



Multiple Sclerosis Society

Registered Charity Nos 1139257/SC041990
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Dear Friends

Lady Luck really shone on us at the cream tea party organised by the committee which runs the Northcourt Centre at Abingdon, with three of our members winning prizes in the raffle.

Members of the 22 groups who use the centre were competing for 24 prizes – and for us to win three of them, any mathematician will tell you, is a good success rate.

Linda Phipps won third prize – a hamper full of goodies – while Lizzie Nowakowski won a box of Quality Street chocolates and a bottle of Prosecco and Val Clear won a packet of cards made by Abingdon Artists.

Tea and cakes were served during the afternoon, and the weather was so glorious that some people were able to sit outside and enjoy the sunshine.

The event was held to raise money to provide cycle racks and to carry out other improvements

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to the centre, from which all groups will benefit.

STORE COLLECTIONS

Our fundraisers, Alan Cusden and Geoff Cowan, have been busy organising dates for store collections to boost our funds.

The first date will be at Millets Farm, Frilford Heath, near Abingdon, on Saturday, 13th May. This has always been a profitable place for us, with our last collection there, in December, raising £352.62. We hope to do even better in May, since this is a key period for gardeners.

Another collection date for us has been confirmed at Millets Farm for Saturday, 9th December. We will also have a collection at Sainsbury's at Heyford Hill on Saturday, 9th September.

If any member can spare an hour to help, please contact our fundraisers – their numbers and email addresses are listed later in the newsletter – and they will be happy to add you to the rota. The more members we have, the shorter time everyone needs to collect.

OPEN DAYS

The Hazzaz Belly Dancers from Witney proved a great hit when they entertained us at our April Open Day.

Some of us were a little hesitant when belly dancers were suggested, but all turned out well, with the tasteful performance by Ruth, Nadine, Trudi, Gill and Sharon, with Tony on the drum, much enjoyed by everyone.

As you will see from the pictures, some members were brave enough to get on the floor and dance – in fact, the real belly dancers said they had never seen so many people join in!

Brenda Franklin will lead a craft workshop at our May Open Day and former customs officer Malcolm Nelson, one of our most popular speakers, will entertain us at our June Open Day regaling us with more tales of smugglers.

In July, we will welcome Pat Mabbutt who is promising us a musical morning with handbells. We gather, however, that she won't be ringing the bells – you will! Members' musical skills will be put to the test!

PARENT PROJECT

Camilla Holden, a trainee clinical psychologist working with Dr Rachel Tams and Dr Pete Hewitt

at the Oxford Centre for Enablement, writes:

“I would like to invite your members to take part in my doctorate research project exploring the experiences of parents with an adult son or daughter with MS.

“Talking directly to parents, I aim to gain an understanding of what the parental role involves and how it may change over time. I believe this will be the first research project specifically aimed at parents and it is hoped the findings will increase our understanding of how families adjust to living with MS.

“You can take part if you have a son or daughter aged over 18 who has MS and has been diagnosed for at least two years.

“I would meet you for about an hour to talk about your experiences of being a parent. Interviews can take place at the Oxford Centre for Enablement or at the Russell Cairns Unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital. Travel expenses will be reimbursed. If travel is difficult, I may be able to conduct the interview at your home.

“If you are interested in taking part, please contact me at Camilla.holden@hmc.ox.ac.uk or leave a message on **01865 226431.**”



Members join in the belly dancing at our April Open Day, above, and, below, the Hazzaz belly dancers - Ruth, Nadine, Trudi, Gill and Sharon, with Tony on the drum



ALL CHANGE

The MS Society is changing names and titles to give the organisation a more modern look and hopefully attract younger people to key positions.

The word 'branch' is being dropped in favour of 'group', and titles such as chairman, secretary and treasurer will be renamed, to emphasise the fact that they are volunteers.

A full list of the new titles is given later in the newsletter.

The MS Society says there is no longer any need for groups to hold an annual meeting or to hold elections of officers, but they can hold an annual review.

IN THE WATER

People with MS are being offered a new aquatic exercise class.

Physiotherapist Caroline Hyne, who attended our April Open Day to promote the scheme, writes: "Exercise in the water offers unique benefits that cannot be achieved on dry land.

"It can help relieve pain, increase mobility and improve muscle strength and overall fitness.

"You will need to be able to walk independently (with or without an aid) and use long and shallow steps into the pool on your own. There is a rail at the steps.

"The water is 31 or 32 degrees, warmer than standard pool water,

but not quite as hot as a hydrotherapy pool, thus limiting the possible fatigue effect."

The classes will take place at the Ferry Leisure Centre at Diamond Place, Summertown, Oxford. Initial dates are Monday, 8th, 15th and 22nd May from 11-11.40am (cost £30, including introductory dry land assessment), followed by a six-week block, same time, on Monday 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th June and 3rd and 10th July (cost £8 per session, block booking required).

To join the class, email caroline@onphysio.co.uk or call **07702 884 531**.

NO CHANGE

There will be no change in our list of officers for the coming year. At our final annual meeting in March, all were re-elected.

In his annual report, our group coordinator (chairman), John Chipperfield, highlighted the continuing success of our Open Days.

He reported: "Numbers are up and there is a wonderful, friendly atmosphere from start to finish." He thanked everyone – speakers, entertainers, catering staff, therapists and volunteers - who had contributed so much.



Members join in the fun as the Hazzaz Belly Dancers perform another routine at our April Open Day, above.



Left, another picture of dancing at our Christmas Open Day, to the music of Ian and Diane Woods

BRIEFLY

Our best wishes to Sylvie Lambertstock, our catering supremo, who fell and broke her ankle. This didn't stop her attending our April Open Day – she whizzed around the Northcourt Centre in her wheelchair directing operations! We wish her a speedy recovery to full fitness.

Congratulations to our administration volunteer (secretary), Jo Hawtin, who has been awarded the Silver Wolf, the top award available to volunteers in the Scout movement.

Shirley and Nick Ray have two items looking for new homes - a Pride Colt four-wheeled 4mph scooter and a straight Stannah stair lift. Contact them on **01865 714099**.

The National Garden Scheme, in which 4,000 private gardens are opened to the public, has chosen the MS Society as its guest charity this year. Booklets showing gardens open in Oxfordshire will be available at our Open Days or visit www.ngs.org.uk to find out more.

Our group coordinator (chairman), John Chipperfield, caused much amusement when he revealed that he had been invited to speak about MS to the Wootton and Dry Sandford Wednesday Club - on a Monday! The club originally met on

Wednesday evenings but as members got older, they decided a lunchtime meeting would be better. However, the hall was already booked every Wednesday, so they switched to Monday. So why not become the Monday Club? They had so much stationery saying 'Wednesday Club' they decided to keep their original title! The club has chosen to support our group this year – it has already paid us £50 for John's talk and is filling up one of our collection boxes which will be handed to us soon. Our thanks to them for their support – and for giving us a laugh!

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

Saturday May 13: Collection at Millets Farm, Frilford Heath.

Friday June 2: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker: Retired customs officer Malcolm Nelson, with more tales of smugglers. 10am-4pm.

Friday July 7: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Handbells with Pat Mabbutt. 10am-4pm.

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

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

Saturday September 9: Collection at Sainsbury's, Heyford Hill.

Friday October 6: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be announced. 10am-4pm.

Friday November 3: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Brenda Franklin leads a Christmas craft workshop. 10am-4pm.

Friday December 1: Open Day/Christmas celebration, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Diane and Ian Woods entertain. 10am-4pm

Saturday December 9: Collection at Millets 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

Oxford and District Branch Officers – 2017-18

Group coordinator (Chairman)/Newsletter Editor: John Chipperfield
01865 374877

mjpchipperfield@yahoo.co.uk

Administration volunteer (Secretary)/Minutes volunteer: Jo Hawtin
01865 373907

jo.hawtin@ntlworld.com

Finance volunteer (Treasurer): Brian Hawtin 01865 373907

brian.hawtin@ntlworld.com

MS Support Volunteer: Paula Mallaghan 01865 378519

pmallaghan@yahoo.co.uk

Membership Volunteer: Stevan Heads 01235 532184

sheads@icloud.com

Transport Volunteer: Paul Sargent 01869 369397 or 07951 258 702

paul-sargent1961@hotmail.co.uk

Fundraising Volunteers:

Alan Cusden 01865 723420

alancusden@yahoo.co.uk

Geoffrey Cowan 07930 542692

geoffrey.cowan@hotmail.co.uk

Committee volunteer: Dorothy Warner 01235 554448

dowarner@virginmedia.com