

Poi in the Park

A MedicAlert story

By Baxterbear



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Foreword

In my experience as a GP and Psychiatrist to children and adults including those with a life long learning disability I can recommend the Baxterbear stories as they provide reassurance and simple explanations of attending Doctors' surgeries and becoming an inpatient.

The link to medical charities such as MedicAlert is relevant not only to children but to my patients of any age who are of limited intellectual abilities. Many of our patients are epileptic and have other conditions such as diabetes which can be aided by use of the MedicAlert system. Encouragement to do this could be aided by getting to know Baxterbear.

**Dr Maria Kelly MBChB, Dip Psych,
MRCPsych, Consultant Psychiatrist
NHS Lothian.**

Baxterbear's Words

treekled

very happy

confuddled

total lack of
understanding

gasperated

exasperated

Introduction

Hi, I'm Baxterbear,

I have had a rather exciting life so far and certainly haven't wasted it sitting on a shelf! Born in 1928 on the 29th of February, I spent my young days living in the city of Edinburgh. I lived up by the famous Edinburgh Castle with SLB, or Squadron Leader Baxter to everyone else, a very pleasant gentleman who had served in the Royal Flying Corps and now with the Royal Air Force. I used to bumble up through the Castle drawbridge to visit the soldiers there and go in and out of the Officers' Mess. Some days I would even go to morning parade to practise my salute!

Best of all, SLB would often take me flying in his Tiger Moth Biplane. Once we even flew under the Forth Rail Bridge which was very daring! This experience was the start of a life-long love of flying, in all kinds of planes. These days I am a very experienced co-pilot!

I have been a truly fortunate fellow to have lived in many places across the globe. Places like India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) where I was a tea-tasting bear until the outbreak of World War Two.

Whilst helping take photographs for the British Army in my RAF Hurricane reconnaissance plane, I was shot down over the jungles of Burma. That was how I got my injuries, a patched shoulder and torn ear. I don't mind them at all! I was rescued by the Gurkhas. I think that this experience is what makes me different as I know what it is like to go through tough times and stay positive.

After five days hanging in the treetops, I came up with a philosophy which I have held to ever since. "I can only have one thought at a time and it's always positive. I never hold a grudge because that part of my memory doesn't work very well. Before a memory becomes a grudge, it falls out of my head."

After I was rescued, I went to live in Kenya,

a country in Africa, where I went from a tea-tasting bear to a coffee-tasting bear. In Africa I had my ear ripped again, not by a lion or a rogue elephant or even a giraffe, but by a chicken! How embarrassing!

I love flying and since then, I've flown to all sorts of places, seeing the most exciting things. From Venice to St Petersburg, Los Angeles to Washington DC. Kings, queens and presidents, rock and roll, men on the moon, and everything in between ... but nothing beats my love of shortbread!

On my travels I have found time to write about some of my past adventures. Perhaps one day I shall be like my favourite writer, Sir Walter Scott, and have a monument named after me, like the Scott Monument in Edinburgh!

Even though I love to travel and have adventure, I believe that coming home is the most exciting journey you can make. For me, that will always be Scotland!

I am very excited because in 2012 I shall be celebrating my 21st or 84th birthday as

I was born in a leap year. I have so many exciting things planned that I can scarcely wait to share with you!

But I am just tweekled because I know there are plenty of adventures to be shared until then! I decided in 2009, as nine is my favourite number, that I would begin to publish my adventures, which, to date, number over seventy.

Overleaf is one of my stories. This is my second story for MedicAlert and is also about me discovering Poi in the park in London!

Yours sincerely

Baxterbear

Poi in the Park

I was very happy to be off to London for a visit. I had been there before many times over the years, often when flying on to another destination much further away, but I have come to learn that our capital city is more than exciting enough for many an adventure!

My plane bumped down on the runway and I was treakled to see that the sun was shining as I don't much enjoy getting my fur wet and London is often quite rainy. The sunshine made me look forward to my visit even more! The last time I had visited London, I went to see Canary Wharf, the city within the city and learned all about bear markets, which I still can't believe can be a bad thing. This time, I knew things would be different as I was meeting my friend Nick who had promised to show me some rather different people and places! Nick works in the theatre in London, and I was very excited that I could be a performing bear!

I met Nick at the arrivals gate, and we jumped onto the underground as Nick told me it was the quickest and easiest way to get back into the city. Very soon I was confuddled as it was clear that we were not underground at all!

Nick laughed. “Yes, Baxterbear,” he said. “You’re right. The underground sometimes comes above ground too, usually when it gets outside the centre of the city.”

I was treakled by this as I like to see what’s going on around me, and kept my nose pressed to the glass as the outskirts of the city rolled by. Soon, our train did go underground as we made our way toward the centre. I didn’t mind that either as in London there are always so many interesting people to look at. Many appeared to be as well travelled as I am, though most seemed quite surprised to see a bear on the underground. Perhaps this is because other bears go by taxi, I thought.

Nick laughed and said that he'd seen rather enough of taxis for the time being after having to transport a sofa in one as a prop for the play. Apparently, the driver had been less than impressed.

“You have arrived at the perfect moment, Baxterbear,” Nick said as we went through the ticket barrier at a place called Green Park. “On Sundays, something quite magical happens here.”

I was treakled by this prospect but, as we exited the station, was quickly very confuddled. I couldn't see a green park at all. In fact, it seemed that we were on one of the busiest streets in London, with the famous Ritz hotel which made me rather hungry for some afternoon tea.

“Don't worry, Baxterbear,” Nick said. “We shall get there soon enough.”

We walked right around the back of the station and, sure enough, a huge park appeared. How strange that a park this size could be so well hidden, I thought.

I followed Nick as we made our way through the park which was just packed full of people enjoying the afternoon sunshine.

I was rather tempted by some of the nice coloured deck chairs and very surprised when Nick told me that you had to hire them from a man with a clipboard who spent all day chasing children. The children would sit down at one end of the row, then run away before the man could catch them.

It seemed that Nick had something else in mind and we wove our way between the many picnics and games of Frisbee to a small flat section of the park where some people sat on the ground talking.

“Here we are, Baxterbear,” Nick said. “There are some people I’d like you to meet.”

Nick introduced me to some of the group, many of whom were actors and actresses enjoying their day off from rehearsals, but others were very different kinds of

performer as I was soon to discover. Lots of them seemed to be from Australia which made me very treakled as I have many special friends from there. One of them, a tall man with long hair and a broad smile, pulled two brightly coloured balls from his bag. I was confuddled as I noticed that the balls had ribbons and long strings coming from them and asked the tall man what they were.

“It’s hard to explain, Baxterbear, so I suppose I’ll have to show you!”

Just like that, he stood up and began to spin the balls in massive loops, making the coloured ribbons dance circles in the sunlight.

“Those are called poi, Baxterbear,” Nick explained as the tall man spun them in ever more complicated arcs. They are a special kind of performance that comes from the Maori people in New Zealand. You can get many different kinds and even some that go on fire to perform at night!

I was treakled, as the tall man was joined

by many other performers. Some also with poi, and others with sticks and juggling balls and Diablo, which is a string with a big spinning top that the performer throws up as high as the tree tops and deftly catches.

“This is the secret circus, Baxterbear,” Nick said, enjoying my fascination with the performance.

Many other people, it seemed, were fascinated too and a crowd of children and adults had gathered to watch the different performances. There were even some people doing acrobatics, building a human pyramid which looked nothing like the ones I’d seen in Egypt but very impressive nonetheless. The tall man insisted I tried my hand at poi and very kindly shortened them to a more bearlike length. I steeled myself and began whirling my arms just like I’d seen the tall man do. The result was rather different, however, and I soon found myself tangled up in ribbons and string like a very badly wrapped birthday

present! I was somewhat gasperated!

“Don’t worry, Baxterbear,” the tall man said, laughing. “It can take a long time to learn poi. You did very well for your first go!”

I was treakled to hear that, but decided I might enjoy being a spectator more than being tangled up and sat down to enjoy the show.

Then, something else caught my eye. One of the children watching very suddenly seemed to fall down. I ran across to see if I could help.

“He’s fainted!” someone shouted and the performers stopped. As people began to gather round, I picked my way between the feet to where the boy lay.

“Stand back, give him some air,” someone else said. “Is anyone a doctor?”

I wasn’t a doctor, but I knew all about first aid, and something else had caught my eye. It seemed that the boy had a special bracelet which I recognised. I pointed to

it, struggling to make myself heard above the crowd.

“Yes, Baxterbear, you’re right,” Nick said. “He’s wearing a MedicAlert bracelet.”

Fortunately we didn’t have to worry as the paramedics soon arrived with the boy’s worried parents shortly after. I made sure the paramedics knew about the bracelet.

“Thank you, Baxterbear,” they said. “We’ll see that he is looked after.”

One of the paramedics opened the bracelet and read the information inside.

“It seems our friend is allergic to a number of medicines,” he said. “The bracelet is to let us know, so we don’t give him anything that will make him ill.”

Fortunately, they didn’t have to as the boy quickly began to wake up.

“I think you probably just got a bit too hot in the sunshine,” the paramedic said kindly, “but you can come with us and we’ll check you over, just in case.”

The boy nodded, and he and his relieved parents followed the paramedics to the ambulance. Before they went, I noticed that the other paramedic was looking at me.

“Would you by any chance be Baxterbear?” he asked.

I nodded, wondering how he could know my name.

“I know all about you,” he said excitedly. “My children have read your books in school. I know you’ve even written a story before about MedicAlert, to help children not to be scared of hospitals!”

I was treakled! I had indeed written one before, on a day at Edinburgh Zoo that seemed like only yesterday. It appeared the man had also read the other stories I’d written in Edinburgh about Hogmanay and Edinburgh Castle.

As I watched the circus performers return to their tricks, I was treakled that I had been able to recognise the boy’s bracelet.

I knew that I would write down this story so that other people would recognise the MedicAlert bracelets and the important information they contained.

Fancy a chat? Send me an email and say hello at baxterbear@baxterbear.com

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