



Multiple Sclerosis Society

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Dear Friends

Mike Homer has set himself a challenge – to travel by train to as many towns with MS branches as possible, including Oxford.

He is planning 10 one-day trips between Tuesday, 2nd June and Monday, 15th June, leaving his home at Fareham, Hampshire, early in the morning and returning late at night, to raise money for MS research.

He writes: “I will travel by train to the furthest point for that day, then work my way back home stopping at different stations where there are MS groups. I will be stopping for half an hour at each station to meet a representative from each branch.

“Each branch rep will then be asked to sign my route sheet and have a photograph taken with me. My daughter Elizabeth has MS and I want to help her and others as much as I can.”

Oxford and district branch Newsletter

May/June 2015

Mike is 76, was medically retired in 1990 with a balance problem and will be using a power chair to complete what he is calling his MSaTHON. He is due at Oxford station at 20.18 on Thursday, 11th June.

This will be his fifth charity rail run. Previous challenges have raised money for Rowans Hospice at Portsmouth, Military Ministries International, his church and to help a teenage boy travel to America for treatment to a bowel condition.

If anyone wishes to support Mike with a donation, please give it to our chairman, John Chipperfield, and he will hand it to him at Oxford station, or donate at www.justgiving.com/MSaTHON

100 CLUB

There are still plenty of vacancies in our 100 Club. Draws take place four times a year - your chance to win a cash prize and help the branch at the same time. See Brenda Franklin at our meetings and sign up. The next draw is at our June Open Day.

OPEN DAYS

Richard Westcott, who visited us for our May Open Day, delighted us with his talk entitled Confessions of a Pantomime Dame.

He spent many years appearing in stage shows throughout the country (though never in Oxford) and now he has retired, he gives talks revealing some of the secrets behind the scenes.

He arrived as an ordinary man from the Midlands dressed in ordinary clothes. But soon he transformed himself into the lovable dame we see on the panto stage every year.

He started applying an ample layer of makeup to his face, then it was time for a striptease. Off came his shirt and on went a generously proportioned bra. Then off came the trousers to reveal an outrageous pair of coloured bloomers.

He then proceeded to put on his wardrobe of extravagant dresses, some of which you can see in the pictures in this newsletter. It was, as one member put it, a “great hoot”.

It was also a special day for our secretary and treasurer, Jo and Brian Hawtin, who were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. We all shared a

piece of their anniversary cake and everyone signed a card to wish them well.

Some questioned why they had decided to spend their golden wedding day at our Open Day. It just shows their devotion to us!

Brenda Franklin held a Cake Break during the day, offering cakes in exchange for a donation to the branch.

Brenda will be leading a floral workshop at our June Open Day and in July, we will welcome back Wheatley Birds of Prey, who proved popular when they visited us in April last year.

GARDEN PARTY

The Northcourt Centre at Abingdon, where we have our monthly Open Days, is holding a garden party on the afternoon of Sunday, 19th July to raise money to improve the forecourt and redecorate rooms.

Muriel and Dixon Halliday have offered to open their garden which backs on to the centre, and cream teas will be served in the hall.

All groups which use the centre are being encouraged to hold a fundraising activity, which the branch committee will consider in due course. Please put the date in your diary and bring along your friends and family.



**Members
enjoy the
panto dame –
alias Richard
Westcott – at
our May Open
Day**

FAIRTRADE CAFE

Pupils, staff and parents at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School at Kidlington have given a generous donation to our branch.

Our chairman, John Chipperfield, visited the school to receive the money at morning assembly.

We can do no better than reproduce the speech which was prepared and read by the School Council representatives in front of the whole school, with John present:

“On the 27th February, our School and Eco Council, with the help of pupils and their parents, as well as the staff, ran a Fairtrade Café raising £104.10 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. The whole school helped make the cakes and biscuits, even the young ones! We hope this money will help the scientists find a cure which will impact on people’s lives and give them a happy future. We would like to present the money to you. Thank You!”

In reply, John thanked the pupils, staff and parents for their support and said that every penny they had given would go to help people with MS.

Our branch was suggested by pupil Jessica Mallaghan, daughter of our support officer Paula Mallaghan.

FIRE HERO

Jane Salway, who has MS, was pushed to safety in her wheelchair during a fire at her home in Manor Road, Bladon.

Her son, Peter, was asleep upstairs when the blaze started at about 5pm on Easter Sunday. Woken by his father, Paul, he dashed downstairs to get her out of the house.

Mrs Salway said afterwards: “My son is a true hero – he saved my life. I thought he was joking, but he rushed me straight out. He moved my wheelchair before I had a chance to think.”

Peter said: “Dad banged on the door when I was asleep. I opened the door and there was smoke on the first floor. So I rushed downstairs to grab my mum, then all three of us (Peter, Paul and his sister) ran out – then the house went up in flames.”

About 25 firefighters put out the blaze, which caused severe damage to the house and the family’s belongings.

SAVE THOSE STAMPS!

Don’t forget to keep collecting those used postage stamps – they’re worth money to our branch. Save them with at least an eighth of an inch of envelope around them, and give them to John Franklin at our meetings.



More pictures of the panto dame – alias Richard Westcott – at our May Open Day

BRIEFLY

Please note that our transport officer, Liz Smith, has moved to Farmoor and her new telephone number is **01865 863764**. Her email address remains the same - smithlizt@gmail.com

Now that the election is over, the MS Society will step up pressure on MPs and the Government to “keep MS on the agenda” and “make sure the voices of those with MS are heard”.

A new battery-powered wheelchair is being offered for sale at £1,499. It is an Invacare Action 4NG Esprit model, with a warranty until October 1915. If anyone is interested, please call Chris Dorey on **01865 766979** or **07880 500 257**.

The annual barbecue will be held at the Oxford Centre for Enablement on Saturday, 11th July from noon to 3pm. Tickets cost £5 (£2.50 for children 13 and under and free for those five and under) and are available from the centre. All the money raised will go to help patients at the centre. The centre, which many of our members attend, is on the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre site at Headington.

The MS Society is organising a spring raffle, with prizes of £4,000, £1,000 and £500. Tickets have been sent to members to sell, and counterfoils with the

money should be returned by 3rd July.

Since 1956, the MS Society and its members have invested £93 million in research - £153m in today's money.

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

If you change your email address or install email in your home, please make sure you let Stevan Heads, our membership secretary, know. The more newsletters we send by email, the more we save in printing, stationery and postage costs. And you see the pictures in colour, not black and white. Call Stevan on **01235 532184** or email sheads@icloud.com

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

Thursday June 11: Mike Homer at Oxford station on train MSaTHON. 8.18pm (Platform 1).

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

Saturday July 11: Barbecue at Oxford Centre for Enablement, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre site, Headington. Noon-3pm (booking essential)

Sunday July 19: Garden party at Northcourt Centre, Abingdon.

Friday August 7: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Wantage Male Voice Choir entertains. 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

Oxford and District Branch Officers – 2015-6

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