSSG, in which there will be up-to-date information on support and services available to them, once they leave hospital. This will also include an invitation to join BSSG and to enjoy the warmth and friendship of our current members and the new Hub will have to offer. The folders will be presented in a BSSG bag and they will also be given a personalised "We Are Thinking of You" card. We are very excited about this program as it really is the first opportunity we have had to "meet" with new stroke survivors at the outset of their journey with stroke. We would hope furthermore, that it will ease the path of the future Life After Stroke mentors, once that program is established.

Should any members wish to hear more about SFR or have family or friends that could be interested, please feel free to contact me.

Coming Events

On **Monday 20th June** there will be a light lunch held at MCC Sports Club 397 Barkers Rd Kew commencing at **11.30 am**.

The event is in recognition to Jenny and Peter Cheng for their founding and contribution to the Boroondara Stroke Support Group since its inception. This is a free event but we will need to know those attending for catering purposes by **Tuesday June 14**

Our annual **Christmas in July** event with the Knox Stroke Support Group will be on **July 21** at the Matthew Flinders hotel in Chadstone.

More information will be made available about both events closer to the date.

If any further information is required on these events or to say that you will be there contact Brian ph:9818 2511

Promoting the BSSG

by Brian O'Meara

Late last year, the Boroondara Stroke Support Group became a community member of Golden Days Radio whose charter is to support and assist the community that it serves. It does this by providing not-for-profit and politically non-aligned Community Groups free promotional announcements publicising their group. The station can be found on 95.7FM and can also be found on the web by going to goldendaysradio.com. Community Group membership costs only \$50. BSSG has availed ourselves by having promotional announcements for our group on the station, by being a member we get three promotions a week.

Golden Days Radio concentrates mainly on music heard from the 1930's to the 1960's focussing on light classics, operetta, ballads and musical comedy. So if you're looking for "beautiful" music tune into 95.7FM.

Cookies

by Liz Berryman

Ingredients

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup wholemeal self raising flour
- 1/2 cup oat bran or rice flour
- 1/4 cup caster sugar
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut
- 1/2 cup sultanas/currants
- 2 large ripe bananas
- 2 eggs (well beaten)

Note: You can use chopped dried apricots instead of sultanas or currants.

Method

- Mix dry ingredients well - add bananas and eggs - mix well. If still a little dry, add small quantity of milk or sour cream to moisten.
- Break off small pieces and roll into balls
- Place on lightly greased oven trays and flatten each ball with the back of a fork
- Bake for 15 minutes (180° C) or until just beginning to brown
- Remove from oven trays and cool on wire rack - store in airtight container.

Boroondara Stroke Support Group
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 46 - May 2016

Australian Governments lagging in funding stroke assistance

by Brian O'Meara

If you live anywhere but Melbourne, you're unlikely to get the best treatment if you have a stroke. The National Stroke Foundation has called for an urgent investment in stroke care, after releasing data that shows care across most of Australia fails to meet even basic standards. Foundation chief executive Sandra McGowan said numerous lives have been lost in the two decades since the federal government made stroke a national health priority and no funding has been provided over that time for a national stroke strategy.

As a result, many rural and regional Australians were missing out on time-critical care, with 4 in every 10 stroke patients denied access to stroke unit care every year. "There is only one hospital across the whole country (Royal Melbourne Hospital) considered a comprehensive stroke service, but we're calling for the establishment of one in every state", Ms McGowan said. "It is a tragedy that only a small percentage of Australian stroke patients are getting access to the latest treatments and innovation that we know save lives." World Stroke Organisation president Stephen Davis said there had been changes in stroke therapies, but underfunding meant Australia had not moved with the times providing services for patients. "The current gaps in care and inconsistency of the Australian stroke care system are a patient safety issue."

Ms McGowan said funding would help drive targeted improvements in stroke treatment, support patients on discharge and build on the use of telemedicine to improve care in rural and regional areas.

Boroondara Stroke Support Hub

by Vivienne Harkness

Firstly - you will notice the decision on the name. It was felt that the premises should be "club" like, but because we hope to welcome other outside groups, the name "Hub" was chosen, suggesting that we are reaching out to our local community, by spreading like the spokes of the wheel.

Secondly, from all reports, the renovations to our new centre are going to schedule and our sparkling new premises could possibly be ready for the official handover of keys at the end of May!!

Then your committee will go on a shopping spree, outfitting our new home with comfortable furnishings, TV monitors, a DVD machine, a coffee machine, our own bar fridge, iPads, WII machines, bookshelves, tables and chairs, books for our library, art and craft supplies, our own crockery and cutlery, projector and screen, PA system, filing cabinets, a recliner for our sleepy heads and even a jar of Lloyd's lollipops!! Not to forget the vacuum cleaner and the washing up detergent!! Etc. etc. As a result of the generosity of the Jack Brockoff Foundation and the Stronger Community Programs through Josh Frydenberg, we have \$28,000 to spend on making our new home welcoming, warm and wonderful.

We are obviously going to need help moving in - possibly from the 2nd week in June and we anticipate it will take a couple of weeks. Volunteers from the Rotary Club of Kew will be lending us a hand, but if any of you feel you would be able to help - in the first instance please make contact

Thanks to our sponsors

Rotary Clubs of Balwyn, Camberwell, Kew and Preston



with me—we will set up a roster for when the time is right.

The Launch is set to occur in mid July, by which time it is hoped several of the proposed activities planned will have commenced. The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP has agreed to do the honours and we would anticipate around 100 will be in attendance; so you must all keep the date when we know it!!

So very busy and exciting times ahead - including a brand new BSSG brochure, which we would ask all members to distribute as widely as possible; to doctor's surgeries, rehab centres, pharmacies etc. We hope you are all as pleased as we are!

Pilgrimage to St. Helena by Dee Clements



Dee Clements, from our Stroke Group, gave us an excellent summary of her trip to St. Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean. She carried out this journey with a friend earlier this year, and travelled to the ship via South Africa.

Not a bad effort for these girls seeing it was rather rugged at times, and St. Helena does not look too warm.... in fact it is not a place you would expect to

see surfers or sun seekers lying on the beach. Here is the story of Dee, reproduced from "Recollections".

For forty years I have wanted to go to St Helena. This small, volcanic, island in the Southern Atlantic Ocean is where Napoleon Bonaparte was finally exiled after his defeat at Waterloo in 1815. Napoleon and his entourage of twenty-four were appalled at being sent to this remote outpost: a steep, bleak, damp rock in the Atlantic from which escape was high impossible. Napoleon was reduced from a position of power and glory to boredom and solitude until his death six years later. At that time the Island was colonised by the East India Company. My Great, Great, Great Grandfather, William Balcombe, was Superintendent of Sales for that Company. Napoleon's house, "Longwood" was not ready for occupation so Napoleon was introduced to the

Balcombes and stayed in the Pavilion adjacent to their house, "The Briars", for three months. I grew up hearing stories of St Helena, of the family connection to Napoleon and of Napoleon's fascination with and tolerance of one of William Balcombe's children, fourteen-year-old daughter Betsy. He let Betsy chase him around the table, play with his sword and generally entertain him. It is said that Napoleon was never so happy on the Island as when he lived with the Balcombe family. In 2015 I found an opportunity to go to St Helena. A former colleague accompanied me. Together we explored, reflected and immersed ourselves in the history. Currently the only way to access the Island is to take the last remaining Royal Mail ship, "RMS St. Helena" from Cape Town. The ship, with cargo and approximately a hundred passengers (half of them Saints returning from medical treatment) travels to St Helena once every three weeks, proceeds to Ascension Island and returns to collect visiting passengers before sailing back to Cape Town, a further five days.

In 2016 the ageing ship will be sold or retired; an airport will open on St Helena and the only way to access the island will be a weekly flight from Johannesburg. I desperately wanted to go to St Helena before the airport opened, to experience it in its remote and unaltered state.

"RMS St Helena" is twenty seven years old and overdue for retirement or a radical makeover. The Saints (inhabitants of St Helena) voted for an airport rather than spending the money on the ship, largely so that medical emergencies could be evacuated more quickly. Without the ship there will no longer be that link between St Helena and Ascension Island. St Helena may change. Developers may introduce hotels and restaurants. The Island may accept and capitalise on Tourism. Its extraordinary time warp may be lost. Currently tourists enjoy the ocean pilgrimage as an important part of the St Helena experience. On board we were treated to films about the three South Atlantic Islands, Tristan da Cunha, Ascension and St Helena.

St Helena, 10 miles long by 4 miles wide, is our destination. As it loomed into sight, steep, black, mysterious and shrouded in cloud, everyone on the boat became excited. However, no wonder Napoleons heart sank when he first saw it. Bleak and dank, it is one of the most remote places in the world. However on the ship, as the passengers first saw the Island, the excitement was palpable. We

gathered on the deck along the rail, our cameras clicking to capture the sheer, towering cliffs and the clouds that rolled over and over like a speeded up film.

There is no port. Ships moor off the island and people and cargo are transported by small boat or in the case of disabled people, in an "air taxi" which is a cage lifted by crane on to a barge.

We began our seven days on a Saturday. You would think the Tourist Office might be open. But no; closed for the weekend. The Coffee Shop was closed. (St Helena Coffee is unadulterated and thought to be the best in the world.) Napoleon's Tomb was closed. If you want dinner at a "restaurant" tomorrow night, you must order your food today. Tourism is completely off the radar. We hired a car. The roads are steep and winding; an engineering feat in themselves. There are bays where one can pull over to let a car travelling in the opposite direction pass. An unwritten law says cars travelling up give way to cars coming down. High on our agenda was a visit to "The Briars" where the Pavilion still stands. The house was eaten by white ants and disintegrated long ago. We were devastated to find that The Pavilion was closed to the public while a "new" roof was being put on in readiness for the 2015 bicentennial celebrations of Napoleon's arrival on St Helena.

I wept; I had come all this way to see The Pavilion, to walk in the steps of my forebears, to see where Napoleon spent those three months. Quickly word spread amongst the ever-friendly Saints: a Balcombe descendant was on the Island and must be admitted to the Pavilion! The Assistant Governor and his wife live behind the Pavilion. They became party to the special exclusion accorded to us and a time was made for us to visit, taking full responsibility for ourselves.

The popular wife of the Assistant Governor, casually dressed in jeans and T-shirt, welcomed us warmly when we arrived at the Pavilion. We climbed gingerly through the scaffolding. Inside the room was painted bright green, closely resembling the original colour. On the walls were pictures of 'The Briars' as it was in 1815, of William and Jane

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Balcombe and of course Betsy. A version of Napoleon's death mask sat on the mantelpiece. In a glass case lay a piece of the Persian carpet which covered the

floor when Napoleon lived there. I had inherited a framed piece of the same carpet which is now in the possession of "The Briars", Mornington. The hairs on my arms rose and prickled. In this very room Napoleon let Betsy chase him and play with his sword.

Pam and I spent hours at Napoleon's grave-site, painting and reading peacefully in the picturesque dell amid the frogs' loud chorus. We toured "Longwood", Napoleon's house, where mould had covered the wallpaper in a dwelling that never dried out, viewed the bath where he spent hours dictating his memoirs, the hole in the shutters where he spied on his jailers and the bed where he died. We sat for hours in the garden, imagining him digging and planting as he pursued this interest for a time. We finally drank some St Helena coffee and bought some for presents.

I thought seven days on St Helena might feel interminable. It did not. We wished we could stay longer. In seven days we had not seen everything; had not been everywhere. We had met several of the 4,000 Saints, culturally English and physically the descendants of English, Portuguese and Dutch intermingled with slaves. These slightly dark-skinned people are extremely friendly and greeted us every time we passed. There is much to be learned. What will happen to these people who depend on Britain for survival? Unemployment and alcohol abuse are big problems. There is a huge Conservation Program on the Island but currently the wooded areas have been obliterated and the only remaining endemic species is the Wire Bird. Occupation by man and the arrival of rats, cats and rabbits have wiped out the indigenous flora and fauna. Flax has over run every hill and gully. I was sad to leave the island. The future is unclear for this tiny, isolated community that nurses a unique history. I felt hungry for more but I looked forward to Paris where I could pursue my thirst for Napoleonic heritage and increase my understanding of the infamous despot who washed up on the shores of St Helena.

It just shows the stroke has not slowed down the travels of Dee Clements. She then went to Paris, to continue her travels, and see Napoleon's final resting place.