



Oxford and district branch Newsletter

October-December 2016

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Dear Friends

If you wish to attend our Christmas lunch at our Open Day on Friday, 2nd December, you must apply for a ticket beforehand. Tickets are free, but they will NOT be available on the day.

We are making it a ticket-only event so that our catering staff can plan properly and everyone gets a meal.

This is our most popular Open Day of the year and we don't want to run the risk of anyone being disappointed if we don't have enough food.

Some tickets were issued at our October Open Day and they will also be available at our November Open Day. You can also apply for tickets by calling our secretary, Jo Hawtin, on **01865 373907** or emailing her at jo.hawtin@ntlworld.com

Our entertainers in December are that popular singing duo, Diane and Ian Woods. Everyone is welcome to come to the Open

Day to enjoy the entertainment and to take part in the afternoon therapies, but remember - you won't be able to have lunch unless you book beforehand and have a ticket.

Tickets will be available until Friday, 25th November. No tickets will be issued after this date.

The menu is turkey/chicken breast with all the trimmings, roast potatoes and seasonal vegetables; Christmas pudding and custard or fresh fruit salad and cream; mince pies and coffee. There will be a vegetarian option. Please let Jo know if you have any special dietary requirements.

LAST COLLECTION

Fundraiser Alan Cusden will be drawing up a rota soon for our final collection of the year, at Millets Farm at Frilford Heath on Saturday, 3rd December.

We are recommending that the hardy souls who have volunteered to collect wrap up warm as it could be cold.

OPEN DAYS

We were pleased to welcome singer Daisy Alexandra to our August Open Day. She travelled from her home in Bristol to give us a wonderful hour of entertainment. We much enjoyed the popular songs she sang and her interaction with us all.

In September, we were grateful to Valerie and John Burton for stepping in at the last moment after harpist Rosemary Munro had to drop out because of family commitments.

Valerie and John, who had previously visited us to give a talk on the history of the Witney blanket industry, regaled us with fascinating tales of life in the Wychwood area of West Oxfordshire.

Our October visitors were the ever popular Wheatley Birds of Prey, courtesy of Jayne and Clive Jones, assisted by a young student, Harvey. As usual, members enjoyed seeing these wonderful birds at close quarters.

In November, Brenda Franklin will lead a craft workshop for Christmas – and we will welcome back Bridget Britton and Peter Wilford, from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

They visited us in July and their stall of goodies proved so popular that they offered to return for members to browse and buy their Christmas presents, a

gesture that was gratefully accepted. All the profits from the sales go to the RNLI.

As reported earlier, Diane and Ian Woods will bring our 2016 programme to an end with a Christmas singalong with their organ in December.

SAVE YOUR STAMPS

Please continue to collect your used postage stamps. Brenda Franklin has agreed to take on the job previously done by her husband John.

John raised hundreds of pounds for our funds by selling the stamps until his death in January. With Christmas approaching, this will be a good opportunity to collect the stamps from the many cards you receive.

Stamps can be British or foreign but should have at least an eighth of an inch of envelope around the sides.

Give them to Brenda at our meetings or send them to her at 14 Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxon OX18 3PU.

If you post them, please make sure the postage is correct otherwise Brenda has to pay a penalty charge, cutting into the profit our branch eventually receives.

Our thanks to Brenda for continuing the valuable fundraising work that John did so faithfully over many years.



Singer Daisy Alexandra serenades James Spence at our August Open Day, and members pose with her after her one-hour show





Hats were worn and flags flew as we enjoyed Daisy's one-hour performance, while left, Pam Steptoe gets in the mood

SCOTS' CAKE BREAK

There's no holding back our Open Day volunteer Elaine Smith. Last year, she made a major contribution to our funds by taking part in the 10-kilometre BUPA London Run, raising £435, and organising a Cake Break at her home in North Oxford, which brought in £625.

Elaine was on holiday in Scotland at the time of this year's Cake Break, but that didn't stop her. She organised a Cake Break with friends north of the border and has presented us with a cheque for £300. Thank you, Elaine.

NORTHCOURT CASH

As usual, we did our bit to support a fundraising activity for the Northcourt Centre at Abingdon, where we hold our Open Days.

The committee which runs the centre organised its own open day, where all the groups which use it were asked to have a stall to raise money to pay for improvements.

For the second year running, we took along the Dutch board game, Shula, where competitors try to shoot wooden blocks into four narrow gaps. We gave prizes to the adult and child with the highest scores.

The whole event raised £1,149.50, which will go towards

maintaining the centre in good order.

HORSE RACE FUN

There was plenty of fun, laughter and excitement at a horse race afternoon organised by Tracey and Jeff Samways at Botley.

They weren't real horses, but model ones, which ran along a course laid out on the floor at the Seacourt Road hall, advancing on the throw of two dice, the first indicating the horse and the second the number of spaces to move forward. The first horse to reach the finishing line was the winner – and the punters who had backed it collected their winnings.

Jeff and Tracey provided refreshments during the afternoon which was attended by about 30 people and raised a magnificent £171.30 for our funds.

25th ANNIVERSARY

The MS Helpline – **0800 800 8000** – which provides support and information to people affected by MS, is 25 years old.

The MS Society has thanked its volunteers who have given up their time to man the helpline over the years.

Last year, the 23 volunteers and 13 staff answered 4,300 inquiries and provided 60 hours of cover every week.



Members enjoyed the Wheatley Birds of Prey at our October Open Day



INSPIRING ACTRESS

Oxford actress Ruth Curtis has described how she battles on with life, despite her MS.

The 52-year-old told the Oxford Mail how she did a tandem skydive after being diagnosed in 2009.

Previously, she had appeared in stage productions including Macbeth and Wuthering Heights as well as doing regular work on radio.

Although she has had to cut back on physically demanding stage roles, she still does voiceover and TV work and presents two shows a week on Radio Cherwell, the Oxford hospital broadcasting station.

She attended MS Life, an event organised by the MS Society in London in September, bringing together researchers and people living with MS.

Ruth, who lives in East Oxford, told the paper: "I always say I am living with MS rather than suffering from it. I do not know how I manage sometimes, but I have done things since I was diagnosed that I would never have done before."

BRIEFLY

The winners of the 100 Club draw in September were Lindsay Hammond (£21), Jo Hawtin (£10) and Stephen Michael (£3.50).

For many years, Mrs Shergold has provided a chiropody service to clients and has kindly passed the donations they have given her to us. Her latest contribution to our funds is an amazing £522.30. She is truly one of our unsung heroes (or heroines) and we are grateful to her for her continuing support.

Our thanks to Patricia and Stephen Michael, who have handed us £71.50, the proceeds of plants they have grown and sold.

Our best wishes to June Stephen, who will be setting off on a cruise in December.

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 November 4: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Brenda Franklin leads a Christmas craft workshop, plus Royal National Lifeboat Institution gift stall. 10am-4pm.

Friday December 2: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Musical duo Diane and Ian Woods, plus Christmas lunch. 10am-4pm.

Saturday December 3: Collection at Millet's Farm, Frilford Heath.

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

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