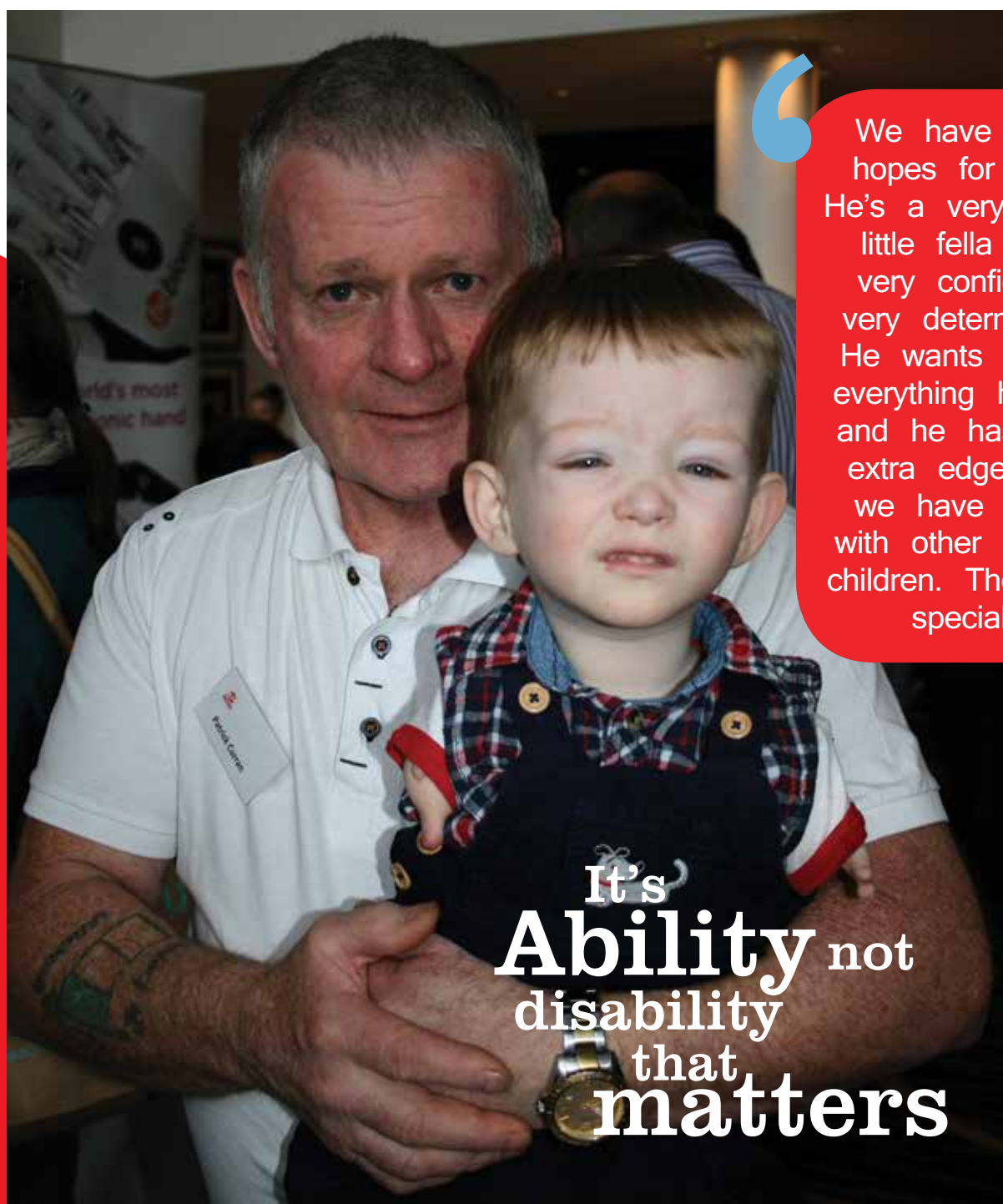


**ISSUE 130**  
WINTER 2015



# within**Reach**

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



“We have high hopes for him. He's a very bright little fella and very confident, very determined. He wants to do everything himself and he has that extra edge that we have seen with other Reach children. They are special.”

It's  
**Ability** not  
disability  
that  
**matters**

# within Reach

Please send photographs and stories for  
**Within Reach** to: Jane Garrett  
The Editor, Within Reach,  
2 Farmside Cottages, Hound House Road,  
Guildford, GU5 9JG  
Tel: 01483 203237  
Mobile: 07884 268594  
Email: [janeg@reach.org.uk](mailto:janeg@reach.org.uk)

## ISSUE 130



### NEW TRUSTEES P6



### REACH FAMILY WEEKEND P8-13



### FUNDRAISING SUPERSTARS P14-16



### MORGAN'S SPORTING TIPS P18



### ADAM'S DREAMFLIGHT P21



### MASQUERADE BALL P23

National Co-ordinator: Jo Dixon  
Reach, Pearl Assurance House,  
Brook Street, Tavistock, PL19 0BN  
Tel: 0845 130 6225  
Email: [reach@reach.org.uk](mailto:reach@reach.org.uk)  
Office hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm  
website: [www.reach.org.uk](http://www.reach.org.uk)

Follow us on twitter: [@reachcharity](https://twitter.com/reachcharity)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/reachcharity](https://www.facebook.com/reachcharity)  
Registered charity no. 1134544

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

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

**Advertising:** Within Reach has a print run of 1,500 and is distributed to members, subscribers, health services and specialists. If you need to reach this key audience, we would be delighted to consider including your advertisement.

Contact Jane Garrett on 01483 203237

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

March 2016

31

#### Editorial deadline:

Material for inclusion in the  
SPRING issue must be sent to  
the editor by 31st MARCH 2016

#### Reach membership

Membership of Reach is open to parents of children with upper limb deficiency and other individuals of 18 years and over who are interested in furthering the work of the association. Junior membership is given to children who have an upper limb deficiency. The UK subscription is from £30. You will receive three issues of the magazine a year.

#### Reach Insurance

Reach membership entitles the Reach child/adult under the age of 65 to be covered by our limb insurance for up to £50,000.

This includes members with multiple limb deficiency. Please call Head Office for more detail from the schedule of insurance.

#### SHARED EXPERIENCES

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

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

Contact Jo Dixon at HQ to order your copy.

Within Reach magazine is printed and distributed by Ashley House Printing Co Ltd  
1-2-3 Swallow Units, Alphinbrook Road, Marsh Barton, Exeter EX2 8QF

# BRANCH CO-ORDINATORS

## NATIONAL COORDINATOR

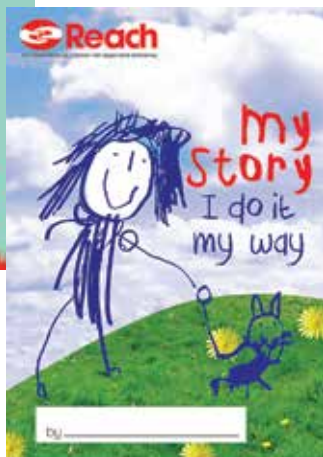
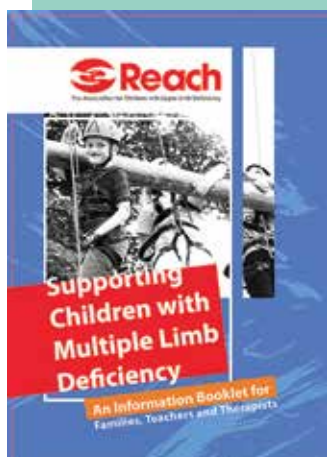
Three of our trustees took 10 volunteers away for a weekend to train them as mentors. This meant that the Reach Activity Week was staffed by Reach members who all have a full understanding of health and safety and the ethos of Reach as an organisation. This year we catered for 42 children and nine of those mentors joined them.

The sad thing is that every year we say goodbye to the 18 year olds, but we want to keep those 18 year olds and their skills and enthusiasm within Reach. Their experience is so relevant to our young guys coming through and we are looking to create a new volunteering arm. We want to get volunteers much more embedded.

Facebook is fundamental for Reach. Every year it grows. Its success is about its immediacy and its responsiveness exactly when people get to need their questions answered. It is peer on peer support at its best. Facebook works if it is safe and well managed and we monitor every single thread and comment to keep members safe and it is a safe forum.

On the fundraising front everyone has been amazing. Eight people between them raised over £60,000. Every single penny for Reach is raised by our fundraisers and I think that's amazing.

Jo Dixon



The Reach Annual Report has just been published: contact Abby Williams at Head Office for your copy.

Also My Story and the booklet Multiple Limb Deficiency have just been re-printed with a bright new contemporary design.

Both these publications are really worth having for new Reach families so do get in touch with Head Office.



## EVENTS DIARY 2016

### CAMP TYNCAE 27th - 30th May

An action packed, fun and relaxed weekend for Reach members and their families. Hosted by Rob and Dawn Davies in West Wales. All you need to do is pack a tent and wet weather gear...(just in case!)

### REACH ACTIVITY WEEK (RAW) at BUDE in CORNWALL 31st July - 7th August

RAW is a fabulous opportunity for young members over 10 years old to get together and share a week of fun, challenges and outdoor activity. They find new friends, catch up with old ones and benefit enormously from peer group support. Children return year after year to experience an action-packed week supported by mentors who are themselves Reach members. This is a very special week.

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

If you have not been to the Reach Family Weekend before, put it in your diary NOW!

It is a brilliant weekend for children, from new-borns upwards. They discover other children like themselves, make friends, have fun and enjoy a wide range of entertainments and activities.

And it is extremely valuable for parents and other family members. Our speakers are inspirational, and along with the professional exhibitors, they enable families to explore technological advancements, discover different opportunities, gain advice and learn from the experience of older Reach members.



# CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT



I am reporting on the period 1 September 2013 - 28 February 2015. To explain - most of this period has been spent on bringing our Reach governance up to scratch and re-establishing organisation processes and Head Office, which is now established in Tavistock.

In September 2014 our Chairman commissioned an independent review of our Governance and this was very much an eye-opener for the Board. The actions arising from this report provided our focus to the rest of this period and included reaffirming our Vision and Mission Statement and forming a strategy.

Together with Steps Charity we also launched a joint website: **www.kidslimbconditions.info** which aims to signpost visitors to the correct resources from a single site covering both upper and lower limbs.

November 2014 saw me take over Chairmanship from Nigel Tarrant who at the time remained on the Board as a Trustee. We continued the work we had started with the Governance Review and focussed on another highlighted area - that of Board skills. We wanted to ensure that the appointments to the Board were based on the skills required and our first appointment to the board was a very much needed Finance expert. We recruited Phil Robertson who has recently retired from over 30 years with a global bank. He has made significant progress in ensuring we understand our finances as areas for improvement. One significant change he brought to the Board, now implemented, was a change of financial year end.

The renewal of our IT systems is almost complete and we now have a very capable and flexible membership system which is allowing us to better manage our information and use it to target mailings and members needs. In addition to this we have upgraded our document management and email systems allowing our trustees to have all the information they need when they need it.

The Reach Bursary Fund has been largely under-used so in order to encourage more applications the Board decided to increase the maximum age for applications to 25. This has significantly increased our number of successful applications. I would like to thank the independent panel for their support and time in running the scheme.

Thank you again to our incredible fundraisers, without whom we would not be able to function and do what we do. Whether you have raised a few pounds at a coffee morning or £1000s in the London Marathon you are all important.

**Gary Phillips Chairman**

## REACH END OF YEAR FACT FILE

**Reach has: 3905 people on the database - 5 ambassadors - 1800 Within Reach circulation - 450 Facebook members - 931 family members - 20 branches run by volunteers - 49 recorders on loan - 402 people at the Family weekend - 32 children on RAW 2014**

## REACH BURSARIES



Reach Bursaries are available to help support a Reach child to reach their potential in any way. Contact Head Office for details. Suitable items include car adaptations to enable members to start driving.

**Sarah Semple**, Northern Ireland, has received £1000 for car adaptations.

**James Barnes Miller**, our Paralympic snowboarding hopeful, has been awarded £3000 towards training costs.

**Former Bursary winner Troye Harris-Williams** is pictured behind the wheel of his car



## Reach Board

**Gary Phillips**  
Chairman  
2 Walden Cottages,  
Westwood Lane,  
Normandy, Guildford, GU3 2JB  
Tel: 07044 080140  
email: garyp@reach.org.uk

**Siân Brooks**  
15 Paultet, Sampford Peverell,  
Nr Tiverton, Devon  
Tel: 01884 820223  
email: sianb@reach.org.uk

**Julie Detheridge**  
20 Brunswick Road  
Earlsdon, Coventry, CV1 3EX  
Tel: 02476 251185  
email: julied@reach.org.uk

**Lee Gwilliam**  
9 Ashengate Way  
Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 3EX  
email: leeg@reach.org.uk

**Dominic Hannett**  
29 Milton Road, Stratford Upon  
Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 7LZ  
Tel: 07894 000267  
email: dominich@reach.org.uk

**James Jones**  
32 Lovage Rd, Whiteley, Fareham,  
Hants PO15 7LD  
email: jamesj@reach.org.uk

**Alan Meneghetti**  
3 Eggars Field  
Bentley, GU10 5LD  
Tel: 01420 520996  
email: alanm@reach.org.uk

**Kevin Moyes**  
12 Lady Housty  
Newton  
Swansea, SA3 4TS  
Tel: 07834353877  
email: kevinm@reach.org.uk

**Phil Robertson**  
126 Ash Lodge Drive  
Ash, Hampshire GU12 6NR  
Tel: 07973 363014  
email: philr@reach.org.uk

**Elizabeth Wilmshurst**  
94 Victoria Mount, Horsforth,  
Leeds, LS18 4PZ  
Tel: 07852 371075.  
email: elizabethw@reach.org.uk

# MEET OUR TWO NEW TRUSTEES

This is the first year we have sought formal applications, interviewed candidates and run an election, and this has produced two new professional and motivated trustees to join the strong team already in place. Tenure is for three years after which time trustees must stand again if they wish to remain on the board. Meetings are held four times a year with much going on in between to ensure that the organisation is well managed and meeting its charity commission and Companies House obligations. Just ask if you would like to know more!



**KEVIN MOYES** is dad to Reach child Max, six, and Jake, nine.

He set up his own education recruitment agency, Education Staffing Solutions more than 13 years ago and his wife Kelly has just qualified as a midwife.

"I have strong personal and professional ethics with a long established commitment to charity work within the local and broader community. My success as a business leader illustrates my propensity to work hard

and attend to the specific detail of strategic and financial management. Since the focus of my company work is in education I am aware and apply strict codes of conduct and safeguarding across all aspects of our work.

"Through involvement with Reach, particularly the Family Weekend, I know how much my family and son Max have benefited. It has bred in us as a family that Max is unique not different or disadvantaged. I wish to ensure every child and family are provided with appropriate support to make that statement.

"My business expertise as CEO will inform and support Reach's work. My work is in education and I am part of a network which can alert and access the broader education community to the work of Reach."

**LIZ WILMSHURST** is mum to Reach baby Kitty, seven months.

She worked as a newspaper journalist for nine years before moving to internal communications and marketing for big corporations including M&S, BUPA, Lloyds Banking Group and Morrisons. She's married to Nick, a broadcast journalist for the BBC.

"When I found out that Kitty was missing her lower left arm at our 20-week scan, I felt the world had ended. Then we found Reach and suddenly we didn't feel so alone any more. Kitty already amazes us every day, and I know this is how many other Reach families feel too. That's why I wanted to become a trustee - to use my media and marketing experience to really help celebrate the great work Reach does and make sure families who find themselves in the same situation know that there's somewhere they can turn.

"Professionally, I'd describe myself as a creative marketer, and I'll always be a journalist at heart. I specialise in verbal and visual brand identity, and content marketing. But I'm pretty commercially savvy too, having worked for some of the biggest retail and financial services names in the UK.

"Personally, I love going to yoga and swimming with Kitty and, when I get time, writing. I'm halfway through my first novel and also write a blog about bringing up a child with a limb difference (which I don't update anywhere near enough!)"



## FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES 2016

### VIRGIN LONDON MARATHON

24th April

Our runners need your support. Check with Head Office for sponsorship opportunities.

### THE MAY BALL

7th May

This is a glittering glamorous fundraising night out for all at Woodbury Hotel and Country Club, Exeter, Devon.

### BUPA LONDON 10k RUN

30th May

### THE BRITISH 10k LONDON RUN

10th July

Check Head Office for remaining Reach places.

**Choose your own challenge:** just let us know what you are planning so we can help with fundraising material, vests, T shirts etc.

### Other ways to fundraise:

Printer cartridge recycling envelopes  
Stamps - envelopes or box full  
Foreign currency collection boxes  
Donations in memory collection boxes

## FEEDBACK FROM THE FAMILY WEEKEND

Thank you to everyone who filled in the questionnaire about the Family Weekend. The comments and suggestions are extremely helpful for the team organising next year's event in Glasgow.

Overwhelmingly the response was that the venue, the speakers and the exhibition were excellent. Parents felt reassured about their child's future and the children had a wonderful time and felt glad to be among children with similar deficiencies.

But there were significant areas of concern. The key problem highlighted as a reason for families not attending was the cost to members, which was seen as prohibitive despite the substantial level of subsidy from Reach.

Many families also pointed out that the older children and young Reach adults needed to be included in the conference, with the opportunity to listen to and meet the speakers, and be more involved in the event generally. It was also suggested some exhibits and speakers should be targeted at older members needs and that there should be more teenage evening activities.

Comments include "I like seeing other children like me." "We notice an extra 'spark' in our daughter after the Reach weekend."

"I always love seeing the young ones every year as they grow up and become more and more able. They are an inspiration."

"This was our first family weekend and we were so glad we went. It made us feel so much more confident about our daughter's future and we made some new friends too. Can't wait for the next one."

"It was a perfect confidence boost for my son."

"It made me feel supported. I felt I had a community I could ask for help. I wasn't sure I wanted to go beforehand but now I am so glad we did."

Accidents by definition are unwanted and unplanned. They happen at the most awkward times, causing wide ranging impact on people's lives. And if they involve a particularly important feature of the body - for Reach members their functioning hand and arm - the effect is devastating. Which is why Reach membership includes insurance for all limbs. We hope it will never be needed but when Lisa Lisney came a cropper off her bike, it proved invaluable.

"On 21 April I did something really silly and went over the handlebars of my bike landing on my good arm!" said Lisa.

"Breaking the forearm and dislocating the wrist, this meant an operation in hospital, plated and pinned I returned home a couple of days later, for six long weeks in a cast. In previous years when I talked to people about my worst nightmare...this is it!

"My children have been amazing. Roxanne aged 20, helped to wash and dress me. my other children 21, 17, 15 and my boyfriend took turns to feed me and take care of the house, giving lifts where needed too and looking after each other. I feel so blessed to have a wonderful family. Okay so the housework wasn't done quite the way I wanted or to my timescale and they kept teasing me about that!

"Working with an occupational therapist I have gradually managed to get that rotation in my arm and wrist back, and slowly but surely I am starting to get the strength back in my arm too.

"As a self-employed painter and decorator this has been a real challenge financially, as I have not had the strength in my arm to get back to work yet, I may need to think about changing my job.

Along with paying my monthly membership to Reach, my right arm (the good one) is insured. Once I had received the sicknotes (now called a fit note) from the surgeon I forwarded them to Jo at Head Office who then passed them on to the Churchill, the insurance company, who assessed my case.

"As a full-time mum and part-time painter and decorator I don't work 52 weeks a year, being around for my children in the holidays is more important to me, no matter how old their are.

"With this in mind the pay from the insurers was based on a full year. It was not as much as I was earning, but it was a little help when we needed it. I was blessed to receive some insurance money to help and it continues to help to see us through. It came through just at the end of each fit note.

"All being well when I see the doctor in a few weeks, I'll have the strength to get back to work, although they think I may now have carpal tunnel! Thank you Jo for your support with all of this."



**Toby Eden**, who will be just seven in January stood up in his school assembly and talked to 140 children about his little arm, and showed them his collection of prosthetics.

"A couple of months ago I decided to try on my red hook arm as I had not worn it for a while and I liked it," said Toby. "I then decided to wear it to school and took my other old arms in too. When I got to school I went and found my head teacher Miss Bishop to ask her if I could show my prosthetic arms in assembly to the other children.

"I wanted to stand up and show my arms because there were new children who had started who didn't know me and I wanted to tell them how my arm didn't grow when I was in my mummy's tummy and how the doctors have made me different arms. I was very nervous when I stood up but I am really pleased that I did and lots of children have asked me questions all about it."

Toby goes to the limb centre at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, and he is about to have a myo-electric arm fitted and an attachment made to enable him to start having guitar lessons like his big brother Jack!

## SOLUTION FOR DISABLED PAEDIATRIC TOILETING

Research shows that using functional rooms such as the bathroom is the second biggest problem faced by families with a disabled child.

To help alleviate the issues, Clos-o-Mat has published a new white paper: Guidance & Considerations in the Provision of Toilet Aids for Disabled Children.

"The ability to go to the toilet with less, or no, help, has a huge impact on any child's independence and self-care skills," explains Mark Sadler, Sales Director at Clos-o-Mat. "Assistive technology needs to be carefully and properly selected, so it provides the appropriate support, ensuring the child can go to the loo safely, achieve effective bowel and bladder evacuation, be hygienically clean after, and will not be outgrown within a matter of months.

"The new white paper aims to provide an easy to follow reference point for the obvious - and not so apparent - considerations in choosing paediatric toileting technology."

The white paper is available for download from Clos-o-Mat's website [www.clos-o-mat.com](http://www.clos-o-mat.com), under its download section. Clos-o-Mat was the first British supplier of automatic toilets, and is now the UK's biggest supplier, and only British manufacturer, of wash & dry toilets and associated assistive technology.

Since the first Clos-o-Mat was introduced 50 years ago, over 40,000 have been sold, some of which are still in daily use. The company is unique in providing in-house advice, supply, installation, commissioning and after-sales maintenance and service.

**Proud sponsors of Reach**



**Insurance for professionals by professionals**

17 Heritage Avenue  
Beaufort Park  
London  
NW9 5FW

T: 020 8511 1070  
[www.churchillins.co.uk](http://www.churchillins.co.uk)



# SHARING EXPERIENCES, NEW TECHNOLOGY, HOPE, FEARS, LAUGHTER AND FRIENDSHIP

Friday evening at the Marriott Hotel in Leicester: the huge atrium lounge transformed into an impromptu gymnastic arena, with Reach children of all ages hurtling around crash-landing on cushions and having a ball. Their energy and enthusiasm set the tone for the whole weekend and underlined the Reach motto that stresses ability. Our children are extremely 'able'.

Reach members are vital partners in the 3D printing revolution and the very latest technological developments dominated both the exhibition and the conference itself. Although quite a few children have already experimented with the colourful plastic hands, many tried them here for the first time and the buzz of excitement was amazing.

Our speakers this year were Joel Gibbard, CEO of Open Bionics, which combines 3D printing with myoelectric technology; Tim Smith, life-long Reach member who is Consultant in Emergency Medicine at Aintree University Hospital and Major Trauma Centre in Merseyside, Major Incident Medical advisor to the NW Ambulance Service and BASICS volunteer; Alan Scott, father of Reach child Rebecca and Frank Letch MBE, former chairman and trustee and now brilliant Reach ambassador and DLA adviser. Joel was joined by Stephen Davies and Drew Murray from Team Unlmbited for a Q & A session.

If we could bottle the atmosphere we could make a fortune.

The weekend was a triumph of teamwork, ranging from Jo and Abby's great administrative efforts to Sian and the trustees' hard work organising fundraising and sales, Bernie's programme of children's entertainment, the childcare team and the football coaches, not to mention James's terrific technical support, compère Alastair Greener and Matt Howes, DJ extraordinaire and brilliant new Reach ambassador.

The stands in the Exhibition were very informative for both Reach children and their parents as they covered a variety of different prosthetic opportunities, with major players Opcare, Ottobock, and Steeper represented.

Sophisticated and robustly constructed, state of the art myoelectric technology was juxtaposed with extremely realistic cosmetic hand coverings.

Des Gosling Mobility Ltd was there to help teenagers get behind a wheel safely, West Midland Rehabilitation Service NHS brought a range of gadgets and useful adaptations and the One Handed Musical Trust showed off its range of recorders and ocarinas.

But what really drew the children like bees round a honey pot were the brightly coloured piles of plastic hands on the stand run by volunteer engineers Stephen Davies and Drew Murray of Team Unlmbited. They just begged to be played with and tried on.





## OPEN BIONICS

**JOEL GIBBARD** is the co-founder of Open Bionics, which makes robotic hands. "There are 11m amputees in the world," he said. "One fifth of them are upper limb and these are the people we want to help."

"The hands we can make are 20 times more affordable than other bionic hands on the market thanks to 3D printing technology."

"I became interested when I was 17 years old, tinkering in my bedroom, and I was always interested in robotics and making robotic hands."

"I took the project to university and persuaded them to let me do another prototype as part of my degree using aluminium and rubberised finger tips connected by myoelectric sensors. This was really successful and I uploaded videos on youtube and people wanted to make a hand and I realised how much impact this work could have. But the hand would only work for about an hour and then it would break, so I had no way of sharing it."

"After university I saw that 3D printing had a huge application for prosthetics as they could be tailored to individuals and were cost effective. I now share all my designs online. The great thing about this is that it is sharable and I have had contact from people from all over the world. You can have a 3D scanner installed on your phone and that can create an accurate 3D image of someone's arm. Until then I hadn't actually spoken to people to find out what they wanted so I spoke to 30 amputees. The common problem was they were heavy and they wanted them lighter. We experimented with 3D materials and rubberised plastic material was lighter and didn't need separate joints with ball bearings. The second most popular thing was that the hands must help them celebrate their limb difference. They wanted it to be positive, something inspiring to look at and customised to express their own individuality."

"Three months ago I set to work on making hands for children. We managed to scale the technology down and we wanted it to be even more inspirational for the kids so we got in touch with Disney and we wanted to give these kids not only the prosthetic

but a custom made comic book."

The Walt Disney Company donated royalty-free licences and artwork from the three hit movies for the limbs. There is the Iron Man hand "hot out of character Tony Stark's workshop", the Star Wars Lightsabre hand, and the Snowflake hand, inspired by Queen Elsa from Frozen. Then we made a comic book and the children get a book and the hand. It teaches them that their limb difference is not holding them back but can be their greatest strength. They are really cool features."

"They are not robust enough for sale and are not medically certified yet but when they become available they will be under £2,000 and that is significantly lower than other myoelectric prosthetics. We haven't made an elbow yet but we are working on it."

"Our designs are open source so every time we develop something we release the designs online. We are about to release the latest adult hand we have developed. They are battery powered and we are about to start field-testing the batteries and we are looking for people to test the hands. We are also in discussion with the NHS."

Daniel Melville, a lifelong Reach member, has been testing the hand and is very enthusiastic."

**I don't want being one-armed to be the thing that defines me. I want to be a good doctor not a good one-armed doctor**



**The mental impact of these hands is huge. It filled me with so much confidence. It made me feel really good about myself**

## TEAM UNLIMBITED

**STEPHEN DAVIES** and **DREW MURRAY** from Team Unlimbited which make hands based on e-Nable designs came to Leicester with 45 hands to give away. They were built by 220 children aged 10-13 from schools at Somerhill in Kent, as part of a project partnered with Techielab.

"We're not sure how many were given out, as we left them on the table and people helped themselves while we were busy," said Stephen. "The remaining hands will be sent to help in Africa."

"The other hands and our new UnLimbited arms were built by us over the course of three weeks. We honestly do not know how many devices were given away that day. But estimate between 15 and 20 in total. We were SO busy. I think the other exhibitors left by 2pm. Drew and I were still fitting the last arm at 6:30pm. A quick change and my wife Rhian and I just caught the start of the gala dinner.

"It was so nice to meet everyone, especially the kids. We were made to feel very welcome and I know that my daughter Charlie really enjoyed all the activities. My son Connor stayed to help us at the exhibition and I was very proud of him for being so mature.

"One of the best things for me was watching the children picking up and trying the devices, playing with them and exploring. For the ones who took away a device on the day, their smiles said it all. These memories will stay with us always.

"It was great meeting up and chatting with Open Bionics and answering some of the parents' questions on stage. We feel a great affinity with Open Bionics and love the work they do too. We enjoyed educating people on the work that e-Nable and Team UnLimbited do in the UK and making some great new contacts. We would love to hear from any of the families that took a device on the day. Send us some photos!"

All of a sudden I felt a million dollars and for kids in the playground it transforms the 'Ugh! What's that' response into 'Wow that's cool'



## REACH DAD ALAN SCOTT

Reach Dad Alan Scott spoke movingly from the heart about bringing up a young child with an upper limb difference. And his presentation, which he illustrated with family photos, went straight to the heart of the audience.

"It's ok to be different," he said. "Children will always find a way to do things. But when we found out at our 20 week scan that our baby had an upper limb difference it was a massive shock for us.

"One of our greatest concerns was for the unknown. Was there anything else wrong? The consultant was great. He had researched it, and having the facts explained was a great relief. We had feelings of guilt but there was nothing we could have done differently.

"We had great support around us and the community midwife was fantastic. She put us in touch with another mother in Reach and then we were automatically referred to the plastics department!

"We have had lots of embarrassing and hurtful stares but we prepare Rebecca herself about how to deal with things and people around her.

"Questions come generally from children. Kids in general are inquisitive and nosy. She can cope with that but it doesn't mean that she particularly likes it. She just has to deal with it.

"We met her new form teacher and explained there was very little that Rebecca couldn't do on her own. Spending some time preparing people is really worth while, but we don't see her difference now as being a problem that needs to be fixed."







I was really impressed. All the speakers seemed to get the message bang-on for the audience. And the guys handing out free 'hands' was a real bonus for the kids - it was great seeing them putting them on and off and using them

Over 270 members of Reach families, children, parents and grandparents, gathered at the Leicester Marriott Hotel for the Family Weekend.

108 children enjoyed the Football Academy, Outdoor Pursuits, Sport and Craft workshops with a crèche for the babies.

The grand finale was the Gala Dinner and Halloween Party where the highlight of the evening was an amazing set from our Ambassador, DJ Matt Howes.

Games, raffles, competitions, auctions, and stalls - all helped

with the fundraising effort at the weekend. The grand total was £2,834.

The toy silent auction raised £376, the raffle £1,058, the Reach shop £800 and the sale of World Cup national side rugby balls £600. Thank you to everyone who took part.



## THE SUE STOKES AWARD 2015



The winner of the 2015 Sue Stokes Award for outstanding achievement was Elmarie O'Brien. Elmarie was selected for her extraordinary determination and positivity.

Her upbeat, humorous account of her early childhood, losing an arm in a lawnmower accident as a toddler and learning to cope one-handed, won her the National Newspaper of Ireland Press Pass writing competition earlier this year.

Her extrovert personality, shining through her writing, impressed the Reach judges too. She was presented with her trophy by DJ Matt Howes, who also lost an arm in an accident.

There were four outstanding Reach members on the shortlisted:

**Lily Brown**, a school ambassador and Taekwondo black belt;  
**Hayley Fraser**, one of the first recipients of an e-Nable hand  
**Jacob Bowden**, all round sportsman.

## SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT

"It went amazingly smoothly," said entertainments organiser Bernie McDowell, "It was terrific fun. The workshops were on a Halloween theme so the children made lanterns and witches' hats. We had wonderful volunteers helping. There were fun sports races with broomsticks and apple bobbing and the older children had a trip out to Leicester Outdoor Pursuits.

"The staff there were really really good and the kids loved it. They all came back with happy faces. The Football Academy was great. We also had a lego room, a facepainting room and and playstations, X Boxes and wii.

"The children were lovely. They got on with whatever they were doing. They helped each other, it was like a really good community.





## REACH FOOTBALL ACADEMY



### FOOTBALL COACH STEVE DAVIES

The 'Reach Football Academy' - it sounds professional - and this year it lived up to its name as Steve Davies, a key member of the coaching team, is at the top of his game.

He has just won the Football Association of Wales Coach of the Year award. What a fantastic role model for our young aspiring sportsmen and women.

Reach member Steve, whose family runs the annual Tyncae adventure camping weekends, is doing more and more professional coaching and hopes to make it his full time career.



### GREAT OUTING

We went to Leicester Outdoor Pursuit Centre and the boys were singing on the coach. I went with friends and I also made new friends.

My group went first on the aerial adventure course with high ropes, crawling through barrels with a rope attached to you and jumping through on platforms. It was all about teamwork.

We had lunch all together and then my group went on the water in two bell boats. We had an oar each and we went up the River Soar. I was splashing my oar down and we came to an open stretch and turned round and glided back with the current. I enjoyed it very much and would like to do it again.

Mum: Jessica was telling her sister they were lucky to have a sister with one arm so they could come to the Reach Weekend

Jessica Grace, 12



"I started the girls from scratch and we now have 30 members aged 12 and under who play football on a weekly basis in Tregaron in Mid Wales," said Steve, "I started the 16 plus ladies' team and they went on to win the league and the cup last season. I also carried on with the six and unders.

"I began doing it on a voluntary basis but now I work in sport and leisure. I coach at the local secondary school and in the leisure centre. I love it and my plan is to increase the number of hours that I do.

"I have always loved playing football. I had a toe to hand transplant in 1996 with Simon Kay and I went straight back to playing afterwards!"







# Halloween





# ALL YOU FANTASTIC FUNDRAISING SUPERSTARS....



**Frank Letch** wore his MBE medal for the first time for the Reach Family Weekend dinner dance in Leicester. It looked great!

And although he has taken a step back from active involvement in Reach, his influence is still amazing.

Frank has been inspiring people for a very long time. In September one of his former teachers from around 60 years ago contacted him with a £100 donation.

Peter Hore, who is now 91, was clearly an excellent judge of character and knew his pupil very well! Re-reading his autobiography he came across this description of Frank as a junior schoolboy.

**"...it was the top junior class, and included children with muscular dystrophy, brittle bones, haemophilia and other problems.**

**"Most remarkable was Frankie Letch, born with no arms. He was quite remarkably independent, using his feet like a monkey. He wrote with one foot, sitting on a desk and in the woodwork class could saw with his feet. He had a strong personality, and I've often wondered what happened to him. I thought he might have a future in local politics. If he's still alive he must have reached retirement age."**



The directors of TMS Financial Solutions in Truro held a Charity Golf Day and donated £1,000

**Lewis Humphreys' fantastic grandparents donated £100 in celebration of his 12th birthday**

The Grace family from Ipswich took their ride on steam train to local fetes and raised £195

**Tony Wright donated £20 in honour of the birth of his Reach grandson Harry**

David Skinner donated the £224 proceeds from BAE Systems' Broad Oak Golf Society Captain's Day Event in August. The Captain has a Reach grandson.

**Mr Cover donated £125 for Reach to Phil Paxton in his hire shop in Kent**

Weston Provident Association donated £346.06

**Our amazing ambassador, journalist and TV presenter Alex Brooker, raised £6,000 for Reach when he took part in the quiz show Celebrity Benchmark, hosted by Paddy McGuinness**

Claire Owens team worked hard bag packing at ASDA, raising £1018.72.

**The Trustees of the Bartlett Taylor Charitable Trust gave £500 for the Buckinghamshire area branch**

Students at the Bennett Memorial Diocesan School in Tunbridge Wells raised a total of £226 with a One-sie Fun Run, a Staff/Student netball match and a cake sale. The events were organised by the Year 13 Sports and Charity prefects inspired by Year 10 Reach student Alex Foster. Sports prefects Harry Kemp and Hannah Crawley along with Alex spoke in assembly about Reach and Alex gave a personal testimony. Well done Alex!

**"On an impulse I googled Frank Letch and you know what I found - Mayor of Crediton! Congratulations on a fantastic career!"**

**Peter Hore**

Frank still gives presentations to schools and other organisations and after talking to Exmouth Moose, he received a £115.20 donation. Wheatley St Michael branch donated £150

Cathy Blackshaw's 50th Birthday Ladies Tea Party raised £1,059 from donations in lieu of presents and her husband raised £156 by organising a golf day for friends.

**Emma Button's grandmother Jean raised £205 from a coffee morning and raffle and £16 at a Ladies Lunch.**

Zoe Groom who runs nearly new children's clothes shop Choice Clothes Ltd in Ipswich was so impressed with her great niece's adventures on Reach Activity Week that she donated £1,000 from the proceeds of unsuitable/unsold items which she sells on for charity.

**Members of Earls Barton Folk Dance Club donated £50 to Reach in lieu of sending each other Christmas cards.**

Students at Hall Mead School in Upminster raised £41.75 through school events and other initiatives and activities.

**The Holiday Inn at Portsmouth donated £103.86 and £402.92**

Jobcentre Plus at Southend-on-Sea raised £46.75

**Evan Joyce's granddad John donated £240 from a society golf game and raffle**

Joan Bannister organised coin boxes and raised £30

**Julia Godfrey donated £20**



# THANK YOU!

## ...AND ALL YOU SPORTING HEROES

### GLASGOW HALF MARATHON

Mags Millar, THE Scottish Branch joint coordinator, ran the Glasgow half marathon in September in 2hrs 10mins and raised a total of £235.50 including gift aid for the branch.



### SAMWORTH CHALLENGE

Simply Slow - Chris Steels, Mel McNeil, Guy Gisborne with Geoff Dawson from Simply Cartons in Nottingham raised £3,447.12 by doing the Samworth Challenge 2015 - they came 10th out of 39 in the Tough category which is fabulous!



The event in Mid Wales tested fitness, stamina and navigational skills. Teams had to navigate their way round on foot, by canoe and on bike and every section was timed.

### CHELTENHAM HALF MARATHON

Katrina Bailey raised £70 running the Cheltenham Half Marathon

### COAST TO COAST

This was Dawn Jackaman's 8th trek to raise money for Reach!

"It was great, 15 days in the Lakes, the Dales and the North York Moors in T-shirt and shorts! Very hard in the Lakes, lots of climbing but wonderful.

"We usually go abroad, but decided to stay in the UK this year. We have been to North and South India, Tanzania, Jordan, Everest Base Camp, Annapurna, the Inca Trail and the Great Wall of China but the C to C was great in a different way. I always raise for Reach. I know I don't manage to raise much but I suppose every little helps." Thank you, Dawn!



The sun shone on Heather Snelling's fifth annual Reach Garden Party at her home in Meopham, Kent. The 60 guests - friends, relations and neighbours - enjoyed a two course buffet lunch with wine and there were cake and book stall, tombola and raffle, all run by willing volunteers and her two grandsons Jack and Toby Eden. The party was a great success and raised a total of £1,100.

Donations totalling £65 were made in memory of the late Vera Vickers

Mayflower Morris - ladies based in Ash Vale, Surrey/Hants raised £100

Former Chairman Nigel Tarrant's company, Coleman Cutts Solicitors donated £1,569.92

Phoenix International Charity donated £500

Christian Allard MSP donated £150 for taking part in an Ipsos MORI survey

Joseph Strong Frazer Trust donated £1000 - thanks to Jenny and Simon Webster for making the contact

### VITALITY BRITISH 10K

Emma Hunt raised £362 running the Vitality British 10K

### OLYMPIC DISTANCE TRIATHLON

Fran Cooper from Freedom Childcare which runs the creche at the family weekend, raised £330 by competing in the Olympic Distance Triathlon in Mallorca.

### DRAGON RIDE

Steve Gunn and Graeme Hutton raised £325 when they completed the Wiggle Dragon Cycle ride 2015 - a 153KM ride climbing the Brecon Beacons.

### LONDON TO BRIGHTON

Matthew Philpin took on the London to Brighton challenge and raised £690.



# ...MORE SPORTING HERO FUNDRAISERS

## REACH IRONMAN

Thomas Romberg raised more than £3,500. when he took part in the gruelling Ironman challenge in Kalmar, Sweden, in August.

After swimming 3.8km through choppy waves, he had to cycle 180km. "It felt as if I was cycling against the wind for the whole way," he said. "I started to run the marathon at 3pm and managed to battle around the course in 4:50h - to clock a total time of just over 13hrs and, unexpectedly, finish the race in day light! I am grateful for the generous donations."



## THE IMPORTANCE OF SPORT

"My son Nils was swimming from age of four. We had a few issues with one swim teacher who denied him his badges as he could not do a perfect stroke, but after a complaint that went nowhere we changed pool and he sailed through. So if you think any children with a disability is not handled correctly, even if it would be better to educate the culprit, for your child's sake and your sanity it is sometimes better to find a good place elsewhere.

see that they fight to be first, but they congratulate each other in a way that is truer than able bodied athletes.

"Each British sport association has a para/disable section which contains the criteria for classification. It is complex and hard to understand but the essence of it is a point system for swimming and a classification ranking for athletics.

"Swimming Classifications are from S1 to S15 with S1 being the most physically disabled and S10 the least, S11 and above are blind, deaf and learning disabilities. The athletics classification starts with T for track (runners) and F for field. Upper limb deficiency is ranked 40-49.

"So in conclusion, everything is possible! If your child likes a sport, look into what is there for them and contact the national coordinators who can help you find a suitable club that has already some disabled members registered or some who are willing to enable it. They benefit as it is good for the other members and broadens their outlook on sport."

Claire Rehm

"He joined his older brothers' club and they saw an opportunity to start something great. At the time he was better than lots of his friends but by the age of 8-9 he started not to be as fast. At this time we were invited to a meeting with disability swimming and went. I was not convinced as I never wanted him to be segregated and handled differently. But this was an eye opener. He enjoyed the session and was deemed good enough to be fast tracked to classification.

"We never regretted this. He had some special training sessions in addition to those at the club, so he is still swimming with his friends and he gets special advice. As he quickly grew to national competition, it allowed him to stay with his friends in the top squad even though he is not as fast, but the club reckons a national swimmer is a national swimmer, even if disabled.

"As a result he has kept his confidence by knowing that by competing with others with similar impairment, he is still good.

"He is part of a group he can identify with whilst leading a normal life elsewhere and it has shown him that having upper arms disability is not the worst thing ever. Disability merges into ability and they are all a big happy gang. If anyone needs help they ask and there is no uneasiness.

"He has a goal to keep fit and train hard as he wants to go to Tokyo Paralympic games. Challenges keep you going.

"This year he was spotted at a school athletics competition by a coach who trains disabled athletes, so we got him classified and he started competing. So yes, upper limb disability doesn't just affect throws but running and jumping.

"So if your child likes a sport, look into para sport and find out what it could do for them. Para athletes have all had to find ways to perform, had some challenges but are a very friendly bunch. If you look at the replay of the races, you will

## BRISTOL TO BATH

Natasha and James Hutchins with Phoebe. So far they have raised in excess of £1,000.







**DSA  
was not able to  
help me with everyday  
struggles such as  
carrying shopping  
bags**

Hi! My name is Emily and I was born with my left arm missing just below the elbow. Although my left hand is missing, my right arm is unaffected and I have a fully functioning right hand.

I'm 20 yrs old and I have dealt with many arm-related struggles throughout my younger life. I want to share my experiences to teach (and hopefully inspire) those who are experiencing the same difficulties.

## **OFF TO UNIVERSITY**

I started university in September 2013. I was very nervous, as any teenager living away from home for the first time would be. I was 19 years old and well aware of the two-handed world I had found myself born into. Plunging into university at 19 was already hard enough, but knowing that I was going to be moving to another place; away from home, my family and my friends, in a world that didn't cater to my needs was daunting. However, I threw myself into the deep end and my anxieties were put to bed once I was fully engaged in university life.

Prior to starting at university, I applied for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), unsure of what they

would be able to offer me. To my surprise, after meeting with an assessor to discuss what difficulties I had and what I might be entitled to, I received a considerable amount of benefits. I got a laptop, complete with wireless mouse and a smaller keyboard to make typing with one hand more efficient, a dictaphone, a printer and unlimited ink/paper. I was also given a Kindle Fire HD so I wouldn't have any trouble hauling masses of books to and from university.

I felt extremely proud to have one hand on the day of the delivery. I am aware that since 2013 cuts to these benefits have been made, however I would still encourage people to apply for DSA when going up to university. And bear in mind that you have to reapply each year you are studying.

Obviously, DSA was not able to help me with everyday struggles such as carrying food shopping bags, managing two handed kitchen appliances or getting ready any quicker in the mornings but that's the reality of the two handed world we live in. But, us 'missing upper limb' people tend to find a way around these things anyway, sometimes performing them better than our two handed peers.

I am now re-taking my second year of university because I failed two of my modules last year. This has given me the chance to fully engage with student politics - in my opinion, the best part of university. I joined our university's disabled student society and often engage in petitions and protests for disabled students' rights, women's rights and rights for education. I am pictured here with Natalie Green, the leader of the Green Party.

And although our slogan at Reach is "it's ability, not disability that matters", I feel having the label 'disabled' as part of my identity has allowed me to feel part of a movement towards better social treatment and legal rights for people who experience the same struggles as myself.



## **TOM IN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Tom Sewell is pictured playing in the National Learning Disability tennis championships at the end of October. He competed in the singles and in the mixed doubles (Photos Tennis Foundation).





# MORGAN'S SPORTING TIPS



"In 2013 I went to Cardiff Metropolitan University where I had the opportunity to work with Sean Power, the new athletics coach focusing on long jump. I started to train six days per week, every week. Since then I have won two British University Championships (BUCS) Gold medals in long jump, 2 BUCS Silver medals in 100m and 2 British Disability Championships Silver medals in long jump and made it to the final of the Welsh Athletics Championships final in long jump, which is an able-bodied competition.

"I owe all this to the coaching from Sean Power and to Disability Sports Wales who help with entries and background support. It was DSW that got me started in athletics. All my life I've been an avid sports fan, playing football, rugby and badminton in able-bodied teams without knowing I could compete at a higher level within disability sports. Before the 2012 Paralympic games, awareness of para-sport was much lower than it is now. Back home I am often asked how athletics is going by people who used to show very little interest in para-sport. My goal is one day to represent Great Britain at a Paralympic event.

"A big change in my life since beginning university is that I now use a sport specific prosthetic everyday, except for my days off training. As someone who always found traditional cosmetic prosthetics somewhat cumbersome and a bit of a nuisance, I have been surprised at the benefits of using the arm so regularly. In my training I wear my arm for all sprinting, plyometric and weights exercises and outside of training I wear it for cycling and playing badminton. I have noticed that my upper body has become significantly stronger, helping to improve my posture and make everyday tasks a bit easier and there has been a great benefit to my

long jump training. I am currently writing a dissertation project on the biomechanical benefits of using a prosthetic arm for long jump performance. Speaking from my experience I can say that having a functional prosthetic that allows me to exercise in a variety of ways has had many benefits.

"My prosthetic is made of black carbon fibre with a titanium close-able hook attachment. There is a wide range of functional attachments from locking clamps to open hooks. I'm fairly sure it is possible to have cosmetic hands attached too. I have an Ossur liner that goes on my arm which has a metal pin that the prosthetic then locks on to when I place my arm in the socket. I then have two different sleeves to help support my stump in the socket, especially when pulling or lifting in the gym. My stump ends just below my elbow so I have some ability to flex my elbow with the arm on. I have to decide between elbow flexibility and the level of support. I can either not use a support sleeve to get maximum flexibility, use a thin one for a mix between support and flexibility and the thick sleeve for maximum support but the least flexibility.

"This prosthetic offers me something I've never had. I've used basic cosmetic and myo-electric prosthetics but always felt they hindered more than helped. Because I never got on well with them as a child I became comfortable doing everyday tasks without them. I'm sure plenty of people can relate to that. But now being able to perform a variety of strengthening exercises using the prosthetic, I have become stronger and can use my stump more effectively for tasks such as carrying shopping bags.

"Of course, its high tech components and durability mean the costs are somewhat higher than a 3-D printed type prosthetic. All types of prosthetics have their place but if sports/fitness is the goal it is worth the extra effort to get one made for the job. I was able to receive my prosthetic through NHS funding but had to argue my case for needing it."

**Morgan Jones**

**Morgan is happy to talk about his sports prosthetic: email him on: [morganjonest47@gmail.com](mailto:morganjonest47@gmail.com).**



## MATTHEW TOPS THE PODIUM AT THE NATIONAL PARA CLIMBING COMPETITION

Reach Matthew Phillips (14) has come first in rounds 1 and 2 of the British Paraclimbing Series 2015 held recently at the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena in Ratho and the Castle Climbing Centre, London.

In Edinburgh he joined 23 other paraclimbers, including another Reach member James Thompson in the competition organised by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the British Mountaineering Council. The second round was held in London where again he competed against 24 other paraclimbers. The same format was used as in Edinburgh and he breezed through with a perfect score of 486 out of 486.

Matthew, took up Paraclimbing less than 18 months ago. He is already at a national competition standard and has his sights set on Team GB. He trains nine and half hours a week with the Surrey Summit Performance Squad at the Surrey Sports Park. Surrey Summit, who are his main sponsors, said: "A big congratulations to a true Summit Hero!"

Matthew's achievement was also recently recognised at the local radio station Eagle Radio Local Heroes Awards at G Live in Guildford where he won the Sports Award.



# Give your child independence and control

- Automatic wash and dry shower toilets.
- Paediatric support systems.
- After sales service and maintenance.
- Over 50 years of healthcare experience.

*I didn't need  
any help today!*

clos•mat®



[www.clos-o-mat.com](http://www.clos-o-mat.com) Tel: 0800 374 076 Email: [info@clos-o-mat.com](mailto:info@clos-o-mat.com)



# NEED TO KNOW

## EDRIC 'WHAT IF' CAMPAIGN

In October Jo Dixon, Lee Gwilliam and Gary Philips attended the **EDRIC** Dysmelia Expert Forum Conference in Stockholm. EDRIC's aim is to support individuals with Dysmelia, and their families, by pooling and sharing knowledge from a wide range of relevant organisations across the world. REACH is a network member of EDRIC and we went to build networks, share knowledge, and keep abreast of the latest developments in supporting limb difference globally.

The three day conference was packed with speakers and topics included: **A medical and psychological analysis of 'Prosthetic Solutions for Children'**; A presentation on **'Wellness for Body & Soul'**. A scheme in Sweden in with bespoke dietary and fitness plans for Thalidomide patients and a number of presentations sharing medical and financial support methods provided to people with Dysmelia

Of particular interest was a presentation on EDRIC's **'What If'** Campaign, created in response to their survey that suggested maternity services across Europe are not providing a good enough quality of service to parents of children with limb difference at both the point of diagnosis, and after-care.

The campaign highlighted that this leads parents to feel uninformed and uncertain of the best course of action for themselves and most importantly, their child.

Using crowdfunding, the **'What If'** campaign raised €17,000 Euro which has been used to launch the **'What If'** portal, collating a number of videos, articles and information aimed to raise the awareness of limb difference in particular to healthcare professionals.

The campaign has also been used to commission a further study into this subject with the aim of producing clearer and more comprehensive data internationally which EDRIC hope can be used to signpost where services at this critical time can be improved. This survey was shared with REACH members throughout October to make sure we were given the opportunity to take part in this vital project.

**Nowhere else in Europe are there as exciting developments as there are here in the UK from the likes of Open Bionics and Team UnLimbited**

there as exciting developments as there are here in the UK from the likes of our AGM attendees, Open Bionics and Team UnLimbited.

In summary, a worthwhile trip which provided a great opportunity to learn from others, network with experts and share experiences from across Europe.

For more information on EDRIC and the 'What If' Campaign, please visit [www.dysnet.org](http://www.dysnet.org).

The conference provided great opportunity to network with experts from across Europe. As was the case at our own AGM, 3D printing and the development of prosthetic solutions in this area was a common topic of conversation. It was pleasing to see that other communities are also aware of the potential benefits, but equally satisfying was that from what I heard and saw, nowhere else in Europe are

## PREGNANT & WORRIED.... CONTACT REACH

Sharon and Simon Payne have a son Oliver, 5, and a Reach daughter Ava who is 4 months old. Ava has a little left arm which stops below the elbow. It was picked up by chance at a 16 week scan to check her heart following a routine appointment with the community midwife.

"It was a massive shock to be told this especially as we had been told at the 12 week scan that two hands and two feet had been visible," said Sharon.



"After the scan I was seen by a Specialist Midwife who went through my options and arranged for me to have a follow up at a specialist hospital the following week. The midwife talked about possible causes for an absent limb such as amniotic band syndrome, a vascular accident or just one of those things, and she gave me the contact details for Reach.

A week later they confirmed the 'little arm' and I had amniocentesis as we wanted as much information as possible as to whether there could be anything else associated with the little arm. After three agonising weeks we finally got our test results back which were 'normal'.

"During the weeks that followed we started telling family and friends about Ava's little arm and received a lot of support. It was an emotional time, I was often upset worrying about the future, I didn't want our baby to be different.

"At 35 weeks pregnant I joined Reach. I received some issues of Within Reach

magazine and information leaflets. It was great to see the work that Reach does and how it supports children and their families. I joined the Facebook group which I have found the most helpful. I remember spending hours going through postings looking at the children's achievements (dancing, horseriding, cycling) and how parents were able to put a question up and the positive responses they received, I realised that joining the group was going to work for us.

"Ava was born in June, I introduced her to the Reach facebook group with a cute picture and was overwhelmed by the number of people who responded welcoming her, sharing their experiences and received an offer of adjusted clothes for her. One bit of advice that I was given by a member was to get in touch with local Reach families, to attend local meet ups and the family weekend/AGM. We followed this advice, met other families and realised that we weren't alone.

"We have recently attended the Family weekend in Leicester which we thoroughly enjoyed and found has really benefitted our family.

"Ava is happy and thriving. We have had several follow up appointments. To date Ava has had an x-ray of her spine and arms and a scan of her kidneys. She is being followed up by a Paediatrician, Orthopaedic team and an Occupational therapist. She is due to have a heart scan and we are due to see a geneticist. Ava has been seen at our local limb centre and is due to be seen by a prosthetist when she is six months old where we will decide on what path to follow.

"So far Reach has been a big support to us, we have met some great people and can't wait for the next meet up."



# DREAMFLIGHT - A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

My name is Adam Moran, I am 14 years old and I have been a member of Reach since I was a baby. We live in Scotland and my family and I are in the Scottish Branch of Reach. Earlier this year, the co-ordinators of the Scottish branch nominated me to go on a trip of a lifetime to Florida with the Dreamflight Charity. Dreamflight take children with a disability or illness out to Florida every year for a big adventure without their parents. I didn't know anything about it until I was sent a special invite in a golden envelope!

On 17th October I flew out to America on a specially chartered plane full of children from all over the UK. I was nervous about going on holiday without my mum, dad and big brother but there was lots of doctors and carers there to look after us!

Over the next ten days we had the most amazing time! I went to Disney's Magic Kingdom, Hollywood Studios, Seaworld and my favourite Universal Studios! I had great fun on lots of rides but my favourite one was Rip Rocket Roller Coaster! I got to meet loads of characters like Mickey Mouse and Spiderman. We even went swimming with dolphins which was awesome!

I made lots of new friends, with lots of kind of disabilities, although no-one had a



**Adam  
Moran in  
Florida**



wee hand or arm just like mine. It was just a great experience and one of the best times of my life. I didn't even miss my mum and dad!

Thank you to Mags Millar and Stephanie Tennent for nominating me! I even met Mags coming off a ride when I was there, as she was on holiday there too. Also thanks to Dreamflight - it really was a trip of a lifetime and something I will never forget!

Dreamflight is a UK based charity that offers a trip of a lifetime to children across the UK in Orlando Florida. Parents are not invited. the children go with a team of volunteers including doctors, nurses and carers. Once a year in October these marvellous people take around 192 nominated children for an amazing 10 days. Dreamflight believe that fun and joy are as important as

medicines and treatments.

"The children leave families behind giving them a chance to discover independence, confidence, and a whole new outlook on life. Often for the first time, these children realise that they are not alone, and they are not the odd one out. They see children around them who have also suffered, they gain perspective and experience things they never thought possible." (dreamflight.org.uk)

Anyone can nominate a child to their local branch of Dreamflight or online, but nominations must be backed up by the child's medical professional. There are 12 regional sections of Dreamflight and information can be found on the webpage.

"I first came across Dreamflight when I worked in the children's hospice in Scotland," said Mags. "The East of Scotland Dreamflight Branch leader Susan Smyth worked with me and was delighted to receive nominations from Reach. Children must be between 8 and 14 and have a problem, illness or disability that affects their lives. Children chosen for this trip have such a magical and wonderful experience. They are treated to so many VIP treats including a full road closure around Orlando airport with a motorbike escort to their hotel!

It was my absolute pleasure to nominate Adam and I will continue to nominate Reach children across Scotland and fingers crossed many of them will be chosen over the years. I would encourage all Branch Coordinators to nominate children from their own areas as to see the photos and the experiences that Adam has had and to know that I played a small part in making that happen is magical in itself.

"It can be difficult for an outsider to believe that the happy and lively children they see laughing their way around the theme parks have any problems in life. But find time to talk to them about their life experiences and you can't help but be impressed and humbled by their courage. Those who do get the chance to meet these children, and hear their stories, understand exactly what Dreamflight means to them." (Dreamflight.org.uk)



## BRANCH NEWS

## SCOTLAND



The Scottish branch has been busy this year, we have two new branch coordinators who are getting to grips with this new and exciting opportunity!

Cameron Millar was invited to the secret Santa flight in Edinburgh last year, a fabulous experience where the kids were treated to a magical flight on the hunt for Santa from Edinburgh airport.

Our Reach Christmas party was held at the Snozone at Glasgows Braehead, everyone had a ball sledging! We had our annual family weekend in Ardeonaig In August where all the families enjoyed an action-packed weekend raft building, canoeing and gorge walking! For many of our families this is their only chance to meet up as The Scottish Branch covers such a wide area.

Claire Owens and her family raised just over £1000 at a bag packing session in her local supermarket. Mags Millar ran a 5k and a half marathon to raise funds for our branch.

Our wee star Lily Moffat had a successful toe to hand transplant and went to Disney on Ice thanks to the Les Hoey Dreammaker Foundation. Stephanie and Daniel Tennant went down to Manchester to be filmed for a Jeremy Kyle episode talking about inspirational children, Daniel had a fabulous time and was treated to a fabulous holiday to the Barcelona stadium!

We attended our local smart centre information and meet up afternoon where we met Jamie Andrew and enjoyed an afternoon of getting to meet people in our local area and letting them know about Reach.



**The Kent & East Sussex get together at Wilderness Woods in Hadlow Down.**



## SOUTH LONDON

In addition, in September South London branch visited Bocketts Farm with 8 families and a total of 35 people. We all had fun with the animals, the playgrounds indoor and outdoor and the most famous pig race.



## NORTH WEST

The North West Branch went to Jumpnation in Manchester in October. A whopping 70 people attended, our biggest ever event!

All ages and abilities got involved in a fun filled hour of bouncing whilst others spectated on the gallery with a latte!

It was lovely to meet a few families who attended for the first time, and catch up with old friends.





# THE NORTH WEST MASQUERADE BALL



After the success of our 2014 Reach Ball, all six organisers Paul Burns, Gaynor Critchley, Kim Povey, Lewis O'Rourke and Louise Wilson and me jumped at doing it again in 2015. Our first job was to find a bigger venue and we decided on The Cloisters



at Bolton Holiday Inn, a beautiful 16th century converted church that holds up to 180 people. It would be a Masquerade Ball.

We met every month, setting ourselves jobs. I arranged speakers and Jo and Abby at Reach Head Office were fantastic giving me ideas plus providing all the material needed for the night. Jennie Sands and Claire Cashmore both straight away said they



would love to come. As a parent listening to Jennie at Reach AGM Leeds about how determined she is and nothing stops her, I was delighted she could make it and it was an honour to have Paralympian Claire Cashmore.

Paul did the timeplan, seat plans and menu cards and Paul and Lewis were the compères for the evening. We sold 150 tickets, 50 more than last year and it was lovely to see so many Reach members there. Lewis' mask was painted-on gold leaf which was an original idea and when guests arrived in their masks we knew Masquerade was the right theme.

The event included a drink, three course meal, games and dancing to The Provocateurs who came last year. Gaynor had 75 gifts on a tree which guests paid £5 for a guaranteed prize. Kim and Louise sold raffle tickets. Louise and Neel made many of the basket gifts.



The speakers were inspiring, Jennie talked about the operations she had as a child and growing up with a deficiency. Reach members there I know thought 'my child will be fine' and Jennie gave them reassurance. Claire Cashmore came on and we had a bit of a panic when Claire said she had her arm bitten off. Paul thought I've not got that info. Claire talked about what she had achieved from growing up to being in the Paralympics. Both of them said how Reach has helped them and their families over the years. Musician and actor Max Runham came and played three tracks on the keyboard.

This year wasn't as successful financially as last year but we are delighted that Holiday Inn, Bolton will raffle a teddy at every Christmas Party in aid of Reach. After match-giving from Lloyds Bank we expect to have raised £6,660. Thank you everyone for your support. The next Ball will be in 2017.  
**Jane Crook**



## CONGRATULATIONS HOLLIE! DOUBLE WORLD JAVELIN CHAMPION

Hollie Arnold is now DOUBLE World Javelin Champion. She has just returned from the IPC World Athletics Championships in Doha, Qatar and won the Gold medal and the title with a new Personal Best throw and a course record.

Not a bad day's work in 40 degrees heat and the humidity hitting the roof! Hollie Arnold, has been a Reach member since before she was born. Aged 21, the professional athlete, who has a short right arm without a hand, already has two Paralympic Games under her belt and several World Championships.



# withinReach



THE REACH FAMILY WEEKEND 2015

