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A young mum has visited the North Wales Air Ambulance base to say a personal thank you after a dramatic mercy mission by helicopter paramedics helped save the life of her premature baby.

When Cloe Green, 21, went into labour at home it was still a month early but little Levi wasn’t in the mood to wait. Cloe’s sister Amy leapt into action to deliver the baby at the house in Dwyfryn Ardudwy, Harlech, even before the 999 call went through but the air ambulance helicopter was there within minutes as tiny Levi fought for life.

Welsh Ambulance Service paramedics Ian Binnington, from Wrexham, and Martin Lisin, from Holywell, took over and gave the 5lb 8oz baby oxygen and helped get him breathing properly.

“We were so pleased that it was a good outcome and it’s great to see Cloe and Levi looking so well,” said Cloe.

Cloe and Amy, along with their children, including little Levi, visited the North Wales Air Ambulance base at Dinas Dinlle, near Caernarfon, to thank the crew for their swift actions.

On-line delivery number four for Rachel

A grateful couple from Barry have paid tribute to the Welsh Ambulance Service call-taker who talked them through a home birth in the early hours of the morning.

It was a stressful event for Amanda Kingsley and Alan Carter as baby Tia put in an early appearance but all in all their work for call-taker Rachel Spracklen.

Rachel, 26, from Abertillery, who only joined the staff of the Ambulance Service’s South East Region control room in January 2009, has now helped four babies – all girls – into the world.

The most recent came in Barry and Rachel said: “It was Amanda’s third child but it was his first so I just talked him through the procedure and it went well.

“I think he had thought he was going to be sitting on the sofa waiting for the ambulance to arrive, not getting hands on.

“He made me laugh because he asked me if I delivered a baby every night but some people who trained at the same time haven’t done any – it’s just how it goes.”

Amanda said: “Rachel call-taker was brilliant – and the ambulance crew were great, so helpful and nice.”

The crew of paramedic Paul Crowley, from Cardiff, and technician Ed O’Brien, from Porthcawl, let the new dad cut the cord and Paul said: “It’s always good to have a good outcome like this and it’s great to have someone appreciate what you do as well.”
A retired doctor has paid tribute to the Welsh Ambulance Service crew she says saved her life after she suffered a horrific injury on a remote hillside in appalling winter weather.

Dr Anne Watson was walking on a rough track when she slipped and fell in torrential rain, breaking her thigh and badly damaging her knee.

Twelve months later, after recovering not just from her injuries but also from cancer, she returned to Wales to meet her saviours, paramedic Jon Cole and technician Gareth Morris.

"I got hypothermia but they did the best they could to keep me warm, trying to cover me in that silver paper even though I was lying on this track in the pouring rain with water gushing past me."

"They had to pull my leg straight and that did hurt but they were tremendous and did a great job in very difficult circumstances."

"They're a wonderful gang and they really did save my life."

Anne was taken by ambulance to Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny before being transferred to Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital where she underwent a nine-hour operation to reset her thigh.

Since then she has also fought cancer but she returned to Crickhowell to meet up again with the ambulance crew and Jon, 32, from Nant y Glo, said: "It was wonderful to see her again. It was a rotten day when she got hurt but she was quite feisty and her spirits were good and she was an excellent patient, very brave.

"It's a tribute to her that she's making such a good recovery and although it was difficult for us it was much worse for her."

His colleague, Gareth, 35, from Brynmawr, added: "She's a marvellous lady and it was good to see her in such good form and back in Wales."

A volunteer ambulance car driver has paid an emotional tribute to four Patient Care Service staff who pulled him back from the brink after he suffered a heart attack outside Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

"I told them, 'I don't know if you realise exactly what you've done but this man would never have had a chance but for you.'

Wendy, of Mayhill, Swansea, a mum of three who works as a one-on-one special needs assistant, said: "I went on a first aid course with school last year but I didn't expect that I would have to use it in this sort of situation."

"I've since found out that Mark and I are cousins and after he had been in hospital he came and stayed with us for a week to recuperate and now he's looking really well."

Mark, 42, said: "I am sure that without Wendy and Marian and Alan I wouldn't be here today. I'm very grateful and I've even found a relative I never knew I had."
our heroes: from the front line to the back room

Welsh Ambulance Service data analyst Kayleigh Malson knows laughter really is the best medicine – and she can prove it.

Kayleigh returned from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival after a rib-tickling 80-minute sketch show that kept her audience in stitches.

As part of the Abergavenny Spotlight Society (ASS), the 23-year old played to near full houses for three nights.

“We did a sketch show that was 80 minutes long. It was a bit like the Fast Shows,” said Kayleigh, from Abbersychnall near Torfaen: “One minute it’s a doctor’s surgery, the next a game show. I played everything from a doctor to a bar tender.”

Kayleigh, who works at Vantage Point House, the control room for the South East Region, admitted comedy acting can be nerve-wracking.

“If you don’t make them laugh it can be terrible but we had a really good reception when we were in Edinburgh.

Kayleigh took to the stage four years ago for something to keep her busy after analysing ambulance service data all day.

“A former colleague had joined the Abergavenny Theatre Group and I became interested from there. It was just something to do rather than being bored in the evenings. I hadn’t done drama at school.

“Then a group of us thought we’d like to bring comedy to the Valley as the nearest place to see it is Cardiff.”

“I was very nervous at first and I still get nervous although it’s worse in the build up. When I get on stage I’m fine.

“Id really love the opportunity to do a big theatre performance,” she said. “But that would mean having to give up the day job and I won’t be doing that just yet!”

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Communities in one of the poorest regions of Africa now have trained volunteer lifesavers thanks to the efforts of a party of Welsh Ambulance Service staff from South Wales.

The nine-strong party of paramedics and ambulance technicians from the Service’s South East region spent two weeks in Mbabane, in Swaziland, training and equipping local health workers.

They were there as part of the links formed by the Pontyrird- based charity PONT (Partnerships Overseas Networking Trust).

During their stay they trained 60 local volunteers in life-saving skills and provided them with four defibrillators – electric shock machines – worth £6,000 and provided by Heartstart UK in a sponsorship deal arranged by one of the party.

First Responder Officer for South East region Tony Rossetti, from Bridgend.

It was a dream come true for Paramedic supervisor Julien Newton and ambulance technician Andrew Pipien, from Hawthorn Ambulance Station in the Rhondda, who set the ball rolling for the project when they visited Mbabane last year.

They returned this November with Tony and six colleagues, paramedics Jonathan Good, Sted Roberts, Geraint Tucker and Giovanni Riva and technicians Stacey Carter and Mandy George.

The group paid all their own expenses, about £1,000 each, and used their own holidays for the trip, and Julian said: “It all went very well and we trained 60 people with Tony Rossetti and Sted Roberts in charge and the rest of us helping out.

“We also managed to source three ambulances and we hope to have them on the road in 12 months time with trained ambulance drivers.

“They’re not what we would necessarily recognize as ambulances but they do the job there and we are also looking at them using ambulance motorcycles and even bicycles which can pull a stretcher.

“The idea is that the people we have trained can now go back to their communities and pass these skills on – the keenness and enthusiasm of the people to learn and the welcome they gave us was quite humbling.”

Eventually they hope that over 2,200 Operational Level Health Workers and Community Health Promoters will be in place and their efforts have been recognised by the Welsh Ambulance Service in an official partnership with PONT and representatives from Mbabane.

Julian and Andrew are keen to hear from other members of the Welsh Ambulance Service who would like to get involved with the work they are doing in Swaziland.

They can be contacted by e-mail on julian.newton@talktalk.net and andrewpip@hotmail.co.uk

An ambulance call allocator from Llandudno Junction is putting her new found Welsh language skills to the test after a week’s intensive tuition.

Eirwen Roberts won the chance to spend a week at the highly-rated Nant Gwrtheyrn Language Centre in a Welsh Ambulance Service staff competition.

Mum of two Eirwen, 46, who works in the control room at North Wales Regional Headquarters in Lanfairfechan is now able to answer callers in Welsh.

She said: “I was delighted to win the competition and it went really well at Nant Gwrtheyrn and was great fun.

“So many people do speak Welsh, both the people who call in and my colleagues that I wanted to be able to speak it as well.

“I needed more confidence and to increase my vocabulary and now I’m back at work I’ve got to keep it up but I’m sure my friends in work will help me.”

Eirwen won her place at Nant Gwrtheyrn in the competition by saying in less than 100 words why she felt learning the language would be useful to her and for one of her reasons she said: “We receive emergency calls from members of the public who are often in a state of panic and who would feel far more reassured if they were speaking to a Welsh speaker.”

Welsh Language Officer Sharon Jones said the response from staff was excellent and added: “The Trust is committed to delivering a bilingual service and Welsh speakers within the Trust are encouraged to support colleagues who are learning Welsh.”

Anyone with enquiries about the Trust’s Welsh Language Scheme or about learning Welsh, can access information on the Trust intranet or contact Sharon at Headquarters on 01745 532900 or by e-mailing Sharon.Jones@ambulance.wales.nhs.uk

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Eirwen answers the call for wales
A gas explosion at a busy South Wales shopping centre saw the Welsh Ambulance Service deal with 83 casualties in major gas explosion – training exercise simulates disaster...
needs.

“They will be trained to use a wider range of medicines to manage particular conditions and will have extended skills to provide consultations and make informed clinical decisions.”

“They will often be able to treat patients at home, significantly reducing the number of people sent to Accident and Emergency departments and signposting them towards continuing care.

“They will be able to consult and examine patients and devise a treatment plan, offer a range of antibiotic under Patient Group Directions (PGD’s), as well as wound management.”

The Service’s Advanced Care Practitioner, Tim Jones, has also been heavily involved and he added that across the UK up to one million patients a year are taken unnecessarily to A and E departments.

He said: “The new grade of clinician, known as Specialist practitioner - Paramedic/Nurses, will have sufficient training and education to better manage those with serious conditions, such as asthma, and arrange care disposition, often in their own homes.

“But they also have a second role because they are available to be sent to life-threatening emergencies in their area because they have the paramedic skills to deal with those situations.”

One of that new breed will be paramedic Roger John, from Ynysybwl in the Rhondda, who is currently on the Rapid Response Vehicles in Cardiff.

Roger, 55, who joined the ambulance service in 1991, has been a paramedic for 12 years but also has a B Sc Honours degree in Pre-hospital Care from Swansea University and is in the third year of a Masters degree in Advanced Clinical Practice at the University of Glamorgan.

He said: “The new specialist role will require a greater understanding of how the human body works so as to treat the patient in the most appropriate way, at their home if possible.

“I was attracted to the role because I saw it as a natural progression from what I have been doing in developing myself as a paramedic.

“Vast numbers of patients go into A and E and out the other side without being treated and that ties up resources.

“This is where the specialist practitioner role comes into its own because it releases those resources and at the same time takes healthcare to the patient rather than bringing the patient to the healthcare.

“If you can assess a patient, one to one, at the point of contact and decide whether he or she needs to go to hospital or if they can be treated at home then that’s better for everybody.

“It’s much better for the patient and it means you haven’t got a seven-ton ambulance tearing around to something that doesn’t need a blue light response.”

Clearly some people do need to go to hospital but huge numbers don’t and you need the educational process to make you competent to do that and to attain a higher level of skills and clinical expertise and that’s what this is all about.”

**gwyn retires**

A Ruthin man has said goodbye to an ambulance service career spanning five decades.

Gwyn Thomas retired after 44 years in the emergency medical service profession and thanks to his commitment to training, many staff on the road now have had the privilege of being ‘Thomas Trained’.

Gwn said: “I joined St John’s and at that time, the out of hours service for the ambulance service was run by St John’s and the Red Cross in Ruthin which gave me valuable experience working in the ambulances. Alongside that I also did an apprenticeship in plastering.”

Gwyn joined the Denbighshire Ambulance Service in 1965 in Ruthin and after 10 years was promoted to Leading Ambulanceman and completed a pre-instructor course at Wrenbury Hall, in Cheshire.

Gwyn completed his DHSS Instructor course in 1980 and worked at Liverpool Regional Ambulance Training School as well as playing a leading role in the introduction of defibrillators in North Wales.

He also helped set up the Clwyd Ambulance Service’s paramedic training and became a Resuscitation Training Officer and tutored on Advanced Paediatric Life Support Courses at Bolton, Liverpool and Oxford after becoming a member of the Faculty of Advanced Life Support at Hope Hospital, Manchester.

Since then Gwyn continued developing training and clinical governance in the ambulance service and finished as National Equipment Manager.

He said: “The biggest highlight in this role has to be the new ambulances and being involved with their design and the equipment carried by the vehicles.”

“What has given me the greatest pleasure is being able to help people learn and see them develop.

“We have got a terrific bunch of people working with us and they are doing their job very well.”