

# Frances's Story...

## Living Life with AF

12:30 pm on the 12th of September 2007 is not a date I will forget. Having had a thumping chest and butterfly feelings for 13 hours I decided to ring my GP for advice. After catching it all on an ECG and physical examination I was dispatched to hospital where I went back into regular sinus rhythm before being seen. Various tests later and I was diagnosed with Paroxysmal Atrial Fibrillation and sent home.

Six weeks later I again went into A Fib and as it had been happening all night my GP admitted me onto the hospital's Medical Assessment Unit and luckily the hospital saw me. I was given flecainide intravenously as I had been in A Fib so long and within minutes I was in normal sinus rhythm. Since then I have been on the tablet form of flecainide and low dosage aspirin and thankfully have not been in A fib (to my knowledge) again. I do get odd ectopic beats a few times a day and some other "weird" feelings from time to time. It could be that I am still having some kind

of mild AF disturbances and my medication might need a little adjusting but until I see the cardiologist for a follow-up next month I won't know. The hospital said my follow up would be about 2 weeks after an echocardiogram, but it will be 3 months by the time I go. It is only my enquiring to the hospital as to when my appointment was that I got it then. I do feel neglected, but I hasten to add this is not my GPs fault. They have been great. My echo was clear and no reason can be found as to why I have PAF I was only 54 when it started, AF didn't worry me at first and I thought tablets would do the trick.

It was only when I started reading about it and saw the fears, worries and problems other people had (on forums) that I got scared. I also realised for the first time it could be a life-long thing. My GP had already told me that irregular heartbeats/ AF were a common heart condition and my only risk was an increased risk of a stroke but I was in the low risk half of that.

**"I was so pleased to chance upon Arrhythmia Alliance and then the Atrial Fibrillation Association. I have nothing but praise for them."**

It calmed me, I was not



alone and the help, care and information I received was second to none. Now that I realise AF itself is not life threatening if controlled and my only risk is a stroke if left untreated, I am not scared or worried about my condition. I would be lying if I didn't say that the thought of a stroke, even at low risk doesn't exactly fill me with joy but it isn't worth thinking about.

I was so pleased to hear about the launch of AFA and want to give it my fullest support. It is only with organisations like this that we can find common ground and work together to find the best ways forward for patients, the medical profession and everyone concerned.

**"It is so important to remember that there is life after A Fib and a good one at that."**

# Going

# Going

# GONE!

Would you or someone you know like to be the proud owner of this 2007 framed Red Arrows photograph signed by the 2007 team?

AFA is holding a 'secret' bid, e-mail your bid to [info@atrial-fibrillation.org.uk](mailto:info@atrial-fibrillation.org.uk) or post to **AFA, PO Box 1219, Chew Magna, Bristol BS40 8WB**

Minimum bids to start at £15.00.  
**Closing date 31st May 2008.**  
All funds received will go directly to Atrial Fibrillation Association

