

# eSiren





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## watching over the ryder cup



When Tiger Woods teed up at the Celtic Manor on Sunday, October 3, the eyes of the world were upon him – with one exception.

Dave Jones wasn't watching the world's greatest golfer, he was scanning the crowd.

As the Welsh Ambulance Service's South East Region Emergency Planning Officer, Dave's no stranger to the big occasion.

He said: "I've done five or six FA Cup Finals, a Rugby World Cup, a host of Six Nations rugby internationals, five Wales

Rally GBs, cricket Test matches and one-day internationals and five Welsh Open golf tournaments."

Not bad for a Rhondda man who admits he isn't even interested in sport: "While everyone else watches the game I watch them," he said.

He's organised the ambulance logistics for Royal, prime ministerial and other VIP visits and even joined Welsh Ambulance Service colleague Cliff Randall in manning an emergency ambulance at the G20 riots in London last year.

Dave, aged 56, joined the ambulance service in 1977 after eight years in the police and he qualified as a paramedic before going into training and emergency planning.

The Ryder Cup, often considered the world's third biggest sporting event after the Olympics and the World Cup, brought 45,000 spectators a day to the Celtic Manor, the luxury hotel and golf resort created by billionaire Sir Terry Matthews just outside Newport.

In addition there were over 8,000 staff on

site and that number of people on a golf course brought its own problems: "It's a matter of access," said Dave. "It's a lovely course alongside the River Usk but there just aren't any roads onto and off it."

"We worked with the organisers and with their medical providers, Event Medical, to cover everything we could.

"We had two teams of seven, headed by an officer, with three paramedics accompanying doctors on three specially adapted stretcher buggies and three more emergency ambulance staff at fixed points.

"The last thing we needed was a five-ton ambulance stuck in a bunker so the buggies carried all the equipment that a Rapid Response Vehicle would have including a defibrillator, oxygen equipment and drugs.

"There's quite a lot of water on and around the course and some of it is pretty deep so we even had safety throw lines for the water hazards.

"In fact if you were on the course during Ryder Cup week you couldn't have been anywhere much safer."

Dave is no golfer himself. He prefers holidays with wife Ann in their motor home but he said: "I enjoy the challenge of organising the cover for events like this and showing what the Welsh Ambulance Services can do.

"We work closely with all our partners and organisations like St John, do a wonderful job.

"I just wanted us to play our part in making it such a great event because people like Sir Terry Matthews and the Welsh Assembly Government worked so hard to bring it to Wales."



## saving lives is a family affair in mumbles

Saving lives is a family affair for a team of Mumbles First Responders.

Father and son lifeguards, Paul and Darren Williams qualified as First Responders earlier this year and have been attending emergency calls together.

Darren, 23, a swimming instructor and RNLI Seasonal Area Supervisor, and his dad Paul, 46, who runs his own IT solutions company, were called to a Langland nursing home to assist an elderly resident suffering what was thought to be a cardiac arrest.

However, according to Paul before they even arrived at the scene he was called away to West Cross to help a second patient who was suffering breathing difficulties.

Paul said: "As it happened when I got to West Cross the paramedic had arrived and I was able to stand down, return to Langland, and help Darren.

"He did a fantastic job and had the patient, a very elderly man, calm and on oxygen and we helped get him into the ambulance.

"Darren was then asked to go to Morriston Hospital in the ambulance to assist the paramedic and he got a lift home from his sister, Olivia.

"All in all a good family effort and we were delighted to receive a letter of thanks from the Welsh Ambulance Services."

And Paul and Darren could soon be joined on the Mumbles First Responder team by a third member of the Williams family.

Paul said: "My other daughter, Emma, has just finished university and is looking to become a First Responder too.

"Being a First Responder goes hand-in-hand with being members of Langland Bay Lifeguard Club. It makes sense having lifeguards trained as First Responders and I know our Welsh Ambulance Services trainer, Steve Roberts, wants to see lifeguards trained as First Responders all the way from the Gower to Aberystwyth."

Mumbles First Responder team co-ordinator Mark James says the team is going from strength to strength.

He said: "With Darren and Paul joining the team, we now have no fewer than three lifeguards, together with a medical student, two Coastguards, two members of the Mumbles lifeboat crew and two paramedic students.

"The 10 newest members are already making a difference, but we're always keen to hear from anyone who's interested in joining us."

Darren Williams said: "I've been a member of the Lifeguard Club since I was 10 and I now work as a Seasonal Area Supervisor for the RNLI.

"Joining the First Responder team has meant I can use my training away from the beach and it's great that my dad joined too.

"Going out on calls together is brilliant and I am really looking forward to both of us helping the community over the coming years."



*Mumbles First Responders father and son Paul and Darren Williams with Welsh Ambulance Service Alternative Responder Officer for Central and West Wales Steve Roberts.*



## farewell to stalwart

A Vale of Clwyd ambulance man has said goodbye to colleagues and friends after a career spanning over three decades.

North Wales Regional Staff Officer Harold Burrows MBE stood down this summer after 31 years with the ambulance service.

Harold, of Denbigh, started his career in Gwent on January 8, 1979, at Chepstow ambulance station.

He explained: "In those days, providing you could drive an ambulance and put on a bandage that was it!

"After coming out of the ambulance training school we set up an Ambulance Service Association group in Gwent. We would meet one day a week and have health professionals come over to talk to us about the latest practice to keep our knowledge up.

"Then we joined the Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (AEMT) and that was the start of what we see today."

Harold, 60, was appointed training officer at Abergavenny and he recalled: "It was hard work only because the men were at first quite fearful of what we were trying to do."

But from the skills he learned through the advances in training, Harold became the first to use a defibrillator on a child outside a hospital.

After being involved in running Gwent alongside colleague Steve Salter, Harold was given the opportunity to move north, 20 years to the day after he started in the service to assist with developing the new Welsh Ambulance Services Trust.

He remembered: "The first thing I was involved with coming into North Wales was getting ready for Y2K – the millennium. I was involved with police, fire and local authorities to make sure we were ready for that and everyone was grateful that the ambulance service was involved in such emergency planning."

He also laid the groundwork for the development of working relationships between control and road staff, and was instrumental in introducing the Community First Responder Scheme in

North Wales.

In his spare time the Denbigh man has helped many volunteer life saving groups and been recognised for his efforts across the UK.

Harold is chairman of the National Search and Rescue Dog Association (NSARDA) which trains rescuers to become handlers of sniffer search dogs and is a dog handler himself.

He is also chairman and an active team member for North East Wales Mountain Rescue and he intends to continue

with both volunteer organisations in retirement.

He said: "The fondest memories I have had is being operational on the road and always being busy doing the role I have had over the years.

"It's also the people that make it. It's the people I've worked with, the laughs and the jokes, that I will miss the most."





A lifetime's experience in the NHS has helped John Morgan hit the ground running since he joined the Board of the Welsh Ambulance Services last year.

The 63-year-old who lives in Penylan, Cardiff, has a background as both an academic in Birmingham and as an administrator in Cardiff.

It means he has dealt with all areas of the health service and with the many professions which work within it but the Welsh Ambulance Services is a new challenge.

He said: "The Ambulance Service is one of the front doors to the healthcare system and after the time I've spent working with the health service I know what's behind the front door and appreciate the problems of getting people in the front and out of the back."

John is from Birmingham though his mother, a nurse, was from near Llangollen. He worked in Birmingham as a Public Health Inspector before going to Birmingham University in 1971 to gain a degree in Social Policy.

His studies took him to the London School of Economics where he received an MSc and to St George's Medical School where as a Research Fellow in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology, he led a team reviewing services for epilepsy.

He then spent 13 years as Lecturer in Health Policy and Social Research Methods at Birmingham University where he helped set up a Department of Nursing Studies and he was a non-executive director of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service for 12 years.

He arrived in Wales as Organisation Development Advisor for the NHS in Wales where he has headed up IT development and helped overhaul the HR Information

System.

He's hardly been less busy since joining the Welsh Ambulance Services Board in October and has been out with emergency crews in Cardiff and spent time in the control room.

He said: "I think it's really important to get out there with frontline staff. They are dealing with people in pain and often with anxious and sometimes angry relatives and friends and their patience

is extraordinary. They are very, very professional and that's so impressive."

He believes one of the biggest challenges the Service faces is to turn ambulances around more quickly at A and E and he welcomes the drive to put more highly-qualified paramedics with nursing skills, the Special Practitioners, on the roads to provide treatment at home and make decisions on future care.

John is married with two stepsons and a

daughter and he and wife Marilyn became grandparents for the first time last year.

He enjoys reading, especially European history and science fiction, and, fittingly for the son of a Crewe railway engineer, has just constructed a model steam railway in the back garden of his Cardiff home.



## full steam ahead



## brave katie beats illness to help save lives

A student nurse who is in line to receive the new Elizabeth Cross for the families of servicemen killed in action since World War Two has signed up to become a Welsh Ambulance Service volunteer lifesaver.

Katie Gibby was just six months old when her father, Welsh Guardsman Mark Gibby, was killed when Argentine Air Force jets attacked and destroyed the troop ship Sir Galahad in June 1982 during the Falklands War.

Now 28, the single mum from Ynyshir in the Rhondda is a first year student nurse after herself overcoming years of ill health, two major operations and months in hospital.

But she has still found time to join the Rhondda Cynon Taf First Responders in answer to an appeal by the Welsh Ambulance Services and she was among over 20 people who attended a public meeting at Gilfach Goch Community Centre earlier this year.

She said: "Apart from being a parent I can't think of anything more rewarding than helping to save someone's life.

"Some people have asked me why I do something that I don't get paid for but what you get from this is more than money and I can't think why more people don't do it.

"I don't have any memories of my dad, only pictures, but I believe that he is somewhere watching over me and I hope he's proud of me."

Rhondda Cynon Taf First Responders are one of the fastest growing in Wales and local team trainer-manager and Welsh Ambulance Service paramedic Stephen

'Stef' Roberts said: "Katie is an example to us all. She's such a dedicated person and has had so much to put up with but she just thinks of other people and wants to help them."

The Responders use the Gilfach Goch Community Centre as a base and have been training there under the guidance of Stef Roberts and Alternative Responder Officer for South East Region Tony Rossetti.

Katie, who has an eight-year-old son, Connor, has suffered ill-health for several years and has had two major bowel operations and spent months in hospital after contracting MRSA.

She is now a first year student nurse at the University of Glamorgan in Pontypridd and she said: "I've been in and out of hospital since 2005 and I was away from my son for such a long time which was dreadful but I was never going to let that illness beat me and now I am illness-free I can start to win."



From left, Responders Dianne Hawkins, Katie Gibby and Kristie Price with Paramedic Stef Roberts



Paramedic Stef Roberts with Katie Gibby



A volunteer who has put her heart and soul into leading a team of Vale of Clwyd lifesavers was left speechless after receiving an inaugural award in honour of her outstanding commitment.

Denbigh Community First Responder team co-ordinator Vicky Hignett has received the George Jones Memorial Award for outstanding contribution to the lifesaving scheme.

The award was launched in memory of

George, of Llanrwst, who passed away last December following a long illness. It is in honour of his dedication to Community First Responder schemes in the Conwy Valley.

George who worked with Patient Care Service staff at Colwyn Bay ambulance station started the Community First Responder scheme in the Conwy Valley with the help of fellow Llanrwst resident and paramedic Alun Roberts five years ago.

He took on the role of Team Co-ordinator, and thanks to his huge efforts he kept the team in the community limelight.

Vicky receives the award for following in George's footsteps by using her own life experience to help get the Denbigh team off the ground and turn it into a successful scheme with the support of team manager, Denbigh based paramedic Gareth Williams.

Her inspiration comes from her father having a heart attack at the age of 47 and

the GP responding very quickly. For that her father had another 17 years with his family until he passed away.

Vicky was presented with the award by regional first responder officer Kevin Hands who said: "She's always said if it wasn't for that quick response she would have lost her father there and then. Vicky has been a great support in getting Denbigh up and running strong since January 2009, she with the support of all the team has created such a great rapport between the volunteers and public.

"She works hard to maintain the moral of the team, she does the rota every week which everyone gets in an email. She also arranges group meetings once a month for the team to catch up, talk about their roles and take part in training sessions.

Kevin added: "Through support from her team she has worked hard to encourage the surrounding community to acknowledge the volunteers and support them in the role they do. She has been a major player in not only increasing the profile of first responders in the Vale of Clwyd, but also across the region."

On receiving the award, Vicky said: "I was absolutely speechless when I was informed I had won, and it's not often I am! The fact that it is in memory of George has moved me considerably. I am really proud to receive this and want to dedicate it to all the team for their huge commitment to making the scheme work in Denbigh and the surrounding area."





A TEAM of ambulance staff who took part in a ten-mile bed dash have helped raise almost £8,000 for a colleague who was forced to quit the service after he was viciously attacked.

The sponsored bed push, which took four hours and raised £1,700, was one of two events organised by friends of Andrew Evans, a 46-year-old father-of-two from Swansea Ambulance Station, who suffered a fractured skull in a violent and unprovoked attack while he was off duty from his job as an emergency medical technician.

Elle Davies, 41, a fellow EMT and friend who organised the bed race, said: "Andrew is just such a nice chap, so down-to earth and just such a lovely guy that we all just wanted to help him."

"It was such a good team effort and everyone did it with such a kind heart."

Andrew met the footsore team and their glamorous patient halfway through their journey from Morriston Hospital to Singleton Hospital.

Later the same day, he joined family, friends and colleagues for a fundraising night at Retro night club in Swansea where they were entertained by local band The Somethings, and the Lockdown Street Dance Team and 50 prizes, including a rugby ball signed by the Welsh Six Nations Squad, were up for grabs in a raffle and auction.

Ross Griffin, 46, who was Andrew's regular partner and first on the scene to help him after the attack, organised the evening in support of his close friend and colleague.

Ross's efforts on behalf of his colleagues have seen him presented with a Welsh Ambulance Service Employee Award.

He said: "Andrew is a very unassuming guy and very popular with the team at Swansea Ambulance Station. It was devastating to see him so badly injured and that his career should end and future prospects looked so bleak so we decided to help him."

His caring colleagues have raised £7,720 and the money will go towards Andrew's treatment and travel over the coming

months.

Ross said: "The amount of money raised speaks volumes for the sort of guy Andrew is and how highly he is regarded by his colleagues."

Andrew, who is known affectionately by his ambulance pals as Nookie after the popular and much loved 1970s ventriloquist puppet bear, said: "I am very humbled by the effort of Ross and

my friends and colleagues. It's been very emotional for me to see how hard they have worked on my behalf and it has helped lift my spirits and make me determined to get better."

## ambulance staff rally round





Welsh Ambulance Services 'heroes' who brought 31-year-old Rob Waggett back to life 18 minutes after he died in his wife's arms at Christmas were nominated for the prestigious Pride of Britain Awards.

Paramedics Dan Faulkner and Gary Evans, technician Alan Hodge and control room call taker Steve North had their names put forward for the glittering occasion by Rob's wife, Dianna.

She said: "I want to thank these men for giving me my life back. I want them to have recognition – they're heroes."

"I nominated them for the Pride of Britain Awards and anything I can do for them I will."

Dianna Waggett, 30, said her husband 'died' in her arms as their young sons slept in a nearby bedroom at their home in Malpas, Newport.

The 31-year-old was 'dead' for 18 minutes before the combined efforts of his wife, a neighbour and emergency ambulance staff, who gave him a total of seven electric shocks, resuscitated him.

The Caerphilly Council contact centre manager had gone to bed early with flu on Sunday, December 20, but later that evening Dianna heard him gasping for breath on the baby monitor they keep upstairs and by the time she reached him he was fighting for his life.

She and neighbour Gary Thompson gave him CPR under telephone instruction from call-taker Steve North until the emergency staff arrived.

Dan, 32, from New Inn, said: "As I walked up the path I could see the Christmas decorations and my heart sank."

"It must have been 18 minutes or more and the seventh time we defibbed him we got an output and he started taking some breaths and he carried on breathing."

Gary Evans, 45, from Pontypool, added: "Mr Waggett is living proof of what can happen with a team effort that started with the call-taker giving instructions on CPR and continued with us."

"But we are there doing everything we can do and his wife is crying and there's two little children asleep in the next room and then for him to pull through is brilliant."

"It was the best Christmas present any of us could have had."

Mrs Waggett said doctors told her that her husband's heart had continued quivering for more than four times longer than is normal - giving paramedics the time they needed to save his life.

Mr Waggett, who has had a pacemaker fitted, is still recovering at home and Dianna said: "They didn't just save Rob's

life, they saved mine and the children's as well."



Ambulance heroes, from left, standing, Ambulance call-taker Steve North, Technician Alan Hodge, paramedics Gary Evans and Dan Faulkner, seated, neighbour Gary Thompson with Rob and Dianna Waggett and children Koby and Mylo.



# awards success for welsh staff

Welsh Ambulance Services staff were the big winners at this year's prestigious Ambulance Services Institute awards at the House of Lords in October.

They won four out of a possible 12 categories and also saw two Swansea women nominated by the Welsh Ambulance Service take the Public Spirited award.

The ceremony was a glittering occasion at the Palace of Westminster with the presentations made by Baroness Browning of Whimble.

The Welsh award winners were Paramedic of the Year Mark Timmins, from Ruthin, Ambulance Technician of the Year Dafydd Dennis, from Barry, Military Award Rhyl paramedic Tony Stephens and Air Ambulance Team of the Year the South Wales Air Ambulance based at Swansea with a crew of paramedics Gareth Williams, from Barry, and Phil Thomas, from Pembroke, and pilot Grant Elgar.

The Public Spirited Award went to Wendy Rowe and Marian Roberts, of Swansea, whose prompt CPR saved the life of a fellow member of a church congregation when he collapsed with a heart attack.

Welsh Assembly Government Health Minister Edwina Hart said: "These awards recognise the excellent work the staff at the ambulance service do and the heroism of those who have gone beyond the call of duty. Their dedication and commitment is an example to us all."

Welsh Ambulance Services chairman Stuart Fletcher and Wales Air Ambulance Chief Executive Angela Hughes attended the event and he said: "This shows the calibre of the staff we have serving the people of Wales."

"Their skill, professionalism and courage has been quite outstanding and the Baroness said she felt very humbled by their courage and sense of duty.

"There were a high number of nominations

from ambulance services from across the UK so this has been a remarkable achievement and one we can be very proud of."

Angela Hughes said: "We are immensely proud of all of our aircrew and the lifesaving, skilled work they do 365 days of the year. It is wonderful for this particular team to receive the recognition they deserve, for making such a difference to someone's life.



Mark Timmins receives a special WAST award from North Wales Air Ambulance Team Leader Ian Binnington.

"This is what the Wales Air Ambulance charity is all about, and it's thanks to the people of Wales that this extraordinary work can be done by our valuable crews."

For full details of the ASI awards see the next edition of Siren.

Four members of the Welsh Ambulance Services have been recognised for their team work through a regional award.

Patient Care Services (PCS) ambulance crew Kevin Taylor and Gerynt Page and clerical support workers Jean Jones, who work at Pembroke Dock, and Vanessa George who works at Neath worked extremely well as a team according to their manager.

The team have been involved in delivering training, record keeping and general administrative duties to support the delivery of training to emergency and non-emergency staff within the Central and West Region.

Locality Ambulance Officer for Pembrokeshire, Dorian James nominated the team saying they had gone 'that extra mile' to deliver an outstanding service to Paramedics, Technicians and PCS Staff.

He said: "They started to deliver training in June 2009 at Neath Ambulance Station. On average they taught six to 10 people per day. The courses were held in Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Powys, Regional Headquarters in Swansea and Neath.

"They managed to train 511 Emergency Medical Staff and 172 PCS staff as well as Ambulance Officers and members of St John Ambulance. They were also asked to support operations by working in Vantage Point House assisting with the Ambulance Radio Replacement Project (ARRP) Help Desk."

He added: "They have also crewed PCS vehicles when demand is high to assist with additional discharges from the District General Hospitals. This has resulted in improved

performance.

"Kevin and Gerynt have worked exceptionally long hours to provide training not only for ARRP but also delivering the Swine Flu package to staff.

"They have been supported throughout by Jean Jones and Vanessa George, making sure all the data was uploaded and sent to North Wales on time and copying and filing all of the training records required for staff.

"Jean and Vanessa also prepared course material ready for each course being taught. As a team they worked extremely well and managed to deliver the training to the majority of staff within the Central and West Region."

Gerynt Page, who has 34 years service with the Welsh Ambulance Services, says he is delighted their efforts have been recognised with a Regional Award.

He said: "The training is all about new data screen technology which is yet to go live. We have been training both PCS and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) staff how to use the new data screens which will be going live shortly.

"Part of the screen is a sat-nav system and part is data screen which will see our reliance on paper end. It's a great system and will work very well. The swine flu training revolved around teaching and testing for correct mask fitting.

"While Kevin and I were doing the training Jean and Vanessa completed the clerical tasks and kept training records up-to-date. We couldn't do our job efficiently without their help and support.

"It is great that your hard work is recognised and appreciated. The regional award came out of the blue to be honest and we are all delighted."



As the comedian was getting to the punch line he was dying on stage - literally.

And, without doubt, Eddie Stapleton would have faced his final curtain at Tenby's De Valance Pavilion had it not been for the swift actions of a member of the audience who swung into action with life-saving CPR as paramedics raced to the scene.

Retired window cleaner and carpet fitter Eddie, 77, is a member of Tenby Male Choir and had taken part in a joint concert at Tenby Parish Church with the Gentlemen Songsters of Dudley.

Following the concert both choirs retired to the De Valance Pavilion for refreshments and Eddie, as usual, took to the microphone and, just as he reached the end of a comic monologue, according to Eddie, the lights went out.

He said: "I don't remember too much about it to be honest. I just keeled over and the doctors later told me if Guy Jackson, who was with the Dudley choir, hadn't stepped in I would have been a goner.

"Guy gave me CPR and got my heart going before the paramedics arrived and I will always be grateful for that. He was fantastic and so were the paramedics."

Guy Jackson, 64, from Stourbridge, said: "Eddie was on the microphone telling jokes and suddenly he keeled over and crashed through an exit door. My initial reaction was that it couldn't be part of the monologue and I just ran forward. It was obvious he wasn't breathing and was turning blue. I just automatically started CPR.

"The training kicked in and I just got to work there was no question about it, he wasn't breathing. The paramedic was

there so quickly it must have been less than five minutes and he took over. By the time we had Eddie ready to go in the ambulance he was back with us, conscious and talking after the paramedic used a defibrillator.

"I am just so glad my employers are so keen on First Aid training for staff and that I took note of what I was taught."

Guy, whose job is to transport prisoners to jails around the country, added: "Eddie has warned me he had a cracked rib because of the CPR I gave him and he wants revenge!"

Paramedic Bryn Hazelden said: "Had it not been for Guy I suspect Eddie would have been too far gone. As it was I and Stuart Mills were able to use a defibrillator

and shocked Eddie to get his heart back into a proper rhythm.

"By the time we left for the hospital Eddie was conscious and talking. He is living proof that good CPR should be taught at every school."



## comic eddie died on stage