



## Multiple Sclerosis Society

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Dear Friends

Our branch committee is always looking at ways to save money, to make sure our limited resources are spent to the full benefit of members.

With that in mind, we are proposing to make two significant economies, and would like members to comment on them.

For some years, we have paid an annual subscription to enable people with MS to enjoy the facilities at the Oxsrads sports and recreation centre in Marsh Lane, Marston. We have never been able to gauge how many members, if any, have taken advantage of this offer because Oxsrads does not keep records. We have decided not to renew the subscription, but let us know if this causes hardship.

Our other proposal is to produce the newsletter quarterly instead of every two months, reducing

## Oxford and district branch Newsletter

November/December 2015

the number of issues per year from six to four. Over the years, we have managed to reduce the number of newsletters we post from about 150 to 80, as more and more members have agreed to receive their copies by email.

But we now feel we are unlikely to reduce that figure further. The cost of printing, stationery and postage for sending an eight-sheet newsletter to 80 members now runs at between £80 and £90 per issue.

By cutting out two issues a year, we could reduce the annual newsletter bill by a third (or nearly £200). Send your views on both proposals to our chairman, John Chipperfield, at 3 Lambs Close, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2YD or email [mjpchipperfield@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mjpchipperfield@yahoo.co.uk)

### **100 CLUB WINNERS**

The winners in the latest 100 Club draw were Rita Thorpe (£23), Patricia Michael (£11) and Margaret Scully (£5).

## **QUIZ EVENING**

The MinnowS – or was it the MaestroS? – were in action again at a quiz night at the Northcourt Centre in Abingdon, where we hold our Open Days.

A year ago, the branch entered a team called the MinnowS in a quiz to raise money for the upkeep and improvement of the centre. It was so successful that the centre committee decided to hold another.

Whereas last year our branch had just enough people to make up a six-strong team, this year we had an abundance of numbers.

Our team comprised Jo Hawtin, Dorothy and Michael Warner, Alan Cusden, June Stephen, and June's brother and carer. That left Brian Hawtin and John Chipperfield spare – so they joined three people spare from other groups to make up a team.

Teams were also asked to contribute to a bottle stall and a bring-and-share supper.

The centre committee's policy is to organise events in which all groups which use the centre can take part and contribute to its fundraising efforts. As many of you will recall, a garden party was arranged during the summer

with a similar purpose.

The latest quiz brought in a profit of £667, which delighted the centre committee.

For the record, our two teams of brain-boxes didn't win, but didn't get the wooden spoon either – both ended somewhere in the middle. Well done to them all!

## **FAMILY SKYDIVE**

The daughter and grandsons of branch member Doug Bradley, who died last year, took part in a parachute jump to raise money for MS.

Tracy Bradley and sons Joe and George Solaja, who all live at Didcot, completed their skydive near Swindon and raised £1,174.25, easily beating their target. They funded the skydive themselves so all the donations from friends, family and colleagues went to the MS national fund.

Tracy said: "Joe, George and I wanted to raise money for MS in grandad's name. It was a first for all three of us, but we knew grandad would have approved."

Doug regularly attended our Open Days and was regarded as the branch's best-dressed man, always immaculately turned out in tie and jacket.



Tracy Bradley and her sons, Joe, left, and George Solaja, from Didcot, who took part in a parachute jump in memory of their father and grandfather, branch member Doug Bradley, who died last year. Below, members of Wantage Male Voice Choir turn pirates during their concert at our August Open Day.



## **OPEN DAYS**

John Winn, a strong supporter of our branch, was our guest speaker at our October Open Day, telling us about his fascinating hobby of steamboats.

He illustrated his talk with a slide show and impressed us all by describing a highly technical subject in layman's terms.

John, who lives in Abingdon, provided us with the wheelchair we keep at the Northcourt Centre for emergency use, and was instrumental in our receiving a cheque for £250 from the Bear Club of Abingdon earlier in the year.

Brenda Franklin led one of her popular craft workshops at our November Open Day, with a Christmas theme, while in December, we will welcome back that popular duo, Diane and Ian Woods, with their music and humour to lead us into the festive season.

Talking of the December Open Day, our catering supremo, Sylvie Lambertstock, and her team will be providing a special Christmas meal, and it would be helpful to have some idea of numbers.

If you are likely to come along and have not given us your name, please call our secretary,

Jo Hawtin, on **01865 373907** or email [jo.hawtin@ntlworld.com](mailto:jo.hawtin@ntlworld.com)

Don't forget – as usual, there will be no Open Day in January. Our first Open Day of 2016 will be on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> February when we will have as our guests Sue and Andrew Moss, two Kidlington pensioners who will be describing an epic cycle ride – their own Tour de France!

We were expecting to welcome Bridget Britton from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, but she has asked us to put back her talk until July. Details for other Open Days in the first half of 2016 are given later in the newsletter.

## **NEW MS OFFICER**

A warm welcome to Karin Gray, who has been appointed by the MS Society to be the local network officer for our area. We look forward to meeting her in due course. She replaces Sue Hannaford, who left the society earlier in the year.

## **FIGURE REVISED**

The number of people with MS in Oxfordshire has been revised to about 800. The previous figure of 1,950 is thought to have included people who live outside the county but come here to receive treatment.



Members enjoy the Wheatley Birds of Prey, with Jayne and Clive Jones, at our July Open Day. By popular request, the birds will return next year.



## **FLYING THE FLAG**

We are planning to publicise our branch with a display of literature and pictures in the centre of Abingdon.

For some years, the Friends of Abingdon have worked with the Choose Abingdon partnership to run the 'Community Shop' at 18 Bury Street.

With Choose Abingdon winding up, the Friends have taken on full responsibility for the 'shop' and see it as a great opportunity to help promote Abingdon and the wide range of activities within it.

The first step has been to re-name it 'Community FreeSpace' – the word 'shop' caused confusion as it was not allowed to sell anything!

The space is available free of charge to local community groups, charities and not-for-profit organisations for small-scale activities such as raising membership awareness, displays, meetings and small celebrations.

Groups which use the Northcourt Centre have been offered space in December and we will be mounting our display of newsletters, information leaflets and pictures of our activities from Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> to Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>

December. If you are in the town at that time, pop in and see our display, and tell your friends and family too.

## **BRIEFLY**

Our next newsletter will include a form for you to nominate committee members to take office at our annual meeting in March, so start thinking now whom you would like to represent you in 2016-7.

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.**

A Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all members who don't attend our festive Open Day.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Tuesday December 1-Saturday December 5:** MS display at Community FreeSpace, 18 Bury Street, Abingdon.

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

**Wednesday December 9:** Christmas carols with brass band at Templars Square, Cowley (organised by the Friends of the Oxford Centre for Enablement). 11am-3pm.

**Saturday December 12:** Christmas party, Oxford Centre for Enablement, 2.30-5pm. Booking essential.

### **2016**

#### **No Open Day in January**

**Friday February 5:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speakers: Sue and Andrew Moss, our Tour de France cycle ride. 10am-4pm.

**Friday March 4:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Annual meeting. 10am-4pm.

**Friday April 1:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Entertainer: Harpist Rosemary Munro. 10am-4pm.

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

**Friday June 3:** Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker: Former customs officer Malcolm Nelson, with more tales of catching smugglers. 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)**

## **Oxford and District Branch Officers – 2015-6**

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