



Oxford & District

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Dear Friends

Inevitably, there are differences of opinion whether we should employ a caterer to provide lunch at our Open Days or continue to insist that members come with their own food and drink.

We will continue to listen to what you say and consider any ideas, but at present, we will continue as we are - please bring your own. We will let you know if we make any changes.

We were delighted to welcome Chrissie Harper and her owls to our June Open Day.

Acorn the tawney owl and Jazz the barn owl came with their owners, Chrissie and Phil, from Stonesfield, near Witney, to entertain us. And what a delight they were.

Chrissie spent more than an hour speaking about their flock and describing the joys and

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challenges of caring for them. Then it was our turn to handle them, if we had the nerve!

As you will see from the pictures later in the newsletter, some members were happy to do so, but the rest of us kept our distance. We needn't have worried – both birds behaved impeccably during their visit.

In July, we were pleased to see local historian Liz Woolley, who delighted us with a talk entitled 'Beer, sausages and marmalade, Oxford food and drink in the 19th century'.

We had a fascinating trip down memory lane recalling how the city kept the population fed and watered in the past.

Everyone was so fascinated with what Liz had to say, we had the longest question and answer session at the end of the talk we could remember.

We are always looking for new speakers and entertainers to appear at our Open Days. If you have any ideas, please let our committee members know.



Andy Simpson, centre, in the cap, who entertained us with his country music at our April Open Day



Angela in mid-flight parachutes to earth

HIGH-FLYING ANGELA

Angela Cusden, a long-standing member, who has sadly died, led an active life for many years, including taking part in a memorable sky-dive – NINE years after being diagnosed with MS.

She was attached to a parachutist in a light aircraft above Weston-on-the-Green airfield, near Bicester, and they floated down to earth, raising £1,000 in sponsorship money, shared by the MS Society and the Otters Swimming Club.

It was a remarkable achievement and, many of us would say, a courageous act in a life which had begun so promisingly at Queen Mary High School for Girls in her home town of Walsall in Staffordshire. She moved to Oxford at the age of 16 to start training as

a nurse at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre. Further training followed at St Mary's Hospital at Paddington in London.

During her spell in Oxford, she had met future husband Alan. An on-off relationship followed, but Angela never forgot him – while in London, she wrote to him, they got back together and that is how it remained.

They married at St Matthew's Church, Walsall, in 1973. Angela completed her nurse training and moved to Oxford to live with Alan.

She qualified as a State Registered Nurse, working at the Nuffield, then as an industrial nurse at Oxford University Press.

Their three children, Matthew, Andrew and Amy, were born – as a family, they enjoyed many camping holidays in Britain and overseas.

LIFE TOGETHER

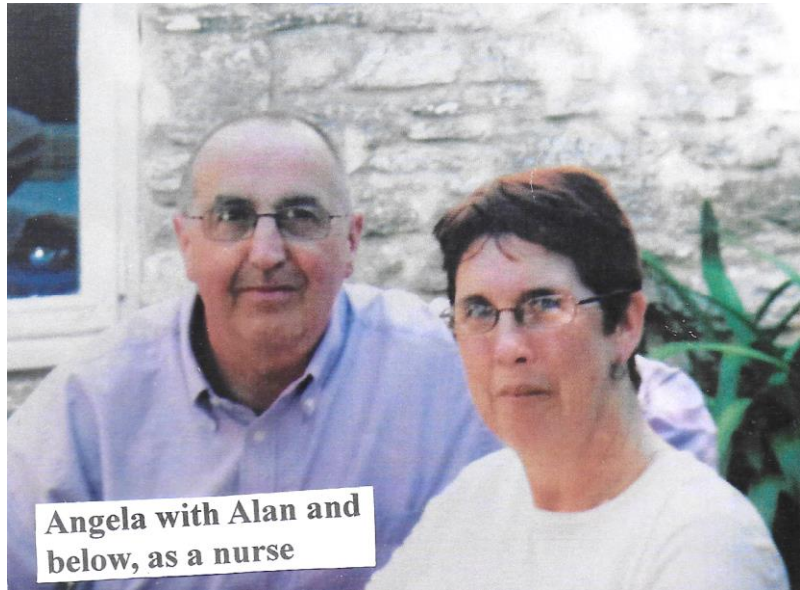
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However, in 1987, Angela was diagnosed with MS, which she battled valiantly against, as many of us will know.

Husband Alan looked after her for many years, but in 2013, she went into the Albany care home at Headington, where she enjoyed days out, a range of activities and regular visits by her family which by now included three grandchildren.

In a resume of her life, written by Angela and read at her funeral, she said: "I like to think that even with MS, I have lived a useful life. I have always been involved with the local MS branch and enjoyed swimming with the Oxford Otters.

"MS left some dark periods in my life, but as with everything else, I do what I can to get over it and I like to think I more or less have done so. The best day of my life? I could not choose between passing my SRN exams, getting married, giving birth to my first child or going to his university graduation. The worst day of my life? When I was told I had MS."



Our MS group was well represented at the service of thanksgiving at South Oxfordshire Crematorium and at the reception at La Fontana at East Hanney. May Angela rest in peace.

Tribute to Angela – turn to next page.

NURSES TOGETHER

Janet Murphy, a fellow student nurse, who lives in Ramsgate, Kent, pays tribute to Angela:

I met Angela in 1971 when we were part of a large cohort of student nurses in St Mary's Hospital at Paddington in London. We became good friends, together with three others, enjoying some fun times as well as supporting each other.

I moved away and after a while we lost contact, until four years ago when, at our nurses' reunion, we were all so sad to discover that Angela had MS and was in the Albany Care Home at Headington (lovingly supported by her husband Alan and their children and grandchildren).

From that time, I began writing letters and cards which Angela enjoyed receiving, according to Alan.

Visits were restricted to family at that time. Sadly, Angela died on 23rd April and her funeral took place on 30th May. May she rest in peace.

A [tribute](#) to Angela was published in the Oxford Mail and The Oxford Times. To see it online, click the link above or type 'angela cusden oxford mail' into your computer.

OPEN DAYS

At our next Open Day on Friday, 4th August, we will welcome back popular retired farmer Don Rouse, who will regale us with the activities of a group called Spajers - the short name for the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Junketing.

It is the organisation which raises money for the elderly at Bampton, near Witney. Its main event of the year is the Great Shirt Race, where competitors run around the streets of Bampton in night shirts, stopping for a quick drink at pubs and other points around the course.

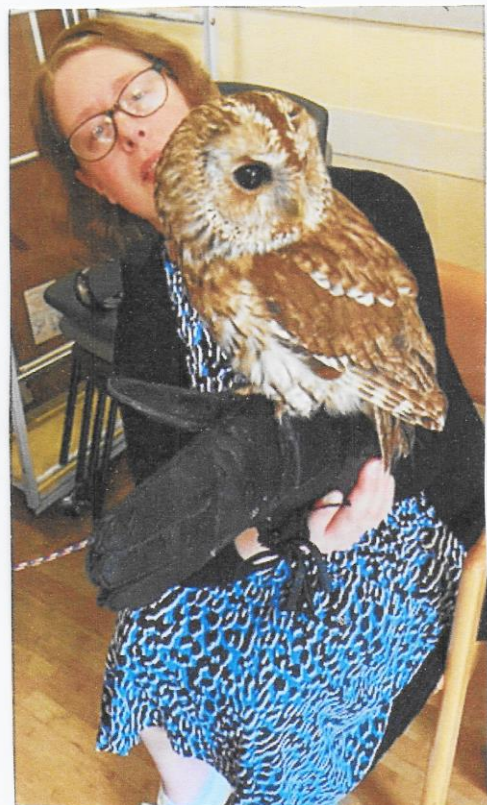
Sadly, it didn't take place this year, but Don will tell us all about its history and hopefully its future, with plenty of humour as usual.

On Friday, 1st September, we welcome back popular singer Cody with his guitar and there will be more music on Friday, 6th October when Jacqui Marie Miles entertains us with classical music and songs from the shows.

All views expressed in this newsletter are individual and are not necessarily the view of policy of the charity or its supporters.



Tawney owl Acorn, above and below right, and barn owl Jazz, below left, proved to be popular visitors at our June Open Day



COLLECTION DAY

As you will see in our diary on the next page, our fundraising volunteer, Alan Cusden, has organised a collection day for our funds outside the Waitrose store in Abbey Close, Abingdon, on Saturday, 9th September.

If you can spare an hour and would like to join the rota of collectors, please call Alan on 01865 723420 or email alancusden@yahoo.co.uk

MS CAMPAIGNS

The MS Society is joining two campaigns – to make the payment of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) less stressful and opposing the closure of many rail ticket offices across England, including those at Oxford and Didcot.

It is keen to know how members are coping with PIP, saying: “We know many people with MS aren’t getting the support they need. We want to hear directly from you about your experience of claiming PIP.”

The online survey which members should have received is open until 31st July. It should take around 20 minutes to complete. If anyone needs help

answering the survey or has any questions, they should contact evidence@mssociety.org.uk

On the closure of rail ticket offices, the MS Society says: “We’re concerned this could be disabling for many people, including people living with MS, making rail travel far less accessible.”

The move has been made because few tickets are now bought at ticket offices – most passengers pay at machines or online. British Rail says staff would be re-employed assisting passengers on station forecourts or platforms.

But Transport for All, a UK-based charity striving to make transport more accessible, is opposing the changes.

The MS Society is supporting the campaign, arguing that for some disabled people, buying tickets at vending machines at stations or booking online is not possible. Other fears are that rail companies would reduce station staff, making it difficult for people with disabilities to access toilets, waiting rooms and lifts.

SUPPORT OFFICER

Remember, we are still looking for a Support Officer to help our members!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All Open Days take place, 10am-4pm, at Northcourt Centre, Abingdon, OX14 1NS.

- Fri. 4th August** **OPEN DAY – Don Rouse.**
SPAJers
(The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Junketing).
- Fri. 1st September** **OPEN DAY – Cody.**
Entertainment from the popular singer and guitarist.
- Sat. 9th September** **FUNDRAISER – Collection at Waitrose, Abingdon**
Please contact Alan if you can help.
- Fri. 6th October** **OPEN DAY – Jacqui Marie Miles.**
Classical music and songs from the shows.
- Fri. 3rd November** **OPEN DAY – John Lowe.**
‘Where are the boys of the village tonight?’
The impact of the First World War on an Oxfordshire village.
- Fri. 1st December** **OPEN DAY – Rebukes Ukelele Band.**
Entertainment to get us in the festive party mood.



Together, we can be there for everyone affected by MS

HELP AT A GLANCE

MS Society helpline – 0808 800 8000 (Freephone)

MS nurse advice line – 01865 234461

ouh.ms@nhs.uk

(The advice line is an answer machine service monitored 9am-5pm, Mon- Fri)

MS specialist nurse – Sue Barnden

01865 737465

ouh.cnsns@nhs.net

Continence (bladder and bowel) nurse – 01865 904303

MS Therapy Centre

37e Milton Trading Park, Abingdon

01235 832023

Carers Oxfordshire – 0845 050 7666

MS resource centre – 0800 783 0518 (Freephone)

MS Trust Library & Information Service – 0800 032 3839

NHS Direct - 111

Medical Emergency - 999

OXFORD AND DISTRICT BRANCH OFFICERS

Group coordinator (Chairman) / Newsletter Editor

John Chipperfield

01865 374877

mjpchipperfield@yahoo.co.uk

Administration volunteer

(Secretary / Minutes)

Jo Hawtin

01865 373907

jo.hawtin@ntlworld.com

Finance volunteer

(Treasurer)

Brian Hawtin

01865 373907

brian.hawtin@ntlworld.com

Transport Volunteer

Karen Bellinger

01235 534159

bellingerkaren@hotmail.com

Fundraising Volunteer

Alan Cusden

01865 723420

alancusden@yahoo.co.uk

Committee Volunteers

Dorothy Warner - 01235 554448

14doth@gmail.com

Sara Nugent – saraholloway2017@yahoo.com