



Fife Independent Disability Network Newsletter

January Edition
2006

From all the Management Committee we hope all our members have a Happy 2006

FIFE INDEPENDENT DISABILITY NETWORK NORTH EAST FIFE PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT 2004 – 2005

Although the project is coming to an end, I feel that good progress has been made. The project has established groups in North East Fife, Balmullo and Cupar, which is the stronger and most committed of the two.

BALMULLO GROUP

This was the first group to be set up and the first meeting took place in December 2004, our next meeting on 6th December 2005 will be our last. The group size has fluctuated over the past months, illness, holidays, carers etc being the cause. However, I believe attendees have enjoyed the meeting and the invited speakers and have gained something from all the information distributed at the meetings. Speakers include Marry Parry (Mobus), Pauline Medd (F.I.D.N.), Alison Mackay (Blether Together), Mr Robin Dick (Fife Integrated Transport) and Laura MacIntosh (WRVS).



This group were concerned with access to facilities and services and enquiries ongoing with Forgan Arts centre and Fife council.

CUPAR GROUP

The first meeting for this group took place in April 2005 at the Age Concern Hall in Cupar. Our next meeting on Thursday 8th

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December 2005 will be our last. This group has grown in strength and commitment and now number approximately 12 regular attendees. Speakers include Marry Parry (Mobus), Kerrie Herd (WRVS), Aileen Horn (Local Community Care Forum), Alison Mackay (Blether Together), Mr Robin Dick (Fife Integrated Transport), and a representative from Shopmobility Fife.

The Cupar group were concerned about access to the County Buildings in Cupar for public meetings in the evening. Access was not possible because of the sitting of a post-box on the rear of one of the double doors. This post-box has since been resited. However, access to the box is now up three steps!

Another of the group's concerns was dropped kerbs on Kinloss Park Estate and Fife Council are aware of the problems.

This group have been keen to attend all Network meetings and transport to these meetings has been arranged through Mobus.

Some members of the Cupar group are very community oriented and are keen to become involved in local government decision making processes. But I do feel that they will need some kind of support, whether moral and or physical and I think they may well look to F.I.D.N. to supply that support.

THE THIRD GROUP

The project aims were that three groups should be set up in North East Fife and I attempted to set up a group in Falkland in June 2005. However this was poorly attended and never got off the ground. Although I visited various venues/locations and talked with people from voluntary and statutory organisations no other group was established. Many people have said that the difficulties with transport (public and private) and the fact that people in North East Fife live in rural locations could prove to be a barrier to getting these people involved.

I also attempted to take over from where the previous Outreach Worker left off in Anstruther but no one I was able to contact was interested in/or able to attend meetings so this did not get off the ground.

VISIT TO FALKLAND

A visit to Falkland Palace grounds was arranged in the summer and all who went on the trip said they had enjoyed themselves. Some money was donated to F.I.D.N. to help with funds.

LIAISON/NETWORKING

I have developed good working relationships with many Fife Council employees and with people employed in the voluntary sector. Fife Independent Disability Network is now more widely known in northeast Fife as a result.

A new initiative (between Fife Council, statutory and voluntary organisations) has emerged in northeast Fife, Community Capacity Building, kinking directly into the East Fife Community Learning and Development Plan. This could have helped the project enormously, through networking/liaison/shared experiences/support. All this information will be passed to F.I.D.N.

Unfortunately, with no repeat funding available, the project will come to an end December 2005. This is indeed unfortunate as I believe that with the two groups firmly established and many working relationships and

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YOUR CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

A Happy New Year to all our members and I also hope that it will be a Healthy one for you all.

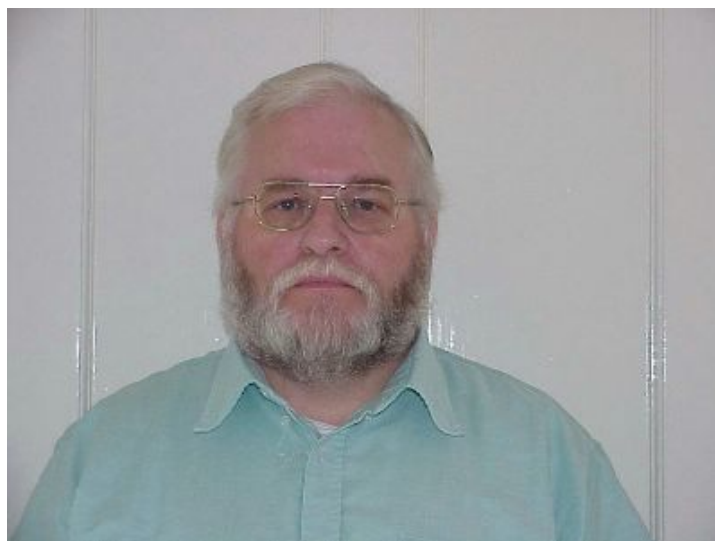
As another New Year begins Fife Independent Disability are already very busy. The Management Committee are attending a three day training course on access awareness, so that we are able to pass our opinions and advice to you, the service users.

I as your Chairperson will do my utmost to ensure that FI DN continue to give a first class service. Our call rate to the office has increased again dramatically these last few months which is a great sign that we as a disability led organisation are on the right track. Our membership is also increasing very well.

Our next Network meeting is on Friday 17th February at 2pm in Balmullo, near Cupar, contact Muriel if you wish more information.

Michael Tonks

Chairperson FIDN



links established, the project could have continued to develop and expand. Ultimately the three groups in northeast Fife would have been self- supporting and I believe firmly involved in community participation.

I am pleased that F.I.D.N. will continue to support the Cupar group for a time and I wish the group and F.I.D.N. every success in their endeavours. I shall be sorry that I will no longer be working with the members of Balmullo and Cupar groups as I have enjoyed our meetings immensely and have also enjoyed carrying out research on their behalf.

Joan Hughes

Outreach Worker NE Fife

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CENTRES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING IN DANGER OF COLLAPSE

January 2006

Leading campaigners have raised concerns that Centres for Independent Living (CIL) are in danger of collapse.

At a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Disability Group in November, Jane Campbell, chair of the Social Care Institute for Excellence, urged the committee to highlight in parliament the fact that CILs were losing direct payments contracts to large, non-user led providers.

She said this contradicted government commitments to service delivery by organisations led by disabled people.

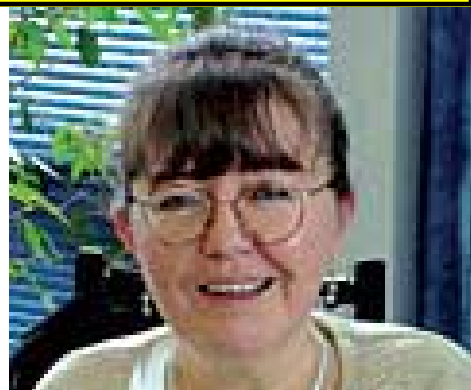
Ian Loynes, director of Southampton CIL, who helped organise a lobby of the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), said he had received no response from the ADSS president.

He said CILs "face extinction" and the government target of a CIL in each authority by 2010 was unlikely to be met.

"The way things are going, we'll be lucky to have any CILs in the country by 2010."

Sian Vasey (left), director of Ealing CIL, said: "There is no evidence at all to show that the (non-CIL) organisations getting the commissions are doing good work."

Nick Danagher, executive director for the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL), said he was hopeful that some of the issues would be addressed through new public duties



being introduced under the Disability Discrimination Act later this year, and through government commitments. Mr Danagher said: "As much as it may seem the situation is going backward for local CILs, it is not as though the issue is being ignored by the government. The door of opportunity is perhaps more open than it has been."

Taken from Disability Now website.

www.disabilitynow.org.uk



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TIME TO BREATHE



[Breathing Space](#) –the free, confidential phone line for people in Scotland who are feeling low or depressed – is launching its new website at Edinburgh's Dynamic Earth on Monday.

The new site - www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk - will provide a unique resource for anyone experiencing low mood or depression as well as family members, carers, students, practitioners and anyone interested in improving the mental health and well-being of people in Scotland.

The site has been designed to allow users to explore issues under the headings of 'Your Mood' and 'Your Problems' and offers practical advice and information on how to seek help.

Tony McLaren of Breathing Space said, "We are delighted to be launching our new website which we see as an extension of the confidential, free phone line service that Breathing Space provides across Scotland every day of the year from 6pm – 2am."

Taken from Inclusion Scotland`s November 2005 Newsletter

Please Send in Letters or comment`s that may be of interest to FIDN readers to the FIDN office (address on page 3). Please state for Newsletter!

Please note that this is no guarantee that it will be place in the newsletter.

FIDN WebSite

You can find this newsletter and previous newsletters plus lots more information on our website. www.fidn.org.uk

We now have 2 web sites the one above from Digital Fife and our new one we are building ourselves which is www.fidn.co.uk



Caledonian Challenge -- The Extra Challenge

Last year in June 2005 I took part in the Extra Challenge. For those of you who have never heard of the Caledonian Challenge let me explain. The State Street Caledonian Challenge is perhaps the most challenging yet rewarding fundraising event of its kind. Teams of four, each representing companies or simply as an individual team, from throughout the UK and beyond, walk 54 miles of the West Highland Way within a 24-hour period, passing through some of Scotland's most spectacular scenery. The Extra Challenge is open to participants with



a medical condition or disability that prevents them from taking part in the longer event. The Extra Challenge participants had the opportunity to share in part of the route and camaraderie of it's big brother, The State Street Caledonian Challenge.

Did you watch "Beyond Boundaries"? If you did what were you thinking? Were you, like me, wondering what YOUR boundaries would be? For those of you who didn't watch, it this was a TV series showing the efforts of a group of disabled people traversing Central America and coping with jungle, desert, water and would-you-believe a volcano. The Extra Challenge takes place nearer home and is not so extreme. However, it offers a challenging day out on the beautiful Scottish hills (weather not predictable) and might be more to your liking AND more attainable.



Why not join in next year, for the 2006 Extra Caledonian Challenge on 17th June?

More information from:

www.caledonianchallenge.com/extra

Fiona Lindsay on 0131 524 0350

Eva.McCracken 01592 758149

Heather Macdonald 0131 468 0110

Lin Berwick Trust

Lin Berwick, who is blind, has cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user, founded the Trust in 1989 because of the frustration and difficulty she experienced in finding suitable holiday accommodation. The Trust has a board of 11 Trustees, a full-time Administrator and a part-time Caretaker.

It opened its first house, Berwick Cottage, in East Harling, Norfolk in 1997, which has been a resounding success, receiving the highest accolades from Tourism for All (formerly Holiday Care). The East of England Tourist Board has awarded Berwick Cottage the highest grades in the three categories of Mobility, Hearing and Vision under the new National Accessible Standards.

The Trust aims to build houses in the North, South, East and West and possibly in mainland Europe! The latest venture is a new luxurious cottage in the village of Dirleton on the shores of the Firth of Forth in Scotland.

Lin Berwick and her co-Trustees are achieving a dream that will provide anxiety-free holidays for people with even the most profound disabilities.



ABOUT US

The Trust has acquired a site in the beautiful village of Dirleton, East Lothian, on the coast of the Firth of Forth and only 40 minutes from Edinburgh and 4 miles from North Berwick. It is in a conservation area surrounded by some of the finest golf courses in Britain. The new cottage will be called Denis Duncan House, which is the name that our Trustees have chosen in honour of the Rev Dr Denis Duncan, who is a Vice President of the Trust, our newsletter editor and a long-standing supporter of the Trust and loyal friend of Lin's. Denis Duncan House will be the Trust's flagship property at a cost of £430,000. It will have a twin-bedded room for people with disabilities and a superbly equipped en-suite bathroom as well as a large sitting room with conservatory leading to the garden of nearly half an acre. We have raised over £220,000 through donations from our supporters across the country and have been awarded a grant of £210,586 by the Big Lottery Fund (Scottish Office). However, we rely on donations to finance the day-to-day running of the Trust so if you would like to support us by making a donation or helping us in any other way, Work started on the construction of Denis Duncan House in November 2004 and it is hoped that the property will be open to holidaymakers from April 2006.

The Administrator

For details of availability and to book Berwick Cottage, all general enquiries or to make a donation

Miriam Toosey BA (Hons) BSc
Eastgate House
Upper East Street
Sudbury
Suffolk CO10 1UB

Untrue claim on agreed quotas on Ryanair flights

The Disability Rights Commission has responded to claims that it agreed with Ryanair to limit the number of disabled passengers to four per flight saying that it has no involvement in providing any guidance to Ryanair on limits to the numbers of disabled passengers able to board flights.



Air travel is exempt from the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act and the DRC has long argued for the same legal protection for disabled people whatever mode of transport they use. In any event, Ryanair's limit of only 4 disabled passengers is out of step with the practices of many major airlines companies that we have come across. In the light of this, and other recent airline episodes involving disabled travellers, the DRC says it will be writing to the government to propose that the present voluntary arrangements on airlines' treatment of disabled passengers onboard planes are not working and this should be put right on a statutory basis.

Taken from Inclusion Scotland`s November 2005 Newsletter

New DRC web guide: using your rights at work

Disability Rights Commission

The DRC has launched a new Using Your Rights web guide, which gives disabled people and employment advisors practical advice on how to tackle discrimination.

This guide will help make clear whether you have experienced disability discrimination. It explains how you can try to resolve problems in the workplace and guides you through the complex process of taking a case to an employment tribunal.

You can download key resources on the DRC website, such as sample grievance letters and tips on how to complete an 'ET1' - an employment tribunal application form. Please go to: <http://www.drc-gb.org/usingyourrights>

Taken from Inclusion Scotland`s November 2005 Newsletter

WANT TO LEARN?

L.E.A.D Scotland (Linking. Education. And. Disability)

What does Lead offer?

- Educational guidance and information
- Computer home loan scheme
- Volunteer support

Our services are free and confidential. We work with disabled people and carers in some areas of Scotland. Find a local Lead Scotland Organiser. Tel: 0131 317 3439



Educational guidance and information

One of our Lead Organisers can arrange to visit you at home, or somewhere that suits you best, to talk about what you want to learn. We can give you the information you need to get started and ongoing support for you to continue your studies. **What interests you?** You might want to learn the guitar, speak French, learn to paint, write creatively, send an email, brush up your reading and writing skills. The lists, of course, are endless! Talking to an Organiser about your interests might help you decide what you want to learn.

There are many reasons for learning. What is yours? Do you want to learn for fun, gain skills for work, or fulfil a lifetime ambition? Perhaps you have recently become disabled and you want to talk to someone about how to get back into learning?

How would you like to learn? Learning opportunities are becoming more and more flexible. Do you want to learn at your own home, at college, at a local learning centre or maybe over the internet? Do you want to learn a few hours a week round your other commitments or are you looking for a full-time opportunity? Talk to an Organiser about what would suit you.

Fife Organiser - Norma Mackenzie tel: 01383 312200

I myself (Robert A Hunter, the FIDN newsletter and website editor) was a LEAD student then went on to be a LEAD I.T. tutor. I so far have managed to acquire 19 officially recognised qualifications on using computers (not all through LEAD).

When I finished work due to my ill health I started to vegetate, then I saw an introduction to computers course at a local community centre, from there I went to college but after a short time I found that going back and forwards to college from home a problem. I saw an advert for LEAD shortly after and the area organiser help me start doing courses through distance learning. From then on I did not look back, this gave me the confidence to get involved in the Fife Branch of the MS Society on the management side. Though I am no longer involved with the Fife Branch I am still participating in the MS Society nationally. I am now a member of LEAD Scotland as well as a I.T. tutor, I look after two websites for FIDN one prebuilt and one I am building myself plus I am the editor and publisher of this newsletter. I also look after one of the Forth and Tay Disabled Rambler web sites.

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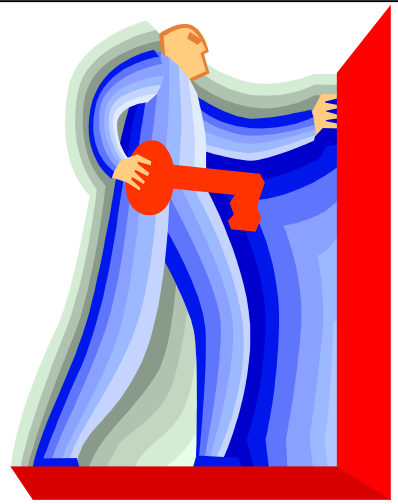
NATIONAL KEY SCHEME (RADAR)

Accessible Toilets for Disabled People

Available from Fife Independent Disability Network, West
Bridge Mill, Bridge Street,
Kirkcaldy Tel: 01592 203993 Fax: 01592 203786
Text Phone: 01592 646885

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Friday 9:30am – 1pm

There are 5,600 accessible toilets in the UK using RADAR keys.
For further information please contact Muriel MacGregor at Fife
Independent Disability Network.



What does it cost? £4:50

How do I get one? Visit FIDN with identification (e.g. Blue badge) photo copy of both sides and pick yours up at the cost of £4:50. If it is easier simply put a cheque in the post along with identification and your address details and we will send your key to your door!

Is it only for wheelchair users? No! Speak to us for clarification. You are entitled to use a RADAR accessible toilet if you require assistance in toileting, have a visual impairment etc.

Where can I use it? All over the UK



And I left school with no qualification, in fact I hated school!! But through flexible learning at college where you can learn when you want (within college opening hours) and at your own pace or even at home (distance Learning) which I have done both.

It has not help my MS but at least it is making it more bearable.

Robert A Hunter

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Please send any comments on this newsletter to the FIDN office, so I can make any improvement if necessary or if you have something that maybe of interest to the FIDN readers.

Editor & Publisher: Robert A Hunter

USEFUL TELEPHONE

Inclusion Scotland

Info@inclusionScotland.org

Tel 0141 887 7058

Fife Advocacy

Tel: 01383 511155

Scottish Disability Equality Forum

Tel: 01786 446456

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife

Tel: 01592 412230

NHS/Fife Health Council

Tel: 0800 587 4008

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Email:

enquiries@fidn.co.uk

Website: www.fidn.org.uk &

www.fidn.co.uk

**Please visit the website for more
Information.**

THE BELOW ARE SOME USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS RELATED TO SAFETY

Homecheck

Tel: 01592 599599

Fife Fire and Rescue Service

Tel: 01333 439497

Fife Constabulary Home

Security Help / Advice

Tel: 01592 418506

Fife Constabulary

Safety Officer (East)

Tel: 01334 418745

Trading Standards

Tel: 01592 416830

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife

Tel: 01334 412845

Home Energy Management Service

Tel: 01592 416904

Care and Repair

Tel: 01592 631661

Eildon Holiday Cottages

Eildon Holiday Cottages comprises of six modern holiday “cottages”, converted from 18th century barns and outbuildings. The cottages are managed by Jill Hart who, together with her husband Tom and their family, live in the Mains farmhouse. Built of local Melrose stone (lovely “old rose” colour), the cottages are spacious, warm, bright and very well equipped. Five of the cottages are Category 1 (unassisted wheelchair access) and have at least one bedroom, with shower or bathroom, on the ground floor.

The cottages are situated 600 ft up on the slopes of the Eildon Hills with magnificent views over the Lammermuir and Moorfoot Hills beyond. Melrose’s 9-hole golf course is within 300 yards of the cottages. Abbotsford, the home of the novelist Sir Walter Scott, is less than four miles away and there is much in the area to interest historians, architects and gardeners.

The cottages are on the edge of Melrose itself, whose Abbey holds the heart of Robert the Bruce, and is one of the most attractive of the Borders towns, with its unusual shops and fine eating places. Excellent hill walking, fishing, riding and golf are all available.

Winner of the Holiday Care Service award in 1991 for the best self-catering accommodation for disabled people in Britain.

Winner of the Tourism for All awards in 1991 for the best facilities for disabled people in Scotland.

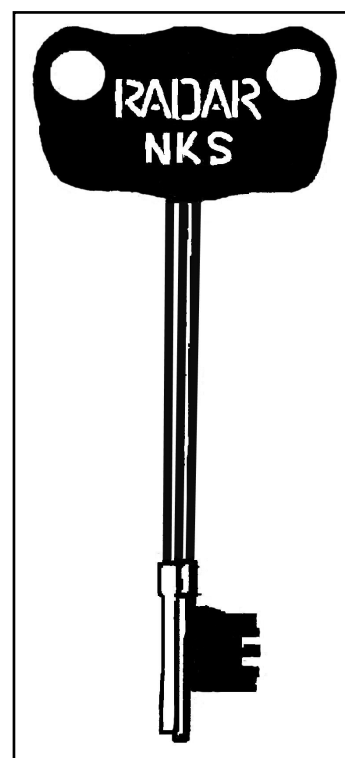
Scottish Tourist Board 4 star accreditation.

Category 1 rated for unassisted wheelchair use.

Special mention in National Civic Trust awards 1992.

Central Borders Civic Trust Special Award for excellence 1992.

Eildon Holiday Cottages
Dingleton Mains, Melrose,
Scotland TD6 9HS
Tel/Fax:01896 823258
Web:www.eildon.co.uk
Email: info@eildon.co.uk



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Cruising? - Yes Please!

By Sue Dickins

I felt I must write to tell our readers about my recent experience on a Mediterranean cruise. Last year my mother, who is 75 announced `lets go on a cruise`. For some mad reason I agreed and allowed her to arrange things. We would be a party of 5. My mother and I both full time wheelchair users, my husband, our 25 year old daughter and our 9 year old son. We were told we would need 2 carers to accompany 2 wheelchair users, whether you needed them or not, so my husband would be mine and my daughter there for my mother.

First of all she tried P&O. They were unable to accommodate us as they were unable to put our son in the same room as a disabled cabin! Maybe disabled people are not allowed to have children. Well we are not allowed to have sex are we? But that is another story. She then tried Royal Caribbean who were running a cruise just right for us in August, when the children were off school. We were able to book 2 disabled cabins, or staterooms as they call them, next to each other, and ours would have a pull down bed for the child.



The year flew past really quickly and before we knew it we were ready to get on our way. Both my mother and I regretting our hasty decision and wondering what we were letting ourselves in for. We were sailing from Southampton, as I had no intention to fly. This was just as well with all the luggage we took! We were told we could board at 1pm for a 5pm sailing. Normal time was 3pm, but we were given early boarding. We got there around 11am and were allowed to board straight away. First hurdle, the gangway, which we were both dreading. My God, it did look steep. I had decided to purchase a new, more powerful scooter before we went, to use on holiday. I was so glad I did as it whizzed up the gangway with little difficulty. There were also helpers at hand to steady me should I need it over the ramps. My mother, in a manual wheelchair, managed with the help of the crew and my husband. We were on. The ship, `The Legend of the Seas` was magnificent. The cabins were roomy and practical though not plush. Plenty of room for my scooter, and the bug test, the bathroom, was perfect. A big wheel-in shower with a sturdy seat. Grab rails situated around the bathroom, just the job. We had a nice Ocean View room.

It was easy to get around the ship on my `Legend X8` quite a large one. There were lifts to all 11 floors. The restaurant and cafes were also spacious. The food was wonderful. 24hour room service meant you could order Pizza and chips at 3pm if you desired, though food was served in the bars until 2am anyway. I was endless.

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The service was second to none, the crew amazing and could not do enough for you. They left chocolate on your pillow every night and left a towel shaped as a different animal every night.

Clubs for the kids were open from 9am to 1am. They could go as little or as much as they wanted. Plenty to do and well supervised. My son was never bored.

The swimming pool had a hoist, though I didn't put it to use. We had 8 stops, including Portugal, Spain, Gibraltar, France, Italy and Corsica. Some stops needed tenders as they couldn't dock the ship. My mother and I opted to stay on board at these times but there was help at hand to lift you and wheelchair onto the tender and many wheelchair passengers took advantage of this. To be honest, it was so pleasant to stay on the ship, we were quite happy to do so, it was also a lot quieter, with everyone getting off!

With the stops we did visit we found that other countries are far behind England and certainly not disabled friendly. Drop kerbs were few and far between. Nearly all shops had steps to enter, so we were not so impressed with the access out and about.

The most enjoyable part was the sailing for me, even though we caught the 'roar of the lion' one night, and I began to wonder if we would get home in one piece. Also the return crossing over the Bay of Biscay was not so great as the ship swayed so much you felt like you were in a hammock. Trying to get dressed that morning when I had to stand a little to deal with my clothes was an interesting experience I can tell you! All that was forgotten as we sadly returned all too quickly and disembarked from the ship that we had called home. My son didn't stop crying all the way out of Southampton.

Just to let people know, if you are thinking of taking your scooter on the ship, of course you will need an adapter to charge your scooter. Also, do not let your charge go down too far before you decide to charge it as the power is much reduced to that at home. I let mine run down a couple of days before charging and I didn't manage to fully charge it again until I



got home even though it was on charge all night every night. Don't get me wrong, I did manage to get enough charge to keep it running but I was concerned at first. I did ask if there was more power anywhere else on the ship but was told no.

I would highly recommend this cruiseline even though it was our first time and we have not tried any other. We know it works for us and we really did have the holiday of a lifetime, not to be missed and well worth the money.

Sue Dickins

Taken from "Pinpoint" The Magazine of Disability West Midlands Autumn 2005