

THE GURNEY FUND

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021



Holiday Plans For 2022

Gurney Kids can look forward to an exciting 2022, as the Fund activity holiday returns following a year of COVID cancellations.

Beneficiaries have been invited on a holiday of a lifetime in August

menu for the bravest youngsters.

Adventurers will be able clamber up the climbing walls or take to their bikes to zoom around the velodrome. There's also an indoor slope, where they can ski, snowboard or

Gurney Fund Administrator Sherral Keywood said: "I am so pleased that we're able to offer a holiday again to some of our beneficiaries.

"Our families were so under-

holidays, gaining confidence from new experiences, learning skills, forming special bonds and friendships and of course having fun!"

Gurney Fund Chairman Tim Packham added: "We would also

"The kids gain confidence from new experiences and form lifelong friendships"

2022 (previous Gurney Kids cohorts pictured above).

Calshot Activities Centre, situated on a spit in the heart of the Solent, is home to a fun boat park, where the kids can try their hands at sailing, windsurfing, paddle boarding and kayaking. Kitesurfing is also on the

hurtle downhill on a rubber ring.

The holiday has proven a real hit in previous years, as 11-18-year-old Gurney Kids get to experience new activities that will challenge their sense of risk and courage. It is also hoped that they will make life-long memories and new friends.

standing when we had to cancel 2020, and appreciated the difficulties of trying to organise something for 2021.

"We are really looking forward to trying out a new venue with a broader age group. We know how much the beneficiaries enjoy the

like to express our thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped with the sailing holidays, which ran for just over 25 years. These holidays would not have been so successful had it not been for the hard work and dedication of all those involved."

Remembering The Fallen



Thousands of police officers who have died on duty were honoured at the 18th annual National Police Memorial Day.

Members of the police family gathered at Lincoln Cathedral on Sunday 26 September, to honour more than 5,000 officers who have lost their lives on duty.

It was the first time the police family had gathered together for National Police Memorial Day (NPMD) since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tim Packham, Chairman of The Gurney Fund (*pictured above*), said: "I'm here today to represent The Gurney Fund, a charity that looks after children whose parents are either medically retired or sadly have died in the line of duty.

"This is an opportunity for us to pay respect to those officers.

"It's very important to recognise those that have made the ultimate sacrifice and it sends a strong

message out that they'll never be forgotten."

HRH The Prince of Wales, who is patron of NPMD, said the country was "forever grateful for the steadfast dedication to duty of our police officers who have adapted and worked so tirelessly amidst the ever-changing circumstances" of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Writing in the commemorative brochure, Prince Charles said: "We owe a most profound debt of gratitude to our police service, and its remarkable officers, who, along with their families, will continue to have a very special place in the heart of our nation."

Officers who have died in the past year were remembered during the service. They are: Sgt Paul Keany of Northamptonshire Police; PC Christopher Miller of the Metropolitan Police; Sgt Matt Ratana of the Metropolitan Police; PC Thomas White of Police Scotland; PC Darryl

Street of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and PC Quamar Zaman of Greater Manchester Police.

During the service, candles were lit for officers in each of the four nations. Representing England was Jayne Clemson, daughter of PC Ray Davenport, of Merseyside Police, who died in 1981 following a traffic incident.

Representing Northern Ireland was Andrea Brown, daughter of RUC Sgt Eric Brown, who was fatally shot by terrorist gunmen in 1983.

Representing Wales was Rhianydd Gardiner, great niece of PC Noel Alexander, who died in 1964 because of injuries sustained in a training incident.

Representing Scotland was Faye Buggins, widow of PC Roy Buggins, who collapsed and died on duty in 2019.

The service also heard a reading from Home Secretary Priti Patel.

Addressing the service, Metropol-

itan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick said: "Policing is a vocation... the women and men of the front line have risen magnificently to the challenges of the past 18 months.

"Today we pay tribute to the courage of those killed in service and the great courage showed by their families ever since.

"Today we thank them for who they were and we thank them for what they did and what they contributed to society.

"Police officers know their actions may cost their lives. The loss of a colleague on duty is felt by each and every member of the service."

Addressing the families present, she said: "We will never forget you or the sacrifice that your loved ones made."

There was silence as petals of remembrance, representing all who have lost their lives, descended from the gallery as the Last Post was sounded.

JustGiving™

Following the closure of Virgin Money Giving, we have a new fundraising and donation platform with JustGiving ([click here](#)). You can also find it through The Gurney Fund website (www.gurneyfund.org/).

We're Proud Of You, Pyrs!



We are feeling super proud of Gurney Fund beneficiary Pyrs, who has overcome the odds and been awarded a GCSE certificate.

Pyrs from Gwent (pictured front left) has been a Gurney Fund beneficiary since 2002. Pyrs was diagnosed with severe autism at an early age, with his Mum Ceris (pictured back left) being told he would be non-verbal and in nappies

for the rest of his life and by his 13th birthday he would be institutionalised.

Now Pyrs has overcome the odds and been awarded his Level 2 entry level GCSE certificate in mathematics. He's also passed his driving theory test, is taking his practical test in January and achieved a gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Amazing work, Pyrs!

Teens overcome odds to earn GCSE certificates

By Des Pugh

TWO former pupils of the Overmonnow Special Needs Unit (SNU) have exceeded all expectations to achieve a Level 2 Entry level Mathematics GCSE at the age of 15. But the journey to get there was not an easy one. Pyrs, Mainwaring, Smith and Amy, Peters, were both diagnosed with autism at an early age. Pyrs was effectively written off by a consultant at Nevill Hall when he was three-years-old, his Mum Ceris told The Beacon. "He was diagnosed with very severe autism and I was told he would be non-verbal and in nappies for the rest of his life and by his 13th birthday he would be institutionalised."

"I couldn't handle it," she said. "He was screaming, poo by the age of eight, he came out of nappies and started speaking and hasn't shut up since!" she added.

Ceris realised later, he did understand from an early age when he would recall things from the age of four and when she said to him "you couldn't speak" he would say "but I knew what was going on".

The summer came, about after Ceris followed the Amer-

ican autistic programme 'Sonnets' when they would sit in an empty room together and when they began to covarily nod his head she would too "and I remember after three weeks, he looked at me for the first time" she said.

Amy and Pyrs began at the SNU (now Class 9) in 2008 when they were both five and spent seven years there and in 2011, Pyrs, Ceris and Caroline had the difficult decision of where to send them next. Chepstow and Caldicot schools both had units where pupils with learning difficulties like Pyrs and Amy would go. However they were not schools with a level of specialist disability and to find the right learning environment for their children, they chose Torfaen-based Crownbridge school where they go really far, which wouldn't happen if they went to a mainstream school explained Ceris.

Amy's mum, Caroline, a former senior police officer added, "Given the size of Mainwaring and the dynamics of the unit and the fact that you pay for the worst areas I would say in



Pyrs and Amy with their certificates and their proud families

South Wales" said "It's incredibly competitive to get a funded place into Torfaen."

"It's wrong we don't have that local provision and we do not only have to fight for the individual needs for your child's education that's inclusive but equally you then have to make honourous journeys to attend that education and that can't be right" added Caroline.

"These two have done such amazing things that no other child with their conditions have ever done and it's all down to the school pushing them" said Ceris.

to ask for staff support and do not have time constraints to complete an activity."

Pyrs has now passed his driving theory test and is taking his test in January and he achieved a gold in his Duke of Edinburgh award.

The two are starting in the Redstone Learning Centre all days a week in college and a day's work experience.

Pyrs said: "We have to do a course in independent Living skills (ILS) but we're too capable for that" he added with a grin. "The good thing about it is we do work experience which is a brilliant thing and one more useful thing I am learning to use an iron."

The spouse identifies pathways that would take them on to future jobs and they go out into the community and do different things.

Amy has a portfolio skill with baking and currently heads out in the edibles garden.

Pyrs wants to be a policeman like his dad, the late Jeff Smith, who was a mayor of Maerthwaite in 2002. Pyrs is looking for work experience in the hospitality sector contact Ceris on ceris11@hotmail.co.uk

Wonderful News For Paula

Congratulations to Paula, who featured in our Summer 2021 newsletter, and has just got married!

Instead of asking for wedding presents, she requested donations to charities, including The Gurney Fund, and we were delighted to receive £100.

Paula, from Leicestershire, worked on domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation teams, before suffering a breakdown and being diagnosed with complex PTSD.

Her marriage broke down and she was medically retired in 2016.

The Gurney Fund helped Paula and her children through some difficult times. She said that The Gurney Fund "restored my faith in the police family".

Paula and her new husband Edge met through ill-health retirement from the police. They said that it was thanks to several charities, including The Gurney Fund, that they were able to feel positive for their future together as man and wife.



At their November meeting, The Gurney Fund Trustees awarded educational grants of **£126,000** towards **higher education, laptops, books, driving lessons and school trips** for our beneficiaries.

Chair's Christmas Message



As we approach the end of 2021, which has been another difficult year due to the global pandemic, it is good that many restrictions have been withdrawn and we can see and hold our nearest and dearest.

But, as in 2020, we have had disruptions. This has been a year and a half like no other, with the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

However, it has been another busy year for The Gurney Fund, as we continue to find innovative ways of working through the pandemic to enable us to provide support to families and offer a helping hand when they need it the most.

Supporting Older Beneficiaries

At our November meeting, we supported our older beneficiaries, who are continuing in higher or further education.

This year we helped over 70 students who are studying a variety of subjects from the arts and sciences.

I would like to recognise the talent of our beneficiaries as they pursue their degrees in subjects including dance, creative and professional writing, animal management, graphic communication and marine biology.

Exciting Holiday News

You may recall we had to cancel

The Gurney Fund's holidays for 2020 and 2021, however I am delighted to report the Trustees have approved a holiday for 2022. This will allow our beneficiaries to spend time with peers and make lifelong friends.

Another big thank you to Sherral, who dealt with all the administration for the holidays that we had to cancel and now, with the assistance of Nikki, the newest member of the team, has the task for co-ordinating next year's event.

New Trustees

Following the retirement of Pete Land and Paul Campbell, I am pleased to have welcomed two new

Trustees to The Gurney Fund at our August meeting, Mel Warnes from Surrey, and Jon Carter-Lang from Leicestershire. We continue to have a full board of Trustees.

On behalf of myself and my fellow Trustees, thank you to Chris, Sherral and Nikki in the office for the work and effort they put in behind the scenes. It really does make our lives as Trustees so much easier.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas, and a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.

Tim Packham
Chair

Keep in touch

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