



Multiple Sclerosis Society

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Dear Friends

Having collections at three Tesco stores in one day seemed a little daunting, but branch members rose to the challenge.

We managed to cover all three stores at Cowley, Bicester and Didcot for several hours, earning the grand sum of £547.03 for branch funds.

Our collections at the Westgate Centre in Oxford have now ended. For the last two years, Land Securities, owner of the Westgate and numerous other shopping centres, has been supporting the MS Society as its chosen charity.

Over that period, our share of the proceeds from collections, sales and other fundraising events has amounted to £1,816.49.

The agreement between the MS Society and Land Securities ended on 31st March, but we did manage to arrange another collection at the Westgate on 1st May during MS Week, raising an

Oxford and district branch Newsletter

May/June 2014

additional £193.09, all of which came to our branch.

At the same time, Brenda Franklin organised a cake break, offering shoppers a cake in return for a donation. This brought in an extra £53.85.

Meanwhile, our thanks to Land Securities and the Westgate staff for their support over the last two years, and to all members who have turned out, often in bad weather, to collect for and publicise MS.

OPEN WEEK

The MS Therapy Centre at Milton Park, near Didcot, is holding an Open Week from 23rd-27th June when visitors will be able to see what it offers.

It provides physiotherapy, osteopathy, massage, reflexology, acupuncture, foot treatment and hyperbaric oxygen therapy. It has also just opened a small gym.

We are trying to forge closer links between our two organisations, so please pop in and see how the centre can help you.

FASTER SERVICE

The branch committee has agreed to pay £140 towards the cost of a new charger for a bladder scanner used by people with MS.

Health staff have access to two scanners – a new one kept at the Oxford Centre for Enablement, and an older version used for home visits, which has no charger. A new charger will help to cut waiting times and reduce the need for people who are less mobile to travel to appointments.

The committee agreed that this would be a good investment and benefit many people with MS by providing them with a faster service. The charger costs £420 – the balance being met by the Banbury and West Oxfordshire branches of the MS Society.

EMAIL ALERT

If any member has received an email from a company called Stemtech, under the heading, My MS Improvement, the MS Society's advice is - ignore it.

The email promotes the use of an 'adult stem cell nutrition product' in combination with the Dr Swank diet, and claims that this approach has allowed the writer, Anthony Langridge, to achieve a dramatic recovery from MS.

But the MS Society says: "There is no evidence that taking these supplements alongside the Swank diet will improve MS symptoms, reduce relapses or slow or stop progression. We believe this is highly likely to be a franchise or pyramid scheme.

"Mr Langridge contacted us two years ago asking us to disseminate information to our members about the company's products, and we declined to do so. He appears to have resorted to sending unsolicited emails, which may breach anti-spam legislation."

JOY SEVERN

We were sorry to hear of the death of Joy Severn, who attended our Open Days with her son, Paul, our former treasurer and vice-chairman, until several years ago. She was 75 and lived at Old Marston.

Paul writes: "She died in the John Radcliffe Hospital having been admitted only 36 hours earlier. Until then, we had cared for her at home. She died from complications arising from secondary breast cancer."

Her funeral took place at St Nicholas Church, Old Marston, followed by burial at Headington cemetery. Our sympathy goes to her family.

GLOBAL DAY

For the second year running, staff at Nielsen, the Headington-based market research company, offered to help raise money for us during their Global Day when they are given a day off work to help good causes.

Last year, the day coincided with one of our Westgate collection days and five Nielsen staff raised £256. Sadly, this year, it proved impossible to arrange a collection day at such short notice, so we had to decline their offer.

However, our fundraisers hope to arrange a fundraising event on 11th June next year, the day we predict the Nielsen Global Day will take place in 2015, should MS be lucky enough to be chosen as one of the charities they will be supporting.

OPEN DAYS

Wheatley Birds of Prey proved to be a very popular attraction at our April Open Day, so much so that we plan to invite them back early next year.

At our May Open Day, Brenda Franklin invited members to join her in making attractive floral designs. These hands-on workshops usually bring an enthusiastic response from members and this one was no exception, with everyone going

home feeling pleased with their efforts.

The guest at our June Open Day will be Janet Morgan, who will entertain us with popular songs, and in July, we will have a visit from Valerie Burton, who will talk to us about life at the Witney blanket mills.

'TREAT ME RIGHT'

The MS Society has launched a new campaign entitled 'Treat Me Right', to improve access to MS treatment.

A spokesman said: "We all agree that people with MS should have fair and equal access to the right treatments at the right time. But we know this isn't happening. The chance to try a treatment often depends on where you live and the information available to you, rather than how much you need it. This has to change. If you'd like to share your experiences of accessing treatments for MS, we'd be keen to hear from you at campaigns@mssociety.org.uk"

Log on to <http://www.mssociety.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/campaigns-blog/2014/03/treat-me-right-fighting-improve-access-ms-treatments> to find out more about the campaign and to sign up to support it today.



John Franklin makes friends with a barn owl, one of the Wheatley Birds of Prey who visited us in April. Below, members collect at the Cake Break stall at the Westgate Centre – left to right, John Franklin, Jo Hawtin, Brenda Franklin and Brian Hawtin



TRIBUTE TO 'GABBY'

Alan Cockbill pays tribute to Gabriel Stocks, who drowned after he fell from his mobility scooter into the River Thames near Osney lock in Oxford:

“I worked with Gabriel for many years at the city and county councils. A few of us kept in regular touch with Gabby and one of the ways was an occasional Friday lunchtime get together called TGIF.

“We met at one of these events just a few weeks before we 'lost' Gabriel. In the last few years, he and his carer would come along and we would all have great fun and laughs together. Several of us attended his funeral and met his family and friends from MS and elsewhere.

“Even in the last year or so, when the disease was seriously incapacitating him physically, his sharp wit and humour were infectious and I marvelled at his capacity to be like that and he inspired me to be so thankful for my good health!

“I live in Abingdon and sometimes cycle to work up Lodge Hill. At the top of the hill, there is a full-size Spitfire aeroplane on a car sales roof, a promotional feature, of course, but for me, every time I cycle up that hill and I'm puffing, panting and struggling, I think of Gabriel and suddenly it's no effort at all.

“I've named the aeroplane Gabriel in his memory, just for me! And the TGIF has been renamed Thank Gabriel It's Friday, another way we can keep his memory alive with us.”

- The inquest into Gabriel's death heard that a passerby, the lock-keeper and regulars from the nearby Punter pub pulled him from the water. Death was due to drowning, with MS as a contributing cause. Coroner Darren Salter said letters left by Gabriel suggested he planned to take his own life, but there was not enough evidence to confirm that intention. He recorded an open verdict. Gabriel, a former member of our branch, had been web manager of the MS Thames Valley regional committee as well as a former chairman, treasurer and founder member of the Henley branch.

'PIP' LEAFLETS

The MS Society has produced a short factsheet about the change from Disability Living Allowance to the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP). You can download a copy from www.mssociety.org.uk, order a printed version by emailing shop@mssociety.org.uk or call **020 8438 0999**.

BRIEFLY

A warm welcome to Paula Mallaghan, who has offered to be our new Support Officer, giving advice to members and carers. Paula will be going on a series of courses later in the year to make sure she is fully trained for the role. Her details are given on the last page of the newsletter.

Suzanne Neal would like to find a good home for a Symmetrikit chair in good condition that belonged to her late mother. She writes: "I've offered it to a number of charities but no takers. It seems such a shame that someone can't benefit from it, as these are expensive bits of kit. We would happily donate it." Call her on **07833 237 300** or email suzannejaneneal@gmail.com

The MS Society is organising a spring raffle, with prizes of £3,000, £1,000 and £500.

Winners of the March 100 Club draw were Linda Douglas (£27.50), June Stephen (£14) and Rita Thorpe (£8.50). There are still vacancies for members and friends to join. Call club organiser Brenda Franklin on **01993 842076** or see her at one of our meetings. You can win a cash prize for yourself and help branch funds at the same time. The next draw will be at our June Open Day.

Tracey and Jeff Samways, with their Yorkshire terrier puppy, Poppy, appeared in a feature in the Oxford Mail highlighting MS Week.

A list of officers elected and re-elected at the annual meeting in March appears on the last page of the newsletter.

A trained counsellor has offered to help branch members. If anyone is interested in such a service, please call our chairman, John Chipperfield, on **01865 374877**.

Let us know if you hear of anyone ill or in hospital. Call **0779 237 7178** for all welfare matters. Send correspondence to John Chipperfield at 3 Lambs Close, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2YD. For the MS nurses, call **01865 234461** or email ms.advice@orh.nhs.uk Call **01865 231869** for information about ongoing and new MS trials. To contribute to the newsletter, call John Chipperfield on **01865 374877**, write to 3 Lambs Close, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2YD or send an email to mjpchipperfield@yahoo.co.uk

All views expressed in this newsletter are individual and not necessarily the view or policy of the charity or its supporters.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday June 6: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Janet Morgan sings popular songs. 10am-4pm.

Mon June 23-Friday June 27: Open Week at MS Therapy Centre, Milton Park, Didcot. All welcome.

Friday July 4: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker: Valerie Burton on working in the Witney blanket industry. 10am-4pm.

Friday August 1: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be announced. 10am-4pm.

Friday September 5: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Animal Experience with Amate Animalia. 10am-4pm.

Friday October 3: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be announced. 10am-4pm.

Friday November 7: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be announced. 10am-4pm.

Friday December 5: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Christmas music from Diane and Ian Woods. 10am-4pm.

Call Alan Cusden on 01865 723420 or Geoff Cowan on 07930 542692 if you wish to help with fundraising or collections.

Call Alan Cusden on 01865 723420 if you wish to go on a boat trip

Don't forget to look at our website at www.mssociety.org.uk/oxford

Oxford and District Branch Officers – 2014-5

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