



**Multiple Sclerosis Society**

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Dear Friends

The MS Society plans to embark on its most ambitious fundraising appeal in its 60-year history.

It aims to raise £100m in 10 years, tapping new sources of income to boost its investment in MS research.

The society has already appointed an appeal board, comprising six highly influential and successful business leaders and philanthropists, all with a personal connection with MS.

They are Sir Vernon Ellis, chairman of the British Council; Sir David Walker, chairman of Barclays Bank; Sir Peter Middleton, chairman of Burford Capital; Nicholas Maclean, founder director of the Eykyn Maclean gallery; Josh Kricherfski, chief operating officer of MediaComUK; and Kate Hely-Hutchinson, founder member of the appeal steering group.

## **Oxford and district branch Newsletter**

**January/February 2015**

The hope is that they will be able to attract new donors and bring closer the day when scientists discover the secrets of MS. The board has already held its first meeting and plans to launch the appeal publicly in 2017.

Meanwhile, the MS Society is working with similar charities in the United States, Canada, Italy and Australia to form the Progressive MS Alliance. The idea is to enable scientists to share knowledge and expertise and avoid duplicating work. It is hoped this will speed up research.

### **100 CLUB WINNERS**

The winners of the 100 Club draw in December were James Spence (£28), Dorothy Warner (£18) and Michael Warner (£9).

There are plenty of vacancies to join the club and win a prize for yourself and help the branch at the same time. Call organiser Brenda Franklin on **01993 842076** or see her at one of our meetings.

## **END OF AN ERA**

The Venturer, the popular narrowboat, on which our members have enjoyed outings in recent years, is being withdrawn from service.

The specially-adapted vessel has been used by numerous groups, many supporting the elderly and disabled, for days out on the Oxford Canal and River Thames around Oxford since being launched by Prince Charles in 1988. Now, after 26 years, the Oxfordshire Narrowboat Charitable Trust says it can no longer afford to run her.

The boat, built by apprentices on a youth training scheme at Birkenhead, was initially owned by BBC Radio Oxford. The trust took over about 20 years ago.

Trust spokesman Mike Stanley said: "When we took over, it was failing – it was losing money hand over fist. Because we are a charity, we can't use it as a money-making scheme and it's an expensive thing to run. It's been heavily subsidised over the last few years.

"It's sad but we have had to let it go. There are a number of reasons which all added up – things have got harder financially and over the years, it became really hard work."

The trust had hoped someone would come forward to help continue the service, but there have been no offers. The boat is now likely to be sold and the money given to the charities and other groups that have supported it in the past.

Many of our trips were financed by generous grants from BMW, a legacy from the days when Jeff Samways, our former chairman and fundraiser, worked for the company. Pictures of two of our 'voyages' appear later in the newsletter.

## **SUE LEAVES**

Sue Hannaford, our main regional contact in the MS Society, is leaving after nine years.

The MS Society is reorganising its structure and streamlining its workforce and Sue has decided to opt for voluntary redundancy rather than apply for the new Local Network Officer role.

She writes: "It's been a fantastic nine years. What has made the job most enjoyable has been working alongside our passionate and committed volunteers. Long may they continue."

Our thanks to Sue for the support she has given us. We wish her well for the future.



## **FLORAL DESIGNS**

Members show off the floral designs they created at a craft workshop led by Brenda Franklin at our November Open Day. Left, Jill Goodall with her arrangement.

## **CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Our catering staff pulled out all the stops to make it a memorable Christmas party at our December Open Day. The day started with an hour-long entertaining sing-a-long with our favourite duo, Ian and Diane Woods. Members enjoyed not only the organ music and singing – led by our secretary, Jo Hawtin, there was wheelchair dancing too!

Afterwards, we all made our way into the main hall for a sumptuous three-course Christmas meal, prepared and served by Sylvie Lambertstock, Elaine Smith and Jo Hawtin. There was also carol singing and a raffle to add to the festive spirit. Our thanks to Sylvie, Elaine and Jo for making it such a special occasion, much enjoyed by all who came.

As usual, there was no Open Day in January. We begin our 2015 programme on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> February with a visit from Dr Malcolm Graham, the well-known Oxford historian, who will talk about what happened in Oxford during the First World War.

A talk on this subject was requested by members and has added significance at this time, of course, because it is 100 years since the war started.

The Open Day on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March will include our annual meeting, your chance to elect the members you want to serve as your officers for the next year. A form is included with this newsletter for you to nominate and second anyone for any of the committee posts. If you nominate someone, please make sure they are willing to stand.

After the annual meeting, Claire Brokenshire, healthwise instructor at Abingdon leisure centre, will give a brief talk on how to exercise and keep fit with MS. There will be no Open Day in April as the first Friday of the month is Good Friday.

## **FESTIVE SUCCESS**

The Friends of the Oxford Centre for Enablement, which some branch members attend, had two very successful Christmas events.

A Christmas party at the centre, on the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre site at Headington, was well attended. It included a quiz, tombola, raffle, carol singing with a band and a visit from Father Christmas. The following week, the band turned out at the Westgate Centre to play more carols and volunteers collected £258.49 from shoppers and other wellwishers.



Members and supporters of the branch have enjoyed numerous outings over the years aboard The Venturer, the popular narrowboat – many paid for by generous grants from BMW – but as reported elsewhere in the newsletter, they have now come to an end. The picture above dates from 2012 as the party prepared to board at the Jericho wharf. The one below was taken during our cruise along the Oxford Canal and River Thames in 2011.



## **BRIEFLY**

The MS Society has announced funding for 15 new research projects from a total of 60 applications it received. They cover a range of topics, including cause, cure, symptom relief and MS services, amounting to £1,450,696. Latest figures show that since 1956, the MS Society has spent almost £150m (at today's prices) on research.

The MS Society was unsuccessful in its bid to be allowed to collect donations outside Tesco stores in the early part of 2015. We hope to have better luck when the second raft of collections later in the year is allocated to charities.

Your membership subscription to the MS Society was due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Our thanks to those members who have renewed promptly. If you have not yet done so, please do so immediately to make sure you receive all the society literature, plus our newsletter. It costs just £5 a year but, of course, you can always add an extra donation if you wish.

Simon Laurens, a 2008 Paralympic gold and silver medal winner, and friends climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in the summer and raised £40,000 for the MS Society. Another group will be

attempting the feat in October and hopes to raise a similar sum.

Our branch has received a cheque for £419.50 from donations at the funeral of Douglas Bradley who, as we recalled in the last newsletter, was always the smartest man in his jacket and tie at our Open Days. Our thanks to his widow Hilary and their family for their generous support to the branch.

The MS Society received more than 200 nominations for its annual awards. The Volunteer of the Year was Ursula Moss, from the Allerdale branch in Cumbria.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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 February 6:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker: Malcolm Graham, Oxford in the First World War. 10am-4pm.

**Friday March 6:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Annual meeting. Speaker: Claire Brokenshire, healthwise instructor on keeping fit with MS. 10am-4pm.

No Open Day in April (Good Friday)

**Friday May 1:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be confirmed. 10am-4pm.

**Friday June 5:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Brenda Franklin leads a craft workshop. 10am-4pm.

**Friday July 3:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Wheatley Birds of Prey return. 10am-4pm.

**Friday August 7:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be confirmed. 10am-4pm.

**Friday, September 4:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker: Malcolm Nelson, My life as a customs officer (Part 2). 10am-4pm.

**Friday October 2:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker: John Winn on his hobby of steamboats. 10am-4pm.

**Friday November 6:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Brenda Franklin leads a Christmas craft workshop. 10am-4pm.

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

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

**Don't forget to look at our website at [www.mssociety.org.uk/oxford](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/oxford)**

**The Annual General Meeting of the Oxford & District Branch of the MS Society will be held on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 10.30am at Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon.**

Only those who have paid their annual subscription by the beginning of the AGM can vote and stand for office. Members are invited to put names forward for any of the following roles:

- Chairman
- Vice-chairman
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Support Officer
- Fundraising Officers
- Open Day Coordinator
- Transport Officer
- Newsletter Editor
- Membership Secretary
- Information Officer

Nominations should be seconded and must reach our secretary, Jo Hawtin, at 11a Vicarage Road, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2EL by 11<sup>th</sup> February. If you are unable to attend the AGM, you may nominate a branch member to be your proxy.

Committee Nomination Form

Name of nominee.....

Telephone number of nominee.....

Position on committee.....

Proposed by.....Signed.....

Seconded by.....Signed.....



## **Oxford and District Branch Officers – 2014-5**

President: Prof Derick Wade

Chairman/Newsletter Editor: John Chipperfield 01865 374877  
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MS Support Officer: Paula Mallaghan 01865 378519  
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Open Day Officer: Vacant

Membership Secretary: Stevan Heads 01235 532184  
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Information Officer:  
Vacant