



Multiple Sclerosis Society

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Dear Friends

Elaine Smith, one of our valued volunteers at the monthly Open Days, has some very generous friends.

Elaine decided to hold a Cake Break but because it was her first venture, she didn't advertise it widely, inviting just 20 friends to her home in Five Mile Drive, North Oxford, to enjoy a piece of cake in exchange for a donation. The result was amazing – a cheque for £250 for our branch funds.

Our thanks to Elaine and her friends for their support – and to Elaine for the valuable work she does at our Open Days.

FLYING THE FLAG

We've taken a major step to publicise our branch.

Other MS Society branches have published leaflets giving details of their activities, but we've fallen behind in this respect. It was one project on our agenda, but we never quite got round to doing it.

Oxford and district branch Newsletter

July/August 2014

Step forward Patricia and Stephen Michael. They put their heads together and have produced an excellent little brochure – an A4 sheet folded twice – with information about what we do and how to get in touch.

Copies are already on display at the Oxford Centre for Enablement and other outlets. If anyone would like copies to distribute to GP surgeries, health centres etc, please contact our chairman John Chipperfield on **01865 374877** or email mjpchipperfield@yahoo.co.uk

Meanwhile, our thanks to Patricia and Stephen for getting the ball rolling.

DRUG APPROVED

A new drug developed by scientists in Oxford and Cambridge has been sanctioned for use by Nice (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence).

Alemtuzumab (or Lemtrada) is said to be a “real step forward” for those in the early stages of MS.

100 CLUB

The first year of our revamped 100 Club has ended – since last June, £198 has been distributed in prizes and a similar amount given to branch funds.

A form inviting you to renew your subscription or to start taking part is included with this newsletter.

There is plenty of room for new members – draws take place every three months, at the September, December, March and June Open Days – and you have a good chance of winning a cash prize, as well as helping the branch at the same time.

The winners of the last draw of the 100 Club year, in June, were Sheila Reeves (£27.50), Patricia Michael (£14) and Brian Hawtin (£8.50).

Our thanks to Brenda Franklin for running the 100 Club. Details of how to renew or join are included on the form.

OPEN DAYS

Brenda Franklin led a very successful craft workshop at our May Open Day and some of the excellent floral designs made by members can be seen on two pages later in the newsletter.

In June, we were pleased to welcome Janet Morgan, who entertained us with popular songs from the shows, while in July, we had a fascinating talk by Valerie Burton on the history of

the Witney blanket mills and her experience of working there. She was accompanied by her husband John, who also worked in the industry.

Our visitor at our August Open Day will be Pauline Allen, who will lead a craft workshop and in September, there will be an animal experience with Amate Animalia, which rescues mammals and reptiles in peril. All will be revealed at the time!

Although we don't encourage members to go into the kitchen, keen observers will have noted that it has recently undergone reconstruction.

Our thanks to all the volunteers and to the therapists who continue to give great service at our Open Days.

Stevan Heads, our membership secretary, has kindly donated a wheelchair to the branch which we hope to keep at the Northcourt Centre, to be used to evacuate members in the event of an emergency during our Open Days.

We will soon be putting together a programme of speakers and entertainers for our 2015 Open Days. Ideas so far include a magician and a harpist. If you would like to suggest others, call our chairman John Chipperfield on **01865 374877** or email mjpchipperfield@yahoo.co.uk

OPEN WEEK

The MS Therapy Centre at Milton Park, near Didcot, held an Open Week in June to mark its 30th anniversary and show visitors what it can offer to people with MS and other conditions.

It provides physiotherapy, osteopathy, massage, reflexology, acupuncture, foot treatment and hyperbaric oxygen therapy. It has also just opened a small gym.

We are trying to forge closer links between our two organisations. Our committee members were on hand during the Open Week to support the MS Therapy Centre, but also to publicise our branch activities.

If you feel the MS Therapy Centre could help you, call **01235 832023**, email info@omstc.org or write to or call at 37E Innovation Drive, Milton Park, Abingdon OX14 4RT.

IT'S RUBBISH!

De-clutter your home and you could raise vital funds for the MS Society.

Old ink and toner cartridges, mobile phones and electronic gadgets such as MP3 players, sat navs, electronic games consoles and digital cameras, are worth money.

Each item that is successfully recycled could raise up to £30.

Since early 2011, the partnership with The Recycling Factory has raised more than £50,000 for the MS Society. Recycling envelopes are included in every issue of MS Matters, the bi-monthly magazine sent to members. Please use it!

STAGE A PLAY

Raymond Hopkins, of Long Hanborough, writes farcical comedies and has been donating the royalties he receives from groups performing them to the MS Society. Since 1998, he has raised nearly £30,000 for MS research.

He is now looking for amateur dramatic societies to stage his plays, so that he can raise even more money for MS. If anyone knows of a group which is looking for a comedy to perform, his website is www.raymondhopkins.com

'OUTDATED, UNFAIR'

The MS Society is supporting a campaign against rises in prescription charges. A coalition of 30 charities and organisations opposing the "outdated, unfair and arbitrary" system already has a petition with 8,000 signatures.

It claims thousands of people are not taking their proper medication because of the cost. The charge rose by 20p to £8.05 in April and another increase is due next year.



BRIEFLY

Jeff Samways made a fleeting appearance on TV South Today during an item on the spiralling costs of running the health and well-being centres. Jeff was at the Oxford Options centre at Horspath Driftway the day the BBC film crew arrived.

The family of the late Reg Foster, of East Hagbourne, near Didcot, who battled with MS for more than 30 years, donated two bags of new clothes to the branch. About half were snapped up by members at our June Open Day, while the rest was given to the Sobell House hospice charity shop at Kidlington. Our sympathy goes to the family on their loss.

The MS Society has received 60 applications for research funding this year. Decisions on which to support will be made in August and September.

Folk music lovers Kate and Dave Guest have organised their final Folk for MS concert at the Old Mill Hall, Grove. In 25 years, they have raised £45,000 from the annual concert, much of it for the MS Therapy Centre at Milton Park. Kate, who has MS, said: "Dave and I have had a number of health issues and it is just getting a bit much for us."

Hundreds of MS Society supporters will be walking across London on Sunday, September

28 to raise money for MS research. The walk will follow the Thames past many landmarks, including St Paul's Cathedral, the London Eye and the Houses of Parliament. One is 20km, the other 10km. Call **0845 4811577** or visit www.mssociety.org.uk/fundraising for details.

The MS Society has joined forces with SweetTree Home Care Services to launch a travel service designed to support people with MS. Call **020 7624 9944** or visit www.sweettree.co.uk

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.



Members with their floral displays after a craft workshop led by Brenda Franklin at our May Open Day
Pictures: Sylvie Lambertstock



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday August 1: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Craft workshop with Pauline Allen. 10am-4pm.

Friday September 5: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Animal Experience with Amate Animalia. 10am-4pm.

Friday October 3: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be announced. 10am-4pm.

Friday November 7: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Speaker to be announced. 10am-4pm.

Friday December 5: Open Day, Northcourt Centre, Abingdon. Christmas music from Diane and Ian Woods. 10am-4pm.

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

Call Alan Cusden on 01865 723420 if you wish to go on a boat trip

Don't forget to look at our website at www.mssociety.org.uk/oxford

Oxford and District Branch Officers – 2014-5

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