

Adopt A British Squaddie Newsletter

March 2014

My 'Other' Boys

By Sarah Bryne

So, not only do I support my boys (and girls obviously) out in the sands but I also support some other boys – The Hull Stingrays Ice Hockey Team.

I've been supporting them since the first drop of a puck (no I'm not being rude hahaha) in Hull way back in September 1988 when we were called the Humberside Seahawks and were owned by our local Council as they built the Arena which we play out of. Well, 25 years later, many name changes and many changes of owners we are still up and running, just We are no longer owned by the Council which, in some ways is a good thing, in others isn't.

Having been heavily involved in the various Supporters Club Committees over the years, and following the team all over the country in years gone by when I was working full-time and could afford to, I have made many friends all over the country and am proud to have such a huge 'hockey family'.

We've had good times, won trophies and championships, as well as many bad times, often without knowing whether we would have a team from one season to another, going round with the begging buckets (literally!!) and a group of us supporters even got together and paid the wages for some of our players a few years ago when the club ran out of money.

Supporters have come and gone and new ones have arrived. Some of the new ones haven't lasted five minutes, especially when we've been on a losing streak (which has been quite a lot in the recent years hahaha), but there are a handful of us that have been going from day one and still do.

Whilst undertaking the role of the Secretary on the Booster Club Committee last season, one of our players, Jeff Smith, asked if there was ever a connection with a charity. We explained in the past, many years ago there was, however, due to recent owner changes it stopped and never got going again. Jeff had other ideas. Jeff is from Canada and his Mum has MS (Multiple Sclerosis) and asked if there was a local branch. It was at this point I started to sink into my seat due to knowing what would be coming next a voice shouted "Sarah has contact with the local branch". To cut a very long story short, it all began.

My connection with the local branch of the MS Society is, in June 1974, when I was 7 years of age and my sister was 5, my Dad was diagnosed with this condition. Can't really say remember Dad walking with his stick to be honest, only memories of him in his 'wheelie' as we called it. We really do not know what we would have done without the help and friendship from the local branch. Dad sadly passed away in April 2011 however, Mum, my Sister and I have kept in touch with the Branch and helped in any way we could.

So back to my other boys. Last season the Booster Club managed to raise thousands and thousands of pounds for the local Branch through raffling off cakes, hockey shirts, sponsored events and so on. Some of the members of the Branch enjoyed a visit to some of the games and were made so welcome by the Hockey Family. Jeff and the rest of the boys, made them feel so special. The final game of the season Jeff and the boys invited the MS guys back again and had them on the ice at the end of the game, had photographs taken with them and presented them with the cheque. I'm pleased to say, they all got a standing ovation from the hockey crowd. I felt so proud that night and so pleased for the Branch, knowing how much the money raised and the promotion of the Branch means to them.

This season Jeff asked me to help out again as he wanted to help them again. To say the Branch were over

the moon was an understatement. Some of the members have been to some games this season too and one of them, at his first game, even won the Shirt of His Back raffle (a raffle where you can win a players shirt). He was that excited about winning it, he even put it on back to front, bless him x The boys took them all into the changing room after the game (rather them than me – ewwww the smell!!!) and spent lots of time with them having photos and signing shirts and autographs too :D

On Sunday (22 nd) Jeff and two other players (Mike and Tommy), along with two young supporters (Amy and Beth) completed a run over the Humber Bridge and back again to raise funds for the Branch. A group of us went to cheer them all on and show them how much we appreciate what they are doing. Some of the people from MS turned up too and again, they were treated with so much respect and had a thoroughly enjoyable day. We're still waiting to hear how much has been raised this season, but Jeff is having the MS people back again on the last game of this season (about five weeks' time) to present them again on the ice with the cheque.

I am proud and honoured to be able to help my boys (and girls) out in the sands, but please don't hold it against me that I also am proud and honoured to be involved with my other boys too hahaha. Oh yeah, like I said earlier, I have been going to the Ice Hockey in Hull from the first drop of the puck back in September 1988. What I didn't mention was I haven't missed a home game either!! Just off to decide whether I need to get a life or not hahahaha ;-) x x x

The Future Generation

By Donna Armstronge

It is often said that our younger generation are selfish, spoiled and lack respect, however, I have, over the past few years encountered the most amazing generosity of spirit from our young people, especially in terms of respect and support for our fallen, veterans and serving troops.

My son, Gregor, was 10, when just before Halloween, he registered with Help For Heroes , dressed up as a soldier and took an H4H collection tin around with him collecting £150 for the charity, instead of sweets when he went “guising” or “trick or treating” if you are not Scottish! Many children stopped him on the way to share their sweets with him, or put any money they had received into his tin.

A few years later, a 13 year old Gregor volunteered to do a 5km run in aid of another Forces charity, raising over £400 for them, much of again, coming from his school friends' pocket money.

Then my 11 year old daughter, Caitlin decided that although she did not have her brother's athletic talent, she was a great baker and baked dozens of muffins, “camouflage cupcakes” and shortbread for a home baking stall for a Forces charity.

When it grew closer to Remembrance Day, Caitlin registered as a fundraiser with Poppy Scotland , bought a poppy shaped biscuit cutter from their store and made 300 Poppy Shortbread biscuits to sell at school . She sent out a letter to all the children beforehand explaining why Remembrance Day meant so much to her and asked them to bring 50p to school on 11 November if they wanted buy one of her special biscuits. She sold every biscuit, making £150 for Poppy Scotland!

A month after this she was contacted by the Royal Navy Search and Rescue crew of HMS Gannet to ask if she could make them another batch of biscuits and that they would pose for a photo with her biscuits!

Gregor has also sold £200 worth of wristbands for the Parachute Regiment's Afghanistan Trust, solely to his school mates and rugby team mates.

On 30 March he will be doing a 160ft Bungee Jump for the Afghanistan Trust and will be cheered on by a crowd of his school mates .

There have been increasing numbers of youngsters who have launched Facebook fundraising pages for

forces charities, and who have carried out some incredible events to raise funds and awareness for our troops and veterans, Harley Helps the Heroes, Lees Helping the Heroes, Brothers Behind our British Forces and Kombat Kidz are some of these pages run by some awesome youngsters.

Many of our AABS members mention just how their children love to help shopping for their adopted squaddies or making cards and pictures for them.

Here's to the future generation !