

Jon's story (interviewed by Karen Carr)

Karen: You've had quite an amazing weekend, haven't you? Could you tell us a bit about what's been happening?

Jon: On Tuesday evening I went out with my friend, and he kindly offered to buy me a drink, but when I tried to say what I'd like, the words wouldn't come out – all that came out was gibberish. I thought, this is a bit weird, what's going on here? But I brushed it off and thought it would pass. We went and sat down and began a conversation but my words wouldn't come out at all and every time I tried to say something, gibberish came out. The next thing I knew, I had intense pins and needles go all the way down my left arm, and within seconds it was going down my right arm. Immediately I thought about the adverts that tell you what to do if you're having a stroke and I thought, I'm having a stroke. In garbled English I tried to say to my friend Martin, 'Call an ambulance'. Fortunately he managed to decipher! He was brilliant – he called an ambulance straight away and also Amanda (*Jon's wife*). It seemed within minutes an ambulance had arrived and the next thing I knew, I was being rushed to A & E at Bedford Hospital. At this stage I had intense pain in the left side of my brain and the vision in my right eye was completely obscured. I was in a lot of pain and didn't know where I was or what was going on, but was soon on a hospital bed. The doctors were injecting me with things and I was unaware of what was going on or what I was doing.

Karen: (*To Amanda*) So what was it like for you at that point?

Amanda: Well initially Jon was able to tell me that he had a really bad headache and thought he was having a stroke, but as we went through the process behind the doors of A & E, things got drastically worse. He lost awareness of where he was entirely, wasn't able to follow any instructions, wasn't able to make eye contact, wasn't able to squeeze my hand. His reflexes in both arms were tested and there was nothing; nothing on the inside of his ankle. On the bottom of his foot there was a reflex and that was it. He was trying to escape, then calming down and then the same again. All his SATS were fine but his blood pressure was low. Jon knew he was having a stroke; one of the staff knew what was happening but the other staff seemed to be delaying everything. I was called into a room and told that Jon may have had a massive bleed on the brain and that I needed to be prepared for the fact that he would be sedated and sent to Addenbrookes, if he became unconscious. If he didn't become unconscious – what we were hoping for – it would be a small bleed, he would be scanned in the morning and sent to Addenbrookes. That's what I was left with when Simon arrived.

Karen: So Simon arrived and...

Amanda: ...we continued to pray – so there's me, Martin, Simon and Tabs all praying in the support unit in A & E and Jon's praying for himself as well, and the doctors are just standing back. All they'd given him was saline and they couldn't do anything for him so were waiting to see what the symptoms turned into. Within a couple of hours Jon started to squeeze my hand and make eye

contact. The symptoms had started to disappear and the doctors told us, whatever you're doing, carry on doing it. You're doing it and we're not, we aren't giving him any medication and we don't know why he's getting better.

Karen: Wow...(to Jon) what was happening with you at that point?

Jon: I didn't know what was going on really! I was thinking, I shouldn't be recovering from this but I am. I was so tired – I remember someone telling me it was quarter to twelve and by that time I was shattered from all the trying to get up and escape, and everything else. I fell asleep and the others were continuing to watch over me and pray. The next thing I knew I came to and saw John Strange by my bed and thought, 'Thank you God!' I was so relieved – God knew what I needed, just having John there praying for me. Slowly but surely, about 4 am, my speech started to return; then later on the intense pain in my head started to subside and I could start moving my limbs again. By 6 am I was completely well.

Karen: Oh yes!! What were the doctors saying?

Jon: They were a bit stunned really, they were completely baffled because first of all they said someone my age with my level of health shouldn't be having a stroke, and secondly if I had had a stroke, there would be no way I could recover without any permanent damage, either loss of use of a limb or a speech impediment or something. I had a CT scan the next day and it was clear.

Karen: Wow – God is totally hotting things up, this is incredible!