

# BIG



Yn dyfarnu arian

Y Loteri Genedlaethol

Awarding funds from

The National Lottery®

WALES ISSUE 5

[biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://biglotteryfund.org.uk)

**FREE! FREE! FREE!**

**INSIDE:** How the **Big Lottery Fund** is putting Lottery money back into your community



**Overcoming domestic abuse**



**PAGE 14**

**Margaret John**



**PAGE 37**

**Scout James**

**is prepared** Page 6

**Win a tour of the Millennium Stadium**

**Page 42**



# Discover the wildlife on your doorstep

Community Wildlife is bringing people together to discover, enjoy and protect the wildlife in their local area.

You can apply to Community Wildlife if you are a voluntary and community organisation, a school, a town or community council or a health authority. Grants between £300 and £10,000 are available.

The application deadline is 24 November 2010.

For more details and an application form, visit our website [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/communitywildlife](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/communitywildlife) or call our helpline on: 0845 367 0610 (Textphone 0845 602 1659).



## Welcome!

**Published by Big Lottery Fund**  
**Website:** [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)  
**Email:** [big.wales@biglotteryfund.org.uk](mailto:big.wales@biglotteryfund.org.uk)  
**Phone:** 01686 611700

**Publishing director:** Linda Quinn  
**Editor:** Ben Payne  
**Assistant editors:** Oswyn Hughes, Claire Trainer, Sian Jones, David Symons  
**Production editor:** Robert Blow  
**Contributors:** Equinox PR  
**Production manager:** Emma Robinson  
**Translator:** David Symons  
**Design:** Tom Barnes, Cathy MacMurray  
**Printer:** Belmont Press

Brought to you by



The Big Lottery Fund is committed to improving communities and the lives of people most in need and there are plenty of stories in this edition of BIG magazine that show exactly how we're doing this.

Read about Jo Morgan, who says life begins at 40 after enduring years of domestic violence. And how Robert Rees shrunk four inches after being diagnosed with osteoporosis. We also discover how Brian McHugh gets his life back on track after a double tragedy.

New to this edition are links to video interviews with some of the people featured. Look out for these and go online to hear their stories.

Please sign up to receive Big Magazine for free by filling out the feedback form on page 42. By doing this you could win tickets for a fascinating tour around the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

And your mag has just been shortlisted for a major UK public relations award. Winners will be announced later this year so fingers crossed.

BIG is the largest of four National Lottery distributors operating in Wales – currently responsible for distributing half of the money that the National Lottery raises for good causes.

We distribute up to £1 million every week and from now until 2015 we will invest over £200 million pounds in Wales alone.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

**Ben Payne**  
Editor

You can also follow us on Twitter [www.twitter.com/BigLotteryWales](http://www.twitter.com/BigLotteryWales) or become a friend of Big Lottery Fund Wales on Facebook



10

Making age an advantAGE



06

New home for Neath scouts



14

Life begins at 40



21

An unbreakable spirit



34

It's tinsel town at Tanyard



# Inside BIG

## BIG shorts

**6** Neath celebrates its new scout hut; TV and film stars immortalised in steel

**8** From t'ai chi to IT; Ponty Werin bridge opens

## Real life

**10** Making age an advantAGE: Pensioners make new friends at a lunch club

**14** Life begins at 40: Jo Morgan has overcome 12 years of domestic violence and now helps other women to do the same

**18** Brian saves his family: Brian McHugh got in touch with Save the Family after a series of crushing blows

**21** An unbreakable spirit: Robert Rees has learned to smile again after an agonising osteoporosis diagnosis

**24** Triple delight for supermum of 9: Lorraine Roberts adds triplets to her growing brood

**26** Dan's the man: An unemployed young father is building a better future for his family

**28** Who cares? Love and faith have kept Valmai Williams strong during the last 20 years of caring for her daughter, Alaw

**32** Stirred not shaken: 90-year-old veteran Dennis Whitcombe recalls meeting the real life James Bond

**34** It's tinsel town at Tanyard: A youth project is inspiring local young actors, producers and musicians to set their sights on Hollywood

**38** Village SOS calls are answered: Three Welsh villages are euphoric having secured £400,000 to set up community enterprises

**42** Don't miss the chance to WIN a tour around the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff

## Your BIG regulars

**30** People's champion: Our salute to the ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

Kerry Jones at the Inspire project in Wrexham is supporting young people to tackle self-harm

**37** On the ball: We ask Gavin and Stacey star Margaret John some burning questions about the National Lottery





5th Neath (Bryncoch) scouts

# BIG shorts

## New home for Neath scouts

They met every week in a building which was literally crumbling around them. Now, thanks to a grant of over £234,000 from the Big Lottery Fund, scout, cub and beaver groups in Neath Port Talbot have a new home to be proud of.

The funding paid for the 5th Neath (Bryncoch) Scout Group to demolish the old scout hut, built in 1938, and make way for a fantastic new building with all mod cons on Farmers Road, Neath.

Group scout leader, Geoffrey Loyns, was glad to see the back of the old zinc shed.

"The old building was in an extremely poor state of repair," he says. "It had a leaking roof, damp

everywhere and no hot water, toilet or kitchen. Some parents wouldn't let their children attend



due to the condition of the place."

The new hall is now available for use by the wider community as well as the scout groups.

"The scouts are over the moon and the facilities are brilliant," says Geoffrey. "It's a good modern facility and has a large hall. It can be used for anything."

### BEFORE



### AFTER



The scouts gather outside their new hut

## Immortalised in steel



Film star Richard Burton and comic actor Rob Brydon (pictured) have been immortalised in steel in a series of portrait benches unveiled in their hometown of Port Talbot.

The new art installations have been placed in the Afan Forest Park above the steel town, together with a statuette of the park's head ranger, Dick Wagstaff.

The three figures were chosen by the local community to be immortalised in a "Portrait Bench" – one of 80 benches to be installed on newly created walking and cycling routes across the UK as part of an art project from sustainable transport charity Sustrans.

Each bench is being placed along a newly-created route for pedestrians and cyclists – in this case along a new route connecting Port Talbot to the Afan Valley community of Cwmavon and the Afan Forest Park.

An excited Rob Brydon said: "I love the thought of becoming part of the landscape alongside the great Richard Burton."

Forest ranger Dick Wagstaff has worked in the Valley for over 36 years. "I was flattered to be portrayed alongside an international icon like Richard Burton and a famous son like Rob Brydon."

**Read about another great Sustrans project on page 9.**



**From t'ai chi**

**to IT**

Jean taking part in an exercise class

**Following the death of her husband, 82-year-old Jean Williams felt isolated and lonely.**

All that has changed since Jean from Talwrn, Anglesey, found a new lease of life two miles down the road in Llangefni.

She's among thousands of older people across Anglesey who are now benefiting from 'Ageing Well Centres', funded with over £495,000 from the Big Lottery Fund and ran by Age Concern Gwynedd a Môn.

New centres have sprung up in Amlwch, Brynsiencyn and Llangefni to provide activities and services for older people. Most days of the week, Jean pops down to her local Age Well Centre at St Cyngar's Church Hall in Llangefni and she now has a life that the busiest

socialite would be proud of.

"This project is excellent," says Jean. "I live alone, so I have a lot of lonely hours to fill. There are so many activities you can take part in at the centre. I'm taking tai chi classes, computer lessons and creative writing classes. We also have a gardening club where we do a lot of work on our allotment. My life's quite full nowadays. I meet all kinds of different people and they're all very friendly."

**Read more about how we're helping older people on pages 10-13.**



Jean learns new computer skills

**Building bridges**

**The £5 million Pont y Werin bridge linking Cardiff Bay and Penarth has been opened by the Welsh Assembly's Deputy First Minister, Ieuan Wyn Jones.**

The bridge, which incorporates a 20-metre opening section to allow river traffic to pass, will complete the six-and-a-half mile circular Bay Edge Walkway and cycle route. Funding for the three-year project has come from the Welsh Assembly Government, Sustrans, the Cardiff Harbour Authority, and Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan councils.

The Big Lottery Fund awarded Sustrans £50 million for UK-wide schemes after it won The People's Millions Lottery contest on ITV in December 2007.

Sustrans is using the grant to create new walking and cycling routes across the UK to encourage people to make more journeys on foot or by bike.



**Deputy First Minister Ieuan Wyn Jones opening the Pont y Werin bridge**



**Local schoolchildren help attend the opening**



# Making age an advantAGE



Donald Rees and Iris Lewis may be regulars at the Age Concern Neath Port Talbot pensioner lunch club in Aberavon, but they're still young at heart. Donald has met a new 'sweet girl' Glenys, and Iris and her childhood sweetheart, Edgar, have found a new love for life. BIG is investing £20 million into helping improve older people's quality of life. Here's why...



Donald Rees

## "I found love at the lunch club"

"I've gotta be honest: it's the best thing that ever happened to me. 'When you lose your partner, people say they're sorry but they don't realise what it's like to be in the house on your own."

Singing as he swaggers into the dining room, bursting with energy and kissing all the ladies' hands like a true gentleman to greet them at the weekly Age Concern Neath Port Talbot lunch club in Aberavon, Donald Rees is ever the joker at 78: "I'm young, see, young at heart!"

No-one would imagine this confident man could ever feel lonely. "When I lost my wife Rita, I was working, so I had something to keep me busy and that took the edge off it; but I finished work and then I felt lonely. And it was then that I wrote to the Evening Post and that's how I

To see a video about AdvantAGE, visit [www.tinyurl.com/37nbjwr](http://www.tinyurl.com/37nbjwr)

## The facts

- Over one million (11 per cent) of people aged 65 or over in the UK say they often or always feel lonely
- Nearly half of all older people (about 4.6 million) consider the television as their main form of company

met my last true love and partner, Margaret."

The couple spent 10 happy years together at Ocean Way in Port Talbot, but sadly Margaret died two years ago.

"When Margaret passed away, I felt awful. I've got photos of her all over the house and when I'd get up in the morning they were the first thing I'd see. I always talk to her, and every night I'd say, 'love you, miss you'. And it felt horrible. I didn't go out a lot.

"Then after a while, Margaret's daughter Wendy said, 'Donald, you want to start going out a bit'. She told me about the Age Concern pensioner club."

Ever the charmer, Donald is the life and soul of the lunch party every Thursday. He's loved by all, especially the ladies, which explains how he seems to be third time lucky in love, or at least, companionship.

Having lost his wife and partner of 10 years, finding a new person to share time with has been a blessing and Donald puts it down to the group, "The loveliest thing about coming here has been meeting Glenys," he says. "She's a great woman. I've taken her out to dinner myself, just us two, twice already."

**Donald Rees (continued)...**

And when asked whether he had been lucky enough to find love for a third time, Donald was uncharacteristically quiet. "I like Glenys a lot," he says. "The club has helped me find a companion, just when I thought I'd never be happy again. If I hadn't been with these people, I would've just been by myself."

"After Margaret died, I was cleaning the house every other day, just to keep myself busy. Now I just do it when I see the dust settling on the TV!"

And when asked if the club has given him a new lease of life, Donald concluded: "Definitely! Great! I've gotta be honest, I wouldn't be without it...they're fantastic!"

**Iris Lewis**

**"I just needed someone to talk to"**

"The way I was brought up, there was always someone to talk to. I had my gran and grandpa next door, and my aunt and uncle down the road, so I always had family around me. Life was so different back then."

Iris Lewis, 84, was born and bred in a tight-knit community in Pontardawe. By 18, she'd met her first love and life-long partner, Edgar. But the young sweethearts faced challenges, as Edgar was diagnosed with pneumocholiosis, a potentially life-threatening respiratory disease.

And despite being warned against marriage, Iris's commitment to Edgar has never wavered, even when he was in hospital for 12 months back in 1944: "My grandmother would say don't stay with him, don't marry him. She'd lost her sweetheart through tuberculosis when she was about my age and she was frightened the same would happen to me."

"People told me they felt so sorry for me on my wedding day, but it was the best day ever, and I've been the luckiest of them all."

"They said he wouldn't live, but it's been like a fairy tale for so many years – we had our son and we've lived a happy life. But now that I'm getting older, it's getting

harder. You need that little bit of support from someone, and that's what I get from the volunteers at the lunch club."

After 60 years of endless dedication from his wife, Edgar, now 88, suffered a stroke two years ago, which hit Iris hard. She felt

**"He may be 70 odd, but he knows all anyone aged 83 needs to know about computers!"**

isolated and got a "bit down". She felt unable to cope physically with the demands of living as a carer for her husband.

"It's so important when you're getting older to have that support, because you want to do this and that, but you just can't do it no matter how much you try. In your mind you think you are still fit enough, you could be doing so much, but I'm not able to anymore. My arms and back ache and I'm even having problems walking. It's getting mentally tough as well. Since Edgar's stroke, I've felt so low. I just felt as if I needed someone to talk to."

Before finding out about the lunch club, Iris only ventured out the house for the weekly shop. She was advised by her

**What BIG did**

In June 2010, the Big Lottery Fund launched AdvantAGE, a new £20 million programme aimed at improving the quality of life of older people in Wales.

To help launch the programme, Margaret John, star of the hit comedy TV show. Gavin and Stacey, joined a group of older people at the Aberavon Beach Hotel who regularly attend a Thursday lunch club organised by Age Concern Neath Port Talbot. The charity received a £247,064 grant from BIG in 2008 to fund the Promoting Independence through Neighbourliness project.

The AdvantAGE programme will make grants of between £200,000 and £1 million available to voluntary organisations running three to five-year projects. The closing date for applications is Friday 29 October 2010.

Edgar and Iris with TV star Margaret John



doctor to attend the meetings, as he was concerned about her as a lone carer. "They had a scheme going in the health centre to help people like me. A nurse came to the house for a chat and she put me in touch with Age Concern Neath Port Talbot. The lunch club sounded lovely."

Edgar, though, was less enthusiastic about joining. "I said, you do what you like, I'm going, because the doctor had told me that I have to. So I just went and enjoyed it."

Soon Edgar saw the positive effect it was having on his wife and he decided to give it a go. "We've found it easy to make friends,"

says Iris. "Everyone's glad to meet you, because most of them have lost their partners and live alone – everyone likes to talk about the good days. It keeps us young!"

And the couple have made a friend who lives around the corner who is going to teach Iris how to use a laptop for the first time in her life. "He may be 70 odd, but he knows all anyone aged 83 needs to know about computers!"

Iris is so grateful for the help she's received through Age Concern Neath Port Talbot. "The volunteers here are marvellous. Some of the people who come here are at home on their own, day in day out; they've got carers waking them first thing in the morning and then they put them to bed at six o'clock at night. Just imagine going to bed at that time and waiting for the morning to come."

"I just hope that I will be able to be fit enough to come to these lunches for many years to come and that Edgar will be by my side to do that as well." **BIG**

**Jo Morgan suffered 12 years of domestic violence but now, thanks to a support service, she has transformed her life and is helping other women**

# Life begins at 40



Jo looks at her birthday cards, smiles and says, "For me, life definitely does begin at 40."

For the first time in her life, she is truly happy and is looking forward to a bright future with her four children.

Up until a few years ago, Jo believed that her life was going to be a brutal one.

After seeing her mum endure violent relationships, she herself then suffered more than a decade of domestic violence.

Hundreds of attacks included being stabbed in the head with a screwdriver and shot in the leg with an air rifle. The physical injuries healed after the attacks stopped three years ago but the emotional scars are only just beginning to fade.

Following a violent two-year relationship when she lived in Coventry, Jo fled to Tredegar in south Wales.

She admits feeling vulnerable and when

she met Michael\* in 1996, kidded herself she'd found true love.

"He was a bit of a charmer and a really nice guy," she says. "He swept me off my feet. Four months later I'd moved into his flat thinking the worst days of my life were over."

But Michael quickly became abusive and hit Jo after accusing her of having an affair following a night out.

"I was terrified. All my life I'd been exposed to violence and now this man, who had always been charming and treated me nicely, had turned into an animal almost overnight. Afterwards he was really apologetic and was really nice to me again, so I decided to give him the benefit of the doubt."

But after becoming pregnant in 2000 and

Jo suffered fractured ribs, a broken foot, lost teeth and severe cuts and bruising over the years



giving birth to their first child, Jak, now aged nine, the violence spiralled.

Regular beatings every couple of months were now the norm and continued after the birth of the couple's second child, Tori, now seven.

"During one incident Michael smashed up our home and he used to break off the keys in the locks to stop me going out. He stabbed me in the head with a screwdriver and smashed a glass over my head.

"I felt like I was walking on egg shells. I was worried what mood he would be in when he came through the door. I was worried I would say something that would kick him

off. There were loads of times that I feared for my life and often thought about taking my own life. I even cut my own wrists once and self-harmed because I wanted to escape. For years I thought that violence was my life and that there was no escape.

"People ask themselves why I stayed with him. For a lot of the time I thought I loved him and he was so nice to me between the attacks that I wanted to stay. But he also had so much control over me so I was too frightened to go.

"I didn't want to tell anyone as you think no-one will believe you – he made me think I was losing my mind."

Jo is now looking forward to a bright future with her four children, Jade, Angela, Jak and Tori







**“He hit me all over and left me for dead”**

Over the years, Jo suffered fractured ribs, a broken foot, lost teeth and suffered severe cuts and bruising. Following many attacks, Michael refused to let Jo receive hospital treatment even though her broken foot needed an operation to fix it.

In 2007, she decided enough was enough when she was hospitalised after a serious assault.

“He hit me all over and left me for dead. The next thing I remember is waking up in hospital. After I was discharged I thought that attack was the final straw.

“Police referred me to the Blaenau Gwent Domestic Abuse Services and they attended court with me, offered me support services and basically saved my life.

“They gave me the confidence and

support to finally break free.”

Michael was jailed for 15 months in July 2007 after he pleaded guilty to causing actual bodily harm. The couple are now separated.

Jo now volunteers at the Domestic Violence Service to help other women in need.

“I’m so glad to be free. Strangely enough I don’t feel angry when I think of Michael. I have no feelings but the big thing for me is I’m not afraid anymore.

“My message to other women is to get out of their violent relationship as quickly as they can. I know it’s not easy but there are fantastic support services out there to help them. Women have the chance to break free like me.”

Over the last few years Jo has had happier relationships with men but admits she is still wary, and is constantly on the lookout for any telltale signs of violent behaviour.

And now with the major landmark of her

**Fact file**

Every year one million women in the UK experience at least one incident of domestic abuse. 12,165 were victims of rape with 19,740 being victims of other sexual assaults during 2008/9.

The Forced Marriage Unit helpline received over 1,600 calls on suspected incidences of forced marriage in 2008.

For more information about support services in Wales visit [www.onestepthefar.org](http://www.onestepthefar.org)



Jo is all smiles with her youngest daughter Tori, who didn’t talk until she was five

**What BIG did**

BIG awarded £331,802 to Blaenau Gwent domestic abuse services, which has offered a range of support and information for around 1,800 cases of domestic abuse in the county borough.

Services provided include free legal advice and representation, accompanying victims in court, advice on housing and childcare, acupuncture and victim rehabilitation programmes.

The money has been used to employ a programme officer to work on the range of programmes being provided by the service as well as for a youth support worker to work with 11 to 25-year-olds affected by domestic abuse. The service was also runner-up for best voluntary/charity project in this year’s National Lottery Awards.

Project manager Cath James says: “Our service makes a difference for so many people. Not only does it make a difference for the victim of domestic abuse, but also their immediate family and friends who are also suffering directly or indirectly. Funding like the money from the Big Lottery Fund is crucial as it helps provide more services and ultimately reach more people in need.”

40th birthday behind her, she is looking forward to the future.

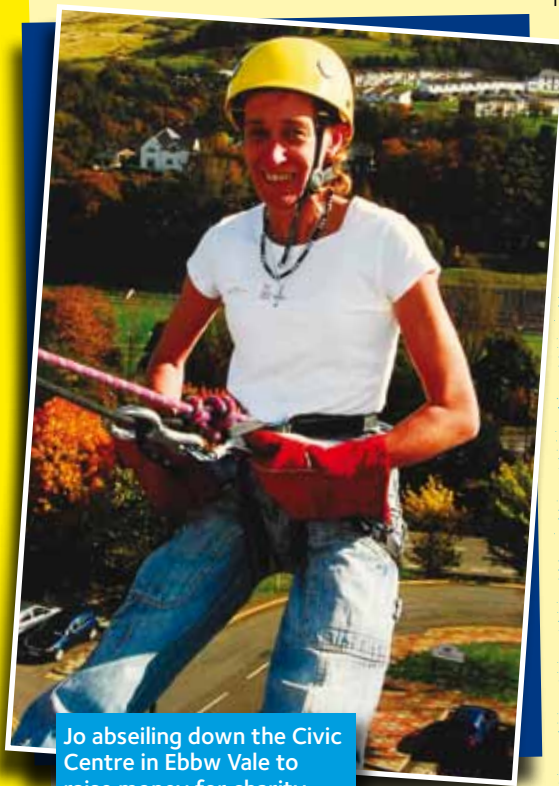
“I’ve started living. For the first time I now have the confidence to go out with the girls and I’ve even abseiled down the Civic Centre in Ebbw Vale to raise money for charity. People notice the difference in me.

“Of course all the violence has had an impact on my children. My youngest didn’t start talking until she was five when Michael had left. It was like she was too afraid to talk when he was around.

“But now the future is all about giving me and my family the best life possible. Our new lives have put a smile back on our faces and I’m going to keep it that way.” BIG

**\*Name changed**

To watch a video about Blaenau Gwent Domestic Abuse Services, visit <http://tinyurl.com/23djvfj>



Jo abseiling down the Civic Centre in Ebbw Vale to raise money for charity

# Brian saves his family



Brian with his wife Hayley, their children Ryan, Courtney and Tash and Janey Gregory (far left) from Save the Family

**They say that bad luck comes in threes but it seems that life has dealt one cruel blow after another to Brian McHugh and his family**

Eleven years ago, Brian's 4-year-old daughter Kimberly died of leukaemia and he suffered severe depression following her death. Four weeks after his daughter died, Brian's wife, Hayley, found out that she was pregnant with their daughter Courtney. Now, Courtney has been diagnosed with vascular problems and may have to have a heart bypass at 10 years of age after being rushed to hospital with a haemorrhage.

Just when Brian thought that things couldn't get any worse – they did. In September last year, Brian's mother, Kathleen, died of a massive heart attack and they lost their family home on the Cheshire estate where they were living at the time. Brian hasn't been able to get a job since his contract as a tour guide came to an end and he can't afford a house for his family. With no roof over their heads and

having to deal with another bereavement in the family, Brian slipped back into another deep depression and faced the serious possibility that the children might have to be put into care.

**"I just wanted to curl up and die"**

"We were living with my mother and because we were the lodgers and our names weren't on the title deeds, the authorities wouldn't pass it on to us after she died and we were told to leave with nowhere else to go," explains Brian, 38.

"It was me who found my mother in the bedroom when she died. I was really depressed for months after that and then we lost the house on top of everything. I



Kimberly



Kathleen

we moved there in September last year. They got us back on our feet again. If it wasn't for Save the Family, the children would probably have been put into care and God knows what would have happened to me and my wife. It's kept the family together. They have been and still are our shining light."

**MORE THAN A HOME**

Save the Family have provided the McHughs with much more

than a roof over their heads. They also offer all kinds of support in helping the family to develop their skills, improve their confidence and deal with all the trials and tribulations life throws their way.

"Me, the wife and the three kids have developed loads of confidence. They've sorted out our accommodation, they teach everybody to cook and they offer a range of different courses to help you develop your skills," says Brian.

**BACK ON THEIR FEET**

Brian's cries for help were soon answered by Save the Family Ltd, a BIG-funded charity which has supported thousands of homeless people in north-east Wales and the north west of England over the years. In north Wales, Save the Family provides homes in a village community for up to 24 families and thanks to the support of the project, Brian and his family now have a roof over their heads and have started a new life full of optimism in Wales. The project provides a last-chance lifeline for people like Brian who find themselves in a crisis and exists to keep whole homeless families together and help them to rebuild their lives.

"I knew the founder and chairwoman of Save the Family Ltd, Edna Speed, from the estate where I lived in Cheshire," says Brian.

"For the sake of my wife and kids, I approached her and she put us in the direction of their project. They found us a lovely house in Brymbo, near Wrexham, and

When Courtney was rushed to hospital in Liverpool with haemorrhaging in the bladder in May, they were able to turn to Save the Family once again for support.

"Our daughter Courtney is seriously ill with vascular problems in her legs and she could need a heart bypass at 10-years-old because the haemorrhaging has moved up from the bladder and is now close to her heart," explains Brian.

"When Courtney was rushed to hospital, they organised the transport to take us. They also took me and my wife there and back in the early hours of the morning and every day when we needed to."

Save the Family has also supported Brian and his wife to deal with their depression.

"I feel much better compared to last year," says Brian. "Save the Family has been great and if we need any kind of support

anytime of the day – they're there for us.

"They've helped me and the wife cope with all that's happened to us. I've now come off the tablets for my depression. My wife had a miscarriage recently but we've helped each other through it. We're a strong family – we've had to be. We've just got to stick together and move on with our lives. Save the Family has been a pillar of strength in teaching us how to do that."

"They've given us more than just a house. They've got us back on our feet, kept the family together and they've given me back my dignity. I've got nothing but praise for the work they do."

### MOVING ON

It's been less than a year since Brian got in touch with Save the Family but his family is already feeling confident enough to move on with their lives.

"We feel like we're back on our feet again and ready to move to a new house in Flintshire run by Save the Family," Brian beams.

"We'll still receive support from Save the Family for six months but after that we can decide to go it alone. That's a place where we want to be, but I suppose Save the Family will always be there when we need them."

Brian's advice for other families going

### What BIG did

Since 1995, Save the Family in Wales has received nine grants amounting to over £1.5 million from the Big Lottery Fund. This includes an award of nearly £200,000 in 2009 as part of our Recession Package, which has enabled Save the Family to help vulnerable people like Brian McHugh and his family to rebuild their lives.

through the same is simple: "Talk to Save the Family. They know how to help you and understand what you're going through. They're always on the end of the phone and they're easy to get hold of and talk to. That's what I did and I thank my lucky stars. I'm looking forward to the future now rather than looking back and delving into the past all the time." **BIG**

Got a smart phone? Download a QR reader app and scan this code to see a video of Brian McHugh being interviewed by Eamonn Holmes on Sky News. Alternatively, visit [www.savethefamily.uk.com/95/](http://www.savethefamily.uk.com/95/)



## Saving the family

The McHughs are one of five families which Janey Gregory from Save the Family has helped move on since March this year.

"There's a huge demand for our services" she says.

"We deal with 150 people a day who have been made homeless in Wrexham and Flintshire alone. That's a

staggering amount for two counties in north Wales.

"We've had families fleeing domestic violence, young parents thrown out of the family home on the street and even a person who left the services and was left homeless. No two stories are ever the same here.

"What's important to remember is that it could happen to any one of us. There seems to be a stigma attached to homelessness. But you've got to be thankful for what you've got because it could happen to anyone, especially the way the economy is at the moment."



# An unbreakable spirit

**Robert Rees has learned to smile again after the devastating news that he had the body of an 85-year old when he was 43**

“All I can remember was dancing, then hearing a noise like a gun going off in my head, followed by an excruciating pain in my back. It felt like somebody hit me with a sledgehammer. I couldn't move my arms and I was paralysed from the chest down.

It was June 2002; I was on holiday in the Dominican Republic with my wife Jean and two daughters Kelly and Lauren. We were just dancing when I collapsed in agony. I staggered a few paces and passed out.

When I came around I was surrounded by

a crowd of people with everyone assuming I'd suffered a heart attack.

I was given an injection, but it was useless. I screamed in agony every time someone touched me. I was taken to hospital where X-rays revealed my back was broken. I heard the doctor saying, “The injuries are so severe this man must have fallen three storeys into an empty swimming pool.”

A scan revealed the broken bone was touching my spinal cord. I was given a brace made of leather and steel and I can remember screaming in agony when it was fitted. Five days later we flew back to the UK – the worst eight hours of my life.

Back home, the orthopaedic surgeon was puzzled how such



Got a smart phone? Download a QR reader app and scan this code to hear an interview with Robert. Alternatively, visit: [www.tinyurl.com/2u24xwx](http://www.tinyurl.com/2u24xwx)



a horrific injury could occur just from dancing. I was terrified when he suggested it could be cancer.

Later that year, I decided to get a second opinion from a consultant who recommended an operation. I had a rib removed and my lung was collapsed to get to the damaged bone, which was replaced with a titanium cage.

**SHRUNK FOUR INCHES**

It took three months to recover. My whole upper body felt as if I had been trampled by a horse. One day my wife said, "I'm sure you look shorter." And, when I measured myself, I'd shrunk four inches. Further X-rays revealed my ribs had suffered 12 fractures since the operation.

Seven months after I'd collapsed, I was an emotional wreck. After seeing a bone specialist, test results came back in March 2003 and I was finally diagnosed with severe spinal osteoporosis. I had the bones of someone twice my age. I was 43 and I had an old woman's disease.

I was in complete shock and very confused. I found a number for the National Osteoporosis Society on the internet. I had so many questions so I rang the national helpline and talked to one of the specialist nurses for 90 minutes – the advice they gave was amazing. "There are many other men with the condition, although you are very young to have such a severe form of the disease," explained the nurse.

**CONSTANT PAIN**

At this time, I was a sales director for Dickies. My job required UK-wide travel but I was now working from home. It was impossible for me to continue and I took early retirement. It was more than a job, it was my life, and nothing prepared me for the depression I slipped into. My world became small, I had nothing to talk about

**Fact file**

- Almost 3 million people in the UK are estimated to have osteoporosis.
- In the UK, one in two women and one in five men over the age of 50 will break a bone mainly because of poor bone health.
- Osteoporosis costs the NHS and government £2.3 billion a year – that's £6 million a day.
- There are about 230,000 osteoporotic fractures every year.
- 1,150 people are dying every month in the UK as a result of hip fractures.

and I missed the status. I'd put a shirt and tie on all my working life but now I was forced to sit in a chair because it was too painful even to walk. Over the next nine months I became clinically depressed, the pain was a constant and I couldn't do any of the things I enjoyed. I'd become like an old age pensioner, sleeping two hours at a time in a chair day and night. It was simply too painful to lay down. Two years passed and my life seemed pointless.

I found it difficult to tell Jean how ill I felt. I still wonder how she put up with me during those two years. I then read about a new treatment called Forsteo but my consultant explained I would not qualify for it. But after an 18-month campaign I was given it and my bone density improved.

Then, in 2004, my mood started to ease when I was invited to speak at a National Osteoporosis Society's staff day. I told my story to help them understand what it's like to live with osteoporosis. My talk went down so well that I was asked to give more talks. A year later, I found myself

speaking nearly every week.

In 2006, the society asked me to become their ambassador which meant travelling further afield to tell my story. It was one of the best things I did. Suddenly I was wearing a suit again and my diary was filling up with appointments. Stangely enough, if it wasn't for osteoporosis I wouldn't have done some of the amazing things I have done. I have even met and receive regular letters from Camilla Parker Bowles. This work has stopped me feeling sorry for myself.

**DISASTER STRUCK**

I was feeling quite confident again until March last year. We were on holiday in Kenya celebrating my 50th birthday when disaster struck. I broke my back again while throwing a ball in the pool. Again, I felt the familiar thud and dreadful pain. I was taken to hospital and then came back to the UK. This time no operation was needed but my confidence dipped again as I lived in constant fear of fracturing. But my family and my work with the Society continues to give me purpose, determination and a lust for life.

I still take a cocktail of painkillers and cannot sleep lying down. In a typical day, I can only function in two-hour bursts. My mobility is severely limited, I don't enjoy my food as much as I used to, and because of the height loss my stomach sticks out as my organs have to fit in a smaller space. I have less lung capacity so my breathing suffers.

I've been shocked at the lack of understanding of the disease among the medical profession and I wish I had a pound for every time someone says 'you look well'. I wish I could wear a badge showing how much pain I'm really in. I suppose I should take it as a compliment as I have learned to smile again. **BIG**

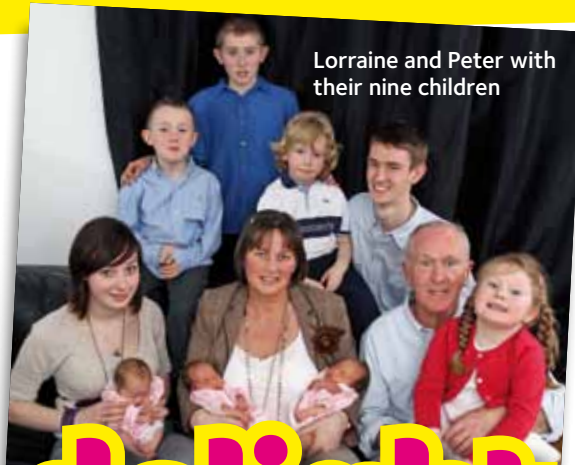


Robert with his wife Jean and daughter Lauren

**What BIG did**

This year BIG awarded £4,086 to the National Osteoporosis Society in Pembrokeshire. Caroline Metz, trust fundraiser for the Society, says: "Living with osteoporosis can be a lonely experience. The grant will go a long way towards easing the isolation for those with the disease in rural areas of Wales. Thanks to this funding, the National Osteoporosis Society will be able to provide more people with help and information."

**Lorraine Roberts was stunned when she found out she was pregnant. At 39 and already the proud mother of six, she reckoned her family was plenty big enough...**



Lorraine and Peter with their nine children

# Triple delight for supermum of 9

**B**ut there was an even bigger bombshell to follow – doctors revealed that she was having triplets.

Now Lorraine has her hands full after giving birth to three non-identical daughters by caesarean section in February this year. First to arrive was Ruby at 4lb 10oz, then Grace at 4lb 7oz, followed by Eva at 4lb 10oz.

Lorraine and her partner, Peter McNea, 53, a delivery driver for the children's charity Barnardo's, are now raising the new arrivals in their four-bedroom house in Wrexham.

"When I heard I was having triplets I felt shock more than anything – but in a nice way," she says. "In any pregnancy I've been told to expect twins because twins are in the family but I was shocked when I was told I was having triplets."

According to the Multiple Births Foundation, triplets occur once in every 10,000 naturally-conceived births.

"I feel lucky," says Lorraine, now



aged 40. "I told my partner the other day that we're lucky to experience a multiple birth. We've got six other children as well and I find the whole experience of motherhood lovely. I've got brothers who are twins and I've seen them grow up to be very close to this day. I'm looking forward to seeing that in my own children."

Although Lorraine, a self-employed carer, has a wealth of experience under her belt, bringing up triplets presents some unique challenges.

"They are quite good babies individually but everything's multiplied by three," she says.

"Mastering the routine has been the most difficult thing. I'm breast feeding as well, which is time-consuming – it takes about an hour to feed them all and sometimes you've got three babies crying for food at the same time."

## "We're lucky to experience a multiple birth"

"Also, I change their nappies about five times a day, so that's about 15 we'd go through."

"As you'd expect, my days are quite full but I go for a walk with the triplets and bump into people I know and friends always call round. I just make the most of it really – it's my life. But there's definitely no plan for more additions to the family!"

The latest annual report from the UK's largest friendly society, Liverpool Victoria,

## FACT FILE

According to the latest statistics for England and Wales, there were 21,624 multiple births in 2008. Some 21,113 of these were twins. Only 511 were triplets and above.

Around one in 65 births is a twin birth and one in 5,000 is a triplet. The average cost of raising a child in Wales from birth to the age of 21 is nearly £189,000.

## What BIG did

The Twins and Multiple Births Association (Tamba) was awarded £5,000 under BIG's Awards for All programme. The money has been used to provide parenting classes in Cardiff and train parenting mentors to establish support networks throughout Wales to allow parents to be more able to meet the challenges of raising twins and multiples.

Lorraine, who was told about Tamba while in hospital but decided not to use them because of her wealth of experience, says: "I'm lucky this isn't my first pregnancy, as with triplets it could have been overwhelming. I can imagine that first-time parents would find it daunting. It's good for them to have someone like Tamba to talk to."

reveals that the average cost of raising a child in Wales from birth to the age of 21 is nearly £189,000. This figure would see the Wrexham couple forking out around £1.7 million on their children but because of her savvy spending, Lorraine doesn't think it will be anywhere near this amount. She says she keeps her weekly food shop down to around £120. She isn't even fazed by the emergency budget in June which saw the freezing of child benefits over the next three years.

"To be honest, I think it's going to affect every family in the country, no matter what walk of life you're from. Everyone's got a budget and you've just got to stick with it. Worrying and moaning about it isn't going to change anything. It is what it is and that's the way I look at it."

Although the family already has a full house with Dean, 19, Jessica, 17, Michael, 12, Lewis, 8, Matthew, 6, and Mea, 4, they have no plans to move out of their four-bedroom house.

"It's hard but we get by," the supermum says. "But I wouldn't know what to do with myself if they all fled the nest!" **BIG**

# Dan's the man – he's hired!

**An unemployed young father from the Rhondda Valleys is building a brighter future for his family after winning a hotly contested competition to secure a much sought-after apprenticeship in the construction industry**



**D**aniel Adams, 28, from Tonypany, had been unemployed since Christmas last year. Lacking confidence and not knowing who to turn to, Daniel became increasingly worried about the future and how he would support his family.

"I was constantly asking myself if there was any work out there for me at all at one point," says Daniel.

"It's hard to keep yourself motivated when you're unemployed and I was willing to take anything on. I've got a two-year-old daughter and it was hard trying to make ends meet."

Daniel is now starting life afresh after beating off stiff competition from six other unemployed people in Rhondda Cynon Taff – all finalists in The Real Apprentice – You're Hired competition.

Funded by the Big Lottery Fund, The Real Apprentice was a project set up by Construction Industry Trust for Youth to help

young people in south Wales who are not in education, employment or training to get their first big break in life – the chance of an apprenticeship in the construction industry.

Based on the popular TV show The Apprentice, the project gave training opportunities for 12 young people to work on a construction site renovating two houses from start to finish.

"I saw The Real Apprentice advertised in the local paper and I thought I'd give it a shot," says Daniel.

The challenge was to spend 10 weeks refurbishing two housing association flats owned by RCT Homes. The flats on the Penrhys Estate hadn't been lived in for a number of years and had damp, rotten woodwork and no fitted bathroom or kitchen units. The reward was a golden opportunity to win training and a job with firms in south Wales.

Supervised by expert trainers and

To see the full video of Daniel and the other candidates competing against each other to win The Real Apprentice, visit [www.tinyurl.com/3483ryo](http://www.tinyurl.com/3483ryo)

construction professionals, Daniel and the candidates got cracking on the flats and learned 'on the job' skills in building, project management, surveying, interior design and sustainable construction.

The flats have now been brought back into use by RCT Homes and are ready to welcome the first tenants.

"I had no training whatsoever until I joined The Real Apprentice," says Daniel. "We just picked up some basic skills as we went along. Plastering, redecoration, carpentry and plumbing – we did the lot. We also carried out gas and electrical work and received careers, advice including CV techniques."

Daniel was thrilled to discover that he'd won and gained the chance to study for an apprenticeship at a training academy in Caerphilly.

"I wanted to get employment and a steady income so that I can support my family and have the opportunity to work, instead of feeling trapped in the house all day," says Daniel.

"The 10 weeks have been a fantastic experience and I've enjoyed every minute of it and learnt a lot about the construction industry. We became a really close team and it didn't feel like we were competing against each other at all.

"It means the world to me to win the apprenticeship and I started work in June this year. I'm working hard to prove my abilities while developing my skills even further. It's been great so far and they're a good bunch of boys to work with."

Daniel is now looking to the future and has nothing but praise for the project which has

given him so much.

"Thanks to The Real Apprentice I've got a chance to build a decent future for my family. It's given us more security and I think I've been very lucky. I'm much more positive about the future now than I was around Christmas time last year. I definitely think there should be more apprenticeship schemes like this out there because it provides a great opportunity for people to find work and companies get to see the quality of your work before they take you on." **BIG**



## What BIG did

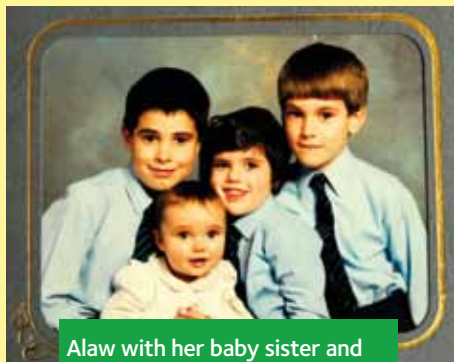
**In November 2009, the Construction Industry Trust for Youth project won £50,000 of Big Lottery Fund money through The People's Millions TV contest, which returns to our screens on ITV Wales in November. For more information, visit [www.peoplesmillions.org.uk](http://www.peoplesmillions.org.uk)**



# Who cares?

**Love and faith have given Valmai Williams from Llanelwy in Denbighshire strength during the last 20 years of caring for her daughter Alaw who suffers fits every week**

she seemed a normal baby girl. But now I know that if it wasn't for the operation the tumour would have killed her. Everything seemed OK until Alaw started having epileptic fits when she was 18 months old. It started with convulsions and a high temperature and then escalated into several fits a day. Then, when she was four, scans revealed a brain tumour. Now we were faced with every parent's worst nightmare of seeing



Alaw with her baby sister and two older brothers

I looked for signs of movement to see whether my four-year-old daughter was OK. When she had an operation to remove a brain tumour, doctors had warned us there was a chance of paralysis, so when I saw her leg move slightly, I breathed a sigh of relief. But over time we realised that, after a second operation, Alaw was going to be left disabled with severe learning difficulties and trouble walking. It took many years for me to accept what has happened to her. When she was born



Alaw starting school and as a toddler



their child go through a major operation. I also had a 4-month-old baby and two older boys at home – I just didn't know how we were going to cope. My husband Derfel is a doctor which has advantages and disadvantages; it's great that he knows what's going on, but sometimes this can be too much information.

## “The first operation was bad enough but the second was horrific”

After the operation we thought that was that, until doctors said a second one was needed as the tumour was still growing. Alaw was having fewer fits but they were still not under control. The first operation was bad enough but the second was horrific. It put enormous pressure on our family. Although I'm a Christian and gained a lot of strength from prayer, it was still absolutely horrendous. Before the second operation, extreme concerns were raised about the possible implications of the operation, including Alaw not being able to walk. I remember seeing the effect on her. By now she would refuse to take her coat off when she got to hospital and just sit in her buggy. Following the operation, it took a good few months before she could walk again. For about half a year she didn't have any

fits but then they started coming again. We could also see a notable change in her – it was as if her understanding stayed at the level of a 4-year-old. It took years to come to terms with this and to learn to cope with someone who would be dependent on us for the rest of our lives. The cause of all of this had never really been identified, with the only answer given that it is epilepsy related to a brain tumour, possibly caused by an infection during pregnancy. It looks like there will never be a clear reason but I know the operations were the right thing to do. Now aged 20, Alaw is still having fits a few times a week but she has just finished her first year at Mencap College which teaches life skills. She is generally happy and loves animals but her speech has gone downhill. She is also unsteady on her feet, needing a wheelchair to get around. There is a sadness there because there's been a lot of things we, as a family, haven't been able to do. I'm now 55 and worry that eventually I won't have the energy to look after her. My faith has kept me going through the difficult times. This, along with love for my children, I hope will keep me strong for many years to come. **BIG**

### What BIG did

BIG's £14 million Life Skills project is a funding stream, which matches Big Lottery Fund money with support from the European Social Fund through the Welsh Assembly Government. The project helps carers like Valmai improve their life skills by increasing their confidence and encouraging them to go into education, learning, volunteering or employment.



# PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

Welcome to BIG's People's Champion – our salute to the ordinary people who do extraordinary things. In each edition we'll be meeting these inspirational people who, with the help of the Big Lottery Fund, make our community a better place thanks to their selfless caring and determination



**A**n estimated 10 per cent of young people aged 15 and 16 in the UK have self-harmed, according to mental health charity, Mind. But thanks to a free support service offered by skilled workers like Kerry Jones at the Inspire project in Wrexham, hundreds of young people can now avoid becoming just another statistic.

"When people asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said that I wanted to do something to help people," says Kerry. "So when I reached 18, nursing was the obvious choice. I liked it, but I enjoyed dealing with young people more. I began volunteering with a youth club and got a job with a local council, managing youth clubs and running activities in schools. I've never looked back."

## SUCCESS

Today, Kerry, 36, from Newtown, is an advanced practitioner with the Inspire project. She has played a major part in the success of the initiative ever since BIG awarded a £977,333 grant to set up the project in 2006. With a team of six workers, Kerry has supported hundreds of young people aged 11-18 in Wrexham, struggling to overcome personal problems. Kerry now has over 18 years' experience working in the



Kerry Jones

social and health sectors and feels passionately about helping young people.

"Inspire is a hospital-based youth work project. I work with young people who are referred to Wrexham Maelor Hospital after self-harming. My job offers me the best of both worlds as I'm back working on the wards again and still have that day-to-day contact with young people.

"It's my job to make sure that young people get the support they need to find the

root of the issue. With any hospital admission it's often the symptoms of self-harm that are treated, but my interest lies in identifying the trigger and making sure that the problem is addressed and the appropriate support is offered to reduce the self-harming behaviour."

Kerry visits youth clubs to speak with young people about the difficulties they face. The team meets around 15 youngsters a week to offer one-to-one support.

Kerry and the team also visit 13 secondary schools across mid-Wales to make young people aware of the issue before it becomes a serious problem. "We try to make pupils aware of the emotional health problems some young people have to deal with, and try to banish the myths and explain what these issues mean. It opens their minds up to be aware of problems their friends may be facing or feelings that they have themselves and don't know how to deal with."

## PRESSURE

The success Kerry gained with a recent case where a 16-year old who had taken several overdoses and was repeatedly self-harming shows why she has become an important part of the Inspire project. "The young person was under stress with GCSE exams looming, so they turned to self-harming as a way to relieve that pressure.

"It's at stressful times like this that trapped thoughts or feelings, put to the back of people's minds, resurface. The thoughts have been lying in that person's head for many years so they are deep-rooted and sometimes tougher to deal with.

"In this case, the young person was already in hospital having taken an overdose, and was referred to Inspire. We offered regular contact through one-to-one meetings all the way through the exams to make sure the young person felt supported. Once the exams were over, we referred the young person to a



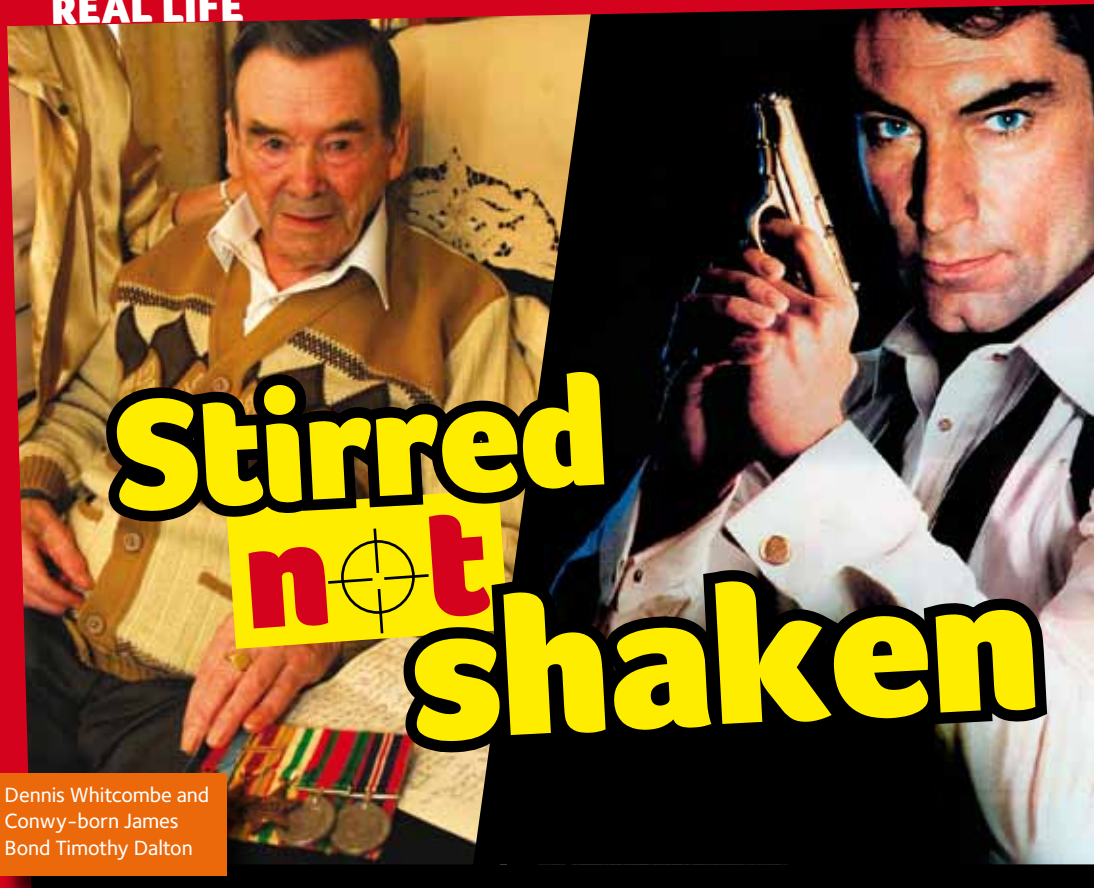
Kerry receiving her award

counselling service, where the root of the problem could be identified alternative methods of coping with pressure other than self-harm. And to our knowledge, the young person has not been admitted to the hospital for self harm again."

Kerry's role at Inspire also involves developing the project so it can be replicated across other parts of Wales, and she has gained national recognition for her efforts. In March 2010, Kerry was honoured with the prestigious Leading and Managing Teams and Individuals award at the Youth Work Excellence Awards, organised by the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities and the Voluntary Youth Service in Wales. The Inspire project was also a finalist.

**"It's my job to make sure that young people get the support they need to find the root of the issue"**

Despite her personal and professional success, Kerry has both feet firmly on the ground and remains hands-on in her day-to-day job. "Working with young people is extremely enjoyable and rewarding. My advice for anyone interested in getting into a career in youth work would be to contact a local council-run youth service, where a team of professionals will be able to point them in the right direction." **BIG**



Dennis Whitcombe and Conwy-born James Bond Timothy Dalton

**James Bond is not normally associated with a World War Two veteran from the Welsh valleys. But Dennis Whitcombe, 90, from Cwmbran was part of 30 Commando Assault Unit (AU) – created by James Bond author Ian Fleming, a former WW2 naval Intelligence Commander – to undertake covert operations into enemy territory**

Working alongside the notorious Scottish safe-cracker, “Gentle Johnny” Ramensky, Dennis Whitcombe was involved in reconnaissance missions in Italy, gathering key information from partisan groups which helped change the course of the war.

Convict Ramensky joined the commandos, instructing them in the techniques of safe-cracking and later parachuting behind

enemy lines to blow safes containing important documents in German and Italian buildings.

Years later at a reunion of 30AU, Dennis met Patrick Dalzel-Job, the distinguished Naval Intelligence Officer and commando, who inspired the James Bond character.

“Serving for 30AU Commando was exhilarating but as we were working behind

enemy lines you lived on your nerves,” he recalls. “But the information gathered helped change the course of the war. And it’s incredible how closely I was connected to both Ian Fleming and James Bond.”

Ex-coalminer Dennis Whitcombe was called up aged 20 in June 1940. After basic training he left to fight in Algiers on St David’s Day 1943.

“Everyone stopped to listen when we started to sing as we left,” he says. “The scenes we were confronted with in Algiers were a world apart from this. Men were dying around us on the ground. And it was very hot with little water.”

After Dennis left North Africa, he landed at Taranto before travelling to Bari, Salerno and then onto Anzio. Between January and May 1944 he was caught up in intense fighting with German soldiers. On 17 February 1944, Dennis had a lucky escape.

“I was walking away from my Bofor gun to get some more vegetation to cover us when I felt a shell fly past me which then hit our gun position, killing four of my friends,” he says.

“Although I escaped uninjured it was a terrifying experience which left me in a bit of a state because of the loss of my friends. They are buried in a line together in Anzio and I was able to make a special trip to visit their graves a few years ago.”

Dennis is a member of the local branch of the Royal Welsh Regimental Association and says he has never forgotten his fallen comrades.

“The war took the valleys out of me and I came back with a different attitude,” he says. “The war formed bonds not just with the soldiers I served with but with those at home who served somewhere different to me. They are unshakable bonds that last a lifetime.” **BIG**



Dennis holding a picture of himself as a young soldier

### What BIG did

Through our Heroes Return programme, Dennis Whitcombe and others from the Pontypool Branch of the Royal Welsh Regimental Association were awarded £1,640 to attend a remembrance service in Weymouth. The programme gives veterans grants of between £150 and £5,500 to allow them to return to the battlefields where they saw action in World War 2. A total of 182 grants totalling £343,235 have been awarded in Wales.



# It's tinsel town

# at TANYARD

**The majestic coast of Pembrokeshire is renowned for providing amazing backdrops to Hollywood blockbusters such as Robin Hood and Harry Potter. Now a 15-year-old schoolboy hopes he can bring his own sprinkling of Hollywood stardust to Pembrokeshire by realising his dream of becoming a world-famous filmmaker**

**A**shley Martin never used to have aspirations of becoming a famous director, producer, comedian and actor. As a young boy, Ashley was more renowned as a troublemaker than as a filmmaker. He often found himself on the wrong end of the law and his life changed dramatically when he became a young parent at the age of 14.

Today, however, Ashley is among numerous youngsters from Pembroke who are finding their niche in their hometown and benefiting from the first-class facilities available right on their doorstep at the Boatyard Music and Film Studio.

Run by the Tanyard Youth Project, the studio was opened in April this year by Wales and Ospreys rugby star, Jonathan

Thomas. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund, the project boasts a fully-equipped recording and filming facility.

As well as an editing suite, the studio includes a live room which is big enough to accommodate full bands, small choirs and orchestral groups. The room has a professional green screen for filming special effects like background replacement and James Harding, the music and film youth worker at the project, is available to anyone with an interest in learning more about recording music or editing films and creating Harry Potter-style special effects.

"Before any of this started up, there was nothing to do around Pembroke," says Ashley.

"I used to be involved in vandalism and spray painting and got into trouble with the police a lot when I was about 12 or 13. I was even banned from the Tanyard at one point for causing trouble. Then I started coming here again and I'm a completely changed person who now desperately wants to be involved with the project. I got interested in a lot of stuff quite quickly and I calmed down. I think this place is absolutely mind-blowing.

"The Tanyard Youth Project has done a lot for me and other young people in Pembroke. How many people get to go to a professional music and film studio, record stuff, and do what we do here?"

## What BIG did

**The Big Lottery Fund awarded The Tanyard Youth Project with £367,807 to buy a building and upgrade it to a music and film studio. The money has also been used to fund the full-time salary of film and music youth worker, James Harding.**

It's keeping a lot of people out of trouble and we have kids coming here to show their talents and express themselves in lots of different ways.

"If young people in Pembroke want somewhere to produce and record music and learn how to make and edit films, then this is the place. Some of the girls that come here are very good singers. There's a lot of talent being developed."

Ashley is fast becoming a dab hand in producing and presenting films.

"I help to put music to the films and I also help with the writing and do all the voiceovers and things," he says.

"When we edit the films, we use special FX and camera trickery and you can make people jump higher than buildings and even make them disappear. It shows you how multi-million pound films are edited. We can do exactly the same stuff here."

And talking of multi-million pound films, Ashley couldn't resist the opportunity of watching them film a Hollywood blockbuster on his home turf. Star Russell Crowe and a 1,000-strong location crew spent five weeks filming Robin Hood on Freshwater West beach in Pembrokeshire last year.



"I saw them filming Robin Hood on Freshwater beach and I thought it was amazing," he says. "I just thought it was great how they put all the sets and props together to film the scenes."

Thanks to the support of the staff at The Tanyard Youth Project, Ashley is now looking forward to creating his own bright future on the silver screen or in the TV industry. No one is more delighted with the progress Ashley has made than 24-year-old James Harding, the Music and Film Youth Worker at the Tanyard project.

"Ashley is a good natural comedian, which is an important part of presenting," explains James.

"When I first met him, he was a totally different person. The Tanyard was a place where he could come to let off steam and we'd help him with whatever problem was going on at the time. Now he's a lot more secure and positive.

"Week in week out, I probably have 50 or 60 kids coming in and out of the studio here. We run film classes here one day a week as well and I never get a quiet moment here in the evenings. In 10 years time, I would love for this place to be recognised in Wales and nationally. I would love to see it grow in every way and more projects like this being rolled

out throughout Wales and beyond."

To stay tuned and see the short films which have been produced by the Tanyard Youth Project, visit Boatyard Music and Film Studio on Facebook.

To find out more, email James Harding [info@boatyardstudio.org.uk](mailto:info@boatyardstudio.org.uk) or visit [www.boatyardstudio.org.uk](http://www.boatyardstudio.org.uk)

**BIG**

## Hollywood or Valleywood?

Here are some examples of the numerous Hollywood films made in Wales

- The First Knight epic starring Sean Connery and Richard Gere was filmed in Trawsfynydd, north Wales
- Angelina Jolie filmed Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life (2003) in Snowdonia and the quarries of north Wales
- Twin Town (1997) starring Rhys Ifans was filmed in Swansea and Port Talbot
- Human Traffic (1999) was shot in Cardiff
- Scenes from Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (2010) and Robin Hood (2010) starring Russell Crowe were filmed on Freshwater West beach in Pembrokeshire
- Willow (1987), Street Fighter (1994) starring Jean Claude Van Damme and the new 3D remake of Clash of the Titans (2010) were all filmed in Gwynedd, north Wales

Got a smart phone? Download a QR reader app and scan this code to see a video of Ashley Martin presenting. Alternatively, visit <http://tinyurl.com/33w9xte>



ON THE BALL

# Q&A

Introducing a regular feature where we ask some of Wales's most well-known personalities some burning questions about the National Lottery

In the spotlight this edition is Gavin and Stacey star Margaret John, who answers some personal questions about the National Lottery.

**Do you think that the National Lottery plays an important role in improving the lives of people in communities throughout Wales?**

It's wonderful that the Big Lottery Fund supports so many good causes in Wales and I'm sure it's changed so many lives for the better over the years.

**Do you play the Lottery?**  
Yes, every Saturday religiously. The numbers I choose are family birthdays and house numbers.

**Which celebrity would you most like to see choosing the National Lottery balls and why?**

Bruce Forsyth would have to be in there. He's a great entertainer. He dances, he sings, he plays the piano and he's a comedian.

**What's the biggest amount you've won?**

I've had the odd £10 here and there over the years.

**If you won would you tell your friends or keep it secret?**

I would tell my friends and my immediate family

and share it with them.

**What would you buy first if you won the Lottery?**

I would either buy a lovely place on the Gower overlooking the sea or a place overlooking The Solent strait in England, so I can see all the ships going in and out of Southampton and Portsmouth. I'd also be able to nip over to France quite easily from there.

**What would you like the National Lottery to spend money on?**

It would be nice to have more leisure facilities such as play parks and youth clubs to keep kids off the street and

nice places for retired people to go to and have fun. **BIG**



PHOTOGRAPHY: SHAUN FITZPATRICK

Tŷ Talcen group in the village of Myddfai, Carmarthenshire



Ashfield Community Enterprise Ltd in Howey, Powys

# Village SOS calls are answered

Three Welsh villages are euphoric having secured £400,000 each of Lottery money to set up new community enterprises

The projects won the money through Village SOS, an innovative scheme by the Big Lottery Fund and the BBC that aims to inspire a rural revival across the UK.

The Talgarth Mill Green Energy Project in Talgarth, Powys, has been awarded the bumper funding to renovate the village's old flour mill and create an eco cafe and a sustainable education and renewable technologies centre. The journey of their business venture will be documented by the BBC for a major prime time TV series to be screened next year.

Two other Welsh projects, Ashfield Community Enterprise Ltd in Howey, Powys and the Myddfai project run by the Tŷ Talcen group in the village of Myddfai, Carmarthenshire, have also been awarded over £400,000 each to

set up business ventures and will become a key part of the Village SOS Learning Campaign, which will accompany the BBC One series.

Ashfield Community Enterprise Ltd in

using the money to buy and re-develop a nursery to provide a growing area for the local community, while the project workers behind Myddfai are using the funding to create a new range and brand of locally-made craft products. **BIG**



Talgarth Mill Green Energy Project in Talgarth, Powys



Got a smart phone? Download a QR reader app and scan this code to find out more about the villages, watch videos about the projects and follow their progress. Alternatively, visit [www.villagesos.org.uk](http://www.villagesos.org.uk)





**Some £46 million of Lottery funding has supported the magnificent Millennium Stadium in Cardiff**

**10 million people have visited the venue since it opened in June 1999**

BUSINESS REPLY SERVICE  
Licence No. NATN323

2 | |

Big Lottery Fund  
Capital House  
e-State  
Edinburgh  
EH11 0BR

**Sign up for BIG magazine for the chance to win a magnificent prize**

**Win a tour for four around the Millennium Stadium**

**Turn over to fill in your entry form**

Conditions of Entry – "BIG magazine" competition

By entering this competition, you accept these terms and conditions:

1. This competition starts at 9am on 5th October, 2010 and closes at 5pm on 31st January, 2011. 2. You are only eligible to enter this competition if you are over 16 years of age, a resident of the United Kingdom and are not an employee, or related to an employee, of the Big Lottery Fund (Fund) or one of its agencies connected with this competition. 3. To enter, answer the questions on the entry form overleaf and return using this pre-paid form. All entries must be received before the competition closes. There is no cost to enter this competition. Entry is limited to one entry per person. The Fund will not accept responsibility for late, lost, incomplete or misdirected entries. Submitted entries become the property of the Fund. 4. The first completed entry form drawn will win a Prize. The Prize draw will take place at Big Lottery Fund, 1 Plough Place, London EC4A 1DE at 12 noon on 1st February 2011. 5. You agree all of your intellectual property rights (including copyright) in the material submitted to the Fund for the purposes of or in connection with this competition is assigned to the Fund from the date of your entry. You warrant that the entry is your own original work. 6. If you submitted the entry that is drawn to be the winning entry, you will receive a tour for four around the magnificent Millennium Stadium. The Fund will purchase the vouchers and post them to you by registered mail. The Fund will contact you by telephone and/or email to let you know that you have won the Prize. If you do not claim the Prize within 60 days of being notified that you are the winner, the Fund may draw another entry to be the winner and/or make your entry void. 7. No part of the Prize is exchangeable or redeemable for cash. 8. The winner of the competition will be published in the Spring edition of the magazine. You agree that your name may be published in this magazine. 9. The Fund may need to disclose your personal information to one of its agencies to help the Fund run this competition. Any personal information you supply us is protected by the Data Protection Act 1998. 10. The Fund reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions at any time without prior notice in its absolute discretion. Any changes will be posted on the Fund's website: [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk). 11. These terms and conditions are exclusively governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales and you agree to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales. All times and dates refer to the time and date in England. 12. The Big Lottery Fund of 1 Plough Place, London EC4A 1DE is the promoter of this competition. Any decision of the Fund about this competition is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

# Sign up for BIG magazine for the chance to win a magnificent prize

**Sign up to receive your free copy of BIG magazine, fill in the questions on the entry form below and send back for the chance to win a tour for four people around the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.**

Send your form back before 31 January, 2011.

The first entry to be picked out of the hat wins. We will get in touch with the lucky winner by email or phone on Tuesday 1 February, 2011 and send their prize by registered post.



## ENTRY FORM

Are you: Male  Female

Which age range do you fall in? *Tick one box*

0-25  25-50  50-65  65+

Where did you get this magazine?

Before you read BIG magazine, had you heard of the Big Lottery Fund?

Yes  No

Having read BIG magazine, how well-informed do you feel about what the Big Lottery Fund does?

Well-informed   
 Quite well-informed   
 Not very well-informed

What do you think of this magazine?

Excellent  Good   
 OK  Poor

Write any comments about the magazine

**SEND MY FREE MAGAZINE TO:**

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Phone.....

Email.....

Tick this box if you would like us to send you future copies of BIG magazine.  Your personal data will be held in line with the Data Protection Act.