

The N. Glos. ICD Group Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Project.

This began about 2 years ago. One of our members, Shirley Harvey, persuaded the choir of which she is a member (Gotherington Singers) to have a collection in aid of AED's at their 2007 Christmas Concert. This realised about £600. Shortly thereafter, the Rotary Club of Cheltenham Cleeve Vale generously donated £2,500. By the middle of 2008 another of our members (Anna Browne) gave us a significant sum of money - instead of receiving presents at her 50th Wedding Anniversary to Jonathan, she asked for contributions to the 'AED Fund'. Anna did not stop at this – she then persuaded the Bredon Bridge Club to contribute also. Funds were then swelled by ICD Group member Dave Bailes, who gave his time and energy to produce a DIY book that he sold around Gloucester, and he handed the proceeds to us. Moreover, the Pittville Townswomen's Guild made a generous contribution. With well over £4000 we set up a project to install AED's in the local community.

Our first step was to talk to Mr Kevin Dickens of the Great Western Ambulance Service (GWAS) at Staverton, Gloucester, who is responsible for raising the awareness of basic life support and AEDs throughout Gloucestershire. Kevin was able to identify locations in the county where, should someone suffer from Sudden Cardiac Arrest, the Emergency Services might have some difficulty arriving at the scene within a few minutes – there are many semi-rural locations where this might apply. We specifically wanted areas of high footfall (supermarkets, shopping malls, schools, theatres etc.) and the location that we chose was Cleeve School in Bishops Cleeve. This has a student population of over 1600, a staff of over 200, and a Sports Hall that is used evenings and at week-ends.

Second, we spoke to the Arrhythmia Alliance and the SADS Trust; both organisations have great experience of placing AEDs in the community. We were advised of the various issues and hurdles we might encounter. For the location we had chosen it was suggested that AEDs should be complemented with oxygen equipment. Although the equipment was clearly accessible and on view, it was thought unlikely that vandalism would be a problem, as close supervision of usage would be maintained at all times by trained staff in the school and the sports centre. The cabinets containing the AEDs are alarmed, which would sound when opened. The equipment was recorded on the Great Western Ambulance Service Computer-Aided Dispatch System, thereby being available for relevant 999 calls.

On Tuesday November 10th 2009, Olly Morgan, the Gloucester and England Rugby player inaugurated the placement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and oxygen therapy equipment at Cleeve School, Cheltenham. This marked the culmination of the joint project between the Rotary Club of Cheltenham Cleeve Vale, the Great Western Ambulance Service, St Johns Ambulance and the North Gloucestershire ICD Support Group.

An AED is a vital piece of life saving equipment for someone suffering a Sudden Cardiac Arrest, a problem all too common these days. AEDs are located throughout Gloucestershire and are being deployed within minutes, which enhances the chance of survival from this condition. Olly Morgan who readily agreed to support this venture said "Raising the awareness of the benefits of basic life support and using this type of equipment will have the potential to save lives". The inauguration was attended by the project team members and contributors as well as Mr Ted Seaman, who recently suffered Sudden Cardiac Arrest and whose life was saved by the rapid use of an AED in a similar environment. Ted, complete with a new ICD, has recently become a member of the ICD Support Group and is now very active in helping GWAS to publicise the importance of AEDs in the community. The Gloucestershire Echo gave us a half-page spread to help publicise the importance of AEDs.

Two AEDs have been installed in the school, one in the first aid room at the Student Reception Area and one in the Sports Centre in another part of the campus. The latter location is also open at evenings and weekends to members of the public and the AED will provide a vital piece of first aid support during these times. We added oxygen respiration equipment, as advised by the Ambulance Service, and the staff training programme covered the use of oxygen, as well as CPR and use of AEDs. Dr Stuart Wilson, Associate Head Teacher at Cleeve School, said "We were delighted to be involved in the project which now provides additional first aid support to our students and staff, and to members of the public using the schools facilities."

Mr Kevin Dickens, Great Western Ambulance Service, (GWAS) said "Working with all these partners to deliver this project has been beneficial. Having Mr Ted Seaman at the inauguration again showcases the partnership working between St John Ambulance and GWAS. I am grateful to Cleeve Vale Rotary Club and North Gloucestershire ICD group for their commitment to this project."

The project was co-ordinated by the Cleeve Vale Rotary Club and the North Gloucestershire ICD Group. Dr Colin Prottey from the Cleeve Vale Rotary Club and the ICD group said this represented the completion of a project that began nearly 2 years ago. Cleeve Vale Rotary Club is very keen to give its continuing support to the installation of Life-Saving Equipment in the local community and will encourage other Rotary Clubs to do likewise. Robin Harvey of the ICD Support Group commented "Many of our members are fully aware of or have experienced Sudden Cardiac Arrest and have an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) fitted. Our support group recognises the potential of AEDs to saving lives and is committed to extending our support to similar projects in Gloucestershire."

Staff at the school and Sports Centre were trained by St John Ambulance, Gloucestershire. Mrs Kim George of St John Ambulance said "We are really pleased to have worked on this initiative. We would encourage all members of the public to gain life saving skills in basic life support, first aid and AEDs, as these skills could help to save lives."

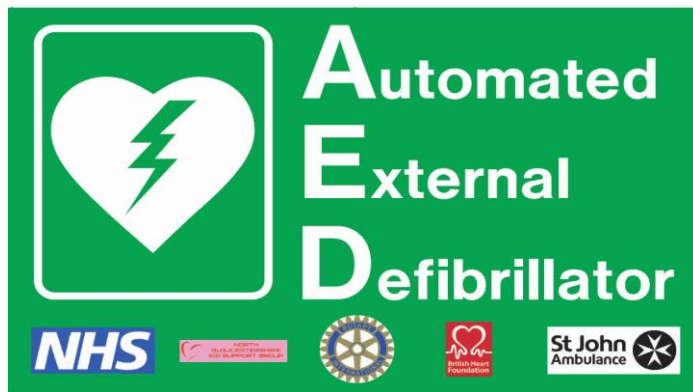
During the course of the Project we were awarded grants from The British Heart Foundation as well as from Rotary District 1100 towards the cost of the project. Cleeve Vale Rotary Club has generously offered us a further sum of money to continue the activity during 2010 and three potential sites have been recommended by the Ambulance Service. Moreover, The Gotherington Singers have very generously offered to us the 2010 Summer Concert to raise further money for AEDs in the county. We will also use this to publicise and to raise public awareness of Sudden Cardiac Arrest and the vital role of training, CPR and AEDs.

We think that as a group of people whose lives have been clearly influenced by Sudden Cardiac Arrest, and having benefited by the intervention of Emergency Services, The North Gloucestershire ICD Group is keen to help wherever it can to increase the current low survival rate of victims of SCA by supporting the installation of AEDs. The project team is now looking to install AEDs in other identified locations in the county. We will work closely with the Rotary movement in the UK and we particularly look to our members to help us by advising appropriate locations where AEDs might be installed in the community. A simple 'Road-Map' of the key steps to be taken has been produced and is available. We will readily help and advise any organisation that wishes to take up this initiative. Also, any contributions towards future placements will always be gratefully received.

For us, the most compelling comment was made by Kevin Dickens at the inauguration " I would like AEDs to become like Fire Extinguishers – everyone recognises them and knows how to use them, they are in all the key places, and fortunately, we rarely have to use them..."



Left-right (back) Ted Seaman; Colin Prottey; Robin Harvey; Stuart Wilson; Kevin Dickens;
(front) Kim George; Olly Morgan; Sue Brobyn



Acknowledge sign of project contributors



Robin Harvey, Stuart Wilson and Colin Prottey



AED and Oxygen Kit, located behind the Reception Desk of the Sports Centre at Cleeve School