



## Oxford & District

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Dear Friends

Two excellent speakers got our 2024 Open Day programme off to a great start.

In February, after our usual Christmas and New Year break, we welcomed Robert Buckeldee, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, one of the team which represents the King in our county.

He gave us a fascinating insight into the role of the Crown at a local level, from feudal to modern times, and explained its importance to communities today.

In March, Hugh Warwick was our speaker, telling us of his passion for hedgehogs. He didn't bring any live creatures with him - they are in hibernation at this time of year - but, as you will see from the pictures later, a cuddly model version joined us.

## Group Newsletter April-June 2024

The popularity of the subject we hear can usually be judged by the number of questions the speaker is asked afterwards. On this occasion, the question-and-answer session went on for almost 20 minutes! We're obviously a group of animal lovers!

The March Open Day was also memorable in one other way. Shirley and Nick Ray bought five raffle tickets and won prizes with them all - the first time we can remember this happening.

Nick was announcing the prize winners, but we can confirm there was no jiggery-pokery - Alan Cusden sold the tickets and members picked the winning tickets out of the bag! Shirley and Nick went home heavily laden!

There was also an Easter flavour to the day, with many members enjoying hot cross buns and everyone going home with an Easter egg.

At our April Open Day, we welcomed back singer/guitarist Andy Simpson, entertaining us with his country music.



Learning about hedgehogs at our March Open Day with Hugh Warwick and friend (not a live one). More pictures on the next page.

## **OPEN DAYS** (continued)

As you see later, we have almost completed our list of speakers and entertainers for this year's Open Days, so we are now preparing our programme for 2025.

It is always good to plan well in advance, as the most popular individuals and groups are booked up early.

If you have any ideas for the future speakers and entertainers, please tell us. As you know, we all like plenty of variety!

## **PING PONG**

Doctors in the United States have suggested a new way to ease MS symptoms – play table tennis.

Dr Antonio Barbera, 61, of the University of Colorado, who has MS, found it helped him regain motion in his right leg and left arm, as well as walk again.

He has held regular 'ping pong' clinics for those with MS for three years with 'amazing results'.

Some who attended reported improvements in mobility and balance. Anyone for table tennis?





**More pictures of speaker Hugh Warwick with members and our friendly hedgehog**



## **PATRICIA MICHAEL**

We were so sorry to hear of the death of Patricia Michael, one of our loyal members. Our group was well represented at her funeral at St Mary's Church, Iffley, in February.

Her husband, Stephen, and members of her family led tributes to her in a service full of prayers, thanksgiving and music. She and Stephen had been regulars at our monthly Open Days for many years.

Patricia was born in Edinburgh on New Year's Day 1943, grew up in Kelso and lived in Shrewsbury, Southport and Penzance before coming to Oxford to train as a nurse at the Wingfield Hospital in Headington (now the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre).

She then went to University College Hospital in London and it was in the capital that she met future husband Stephen at a 'seedy' party in 1964.

Stephen recalls: 'Neither of us were keen to go, but thankfully I was persuaded by work colleagues and Patricia by her fellow nurses. I almost left early, but Patricia came and spoke to me and we chatted. I drove her home in a tiny 1930 Austin 7. As it was passed curfew, she had to sneak in through casualty and slept fully clothed to avoid matron!



'In our early twenties, life was so much fun and full of possibilities. We were both music lovers but members of rival choral societies. After a few months, I popped the question sitting on a park bench. She said 'yes' but we waited two years for her to complete her nursing qualifications.'

They married at Kelso, honeymooned in Austria, and lived in Cholsey, and then East Hanney. After giving birth to sons David and Patrick, Patricia helped found the village playgroup and Sunday school at Hanney as well as supporting fundraising for a new village hall and swimming pool.

The family moved to Iffley Road, Oxford, in the mid-1970s and 'The Limes' has been home since then.

**(Turn to next page)**



## **PATRICIA'S LEGACY**

**(From previous page)**

Patricia was a nurse at Ormerod School for disabled children at Headington, a nursing volunteer at Sobell House and Helen House hospices, a governor of East Oxford School and an active member of the Church.

Donnington Doorstep, a drop-in centre for young mothers and children, was also a passion of hers.

Stephen writes: "Despite MS being a part of Patricia's life for many years, she always found ways to give back with her time and enthusiasm.

"After almost 60 years together, she is most loved and will be missed greatly."

A collection in Patricia's memory was held for our MS group – we will announce the result in due course.

At the suggestion of a member of Iffley Church, half the proceeds of two choral and instrumental concerts at Queen's College in Oxford will go to MS - £413.50 to national headquarters for MS research and £413.50 to the Oxford and district group.

## **PATCHWORK QUILT**

The attractive patchwork quilt which we featured in our last newsletter was won by our secretary, Jo Hawtin, at our February Open Day.

We decided not to auction it as originally planned because we thought making it the main prize in our monthly raffle would bring in more money. That proved to be right – members bought £78 worth of tickets!

As we reported, the quilt was designed and created in memory of Angela Cusden by one of her long-term friends, Jane Prowse.

Angela, originally from Walsall in the Midlands, and Jane, from Deal in Kent, first met when they started training as nurses at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford in December 1969.

Don't forget, our Open Days are monthly get-togethers for those with MS and their carers. Please spread the word!

We know some may not be keen to associate with others with MS, but we are a very friendly group. After listening to a speaker or entertainer in the morning, therapists are available at no charge and there is plenty of time to socialise and chat over a cuppa. Come and join in the fun!

## **LOOKING AFTER US ALL – IN THE KITCHEN**



We don't often realise what goes on behind the scenes at our Open Days. We drink tea and coffee and eat biscuits and that's thanks to Elaine Smith and Jo Hawtin, who work tirelessly in the kitchen looking after us.

We may no longer be allowed, under MS health and safety rules, to prepare and serve a cooked lunch as we did before Covid, but that doesn't mean we can't provide drinks and pre-prepared snacks.

Elaine and Jo are usually the ones beavering away to make sure we have those little extra treats we can still provide without risking anyone's health.

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

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

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

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| <b>Fri. 3<sup>rd</sup> May</b>       | <b>OPEN DAY – Nicholas Brazil.</b><br>A journey along the Thames.                           |
| <b>Fri. 7<sup>th</sup> June</b>      | <b>OPEN DAY – Ann Sharman.</b><br>History of chocolate.                                     |
| <b>Fri. 7<sup>th</sup> July</b>      | <b>OPEN DAY – Annie Thompson Lynch.</b><br>Unsung heroes.                                   |
| <b>Fri. 2<sup>nd</sup> August</b>    | <b>OPEN DAY – Graham Sutherland.</b><br>Feisty females.                                     |
| <b>Fri. 6<sup>th</sup> September</b> | <b>OPEN DAY – Entertainer Cody.</b><br>Country music with our popular guitarist and singer. |
| <b>Fri. 4<sup>th</sup> October</b>   | <b>OPEN DAY – Yvonne Crane.</b><br>Meet the Guide Dogs.                                     |
| <b>Fri. 1<sup>st</sup> November</b>  | <b>OPEN DAY – Ian Scott-Hunter.</b><br>The role of a Royal Footman.                         |
| <b>Fri. 6<sup>th</sup> December</b>  | <b>OPEN DAY – Christmas.</b><br>Arrangements to be confirmed.                               |

## **2025**

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| <b>Fri. 3<sup>rd</sup> January</b>  | <b>NO OPEN DAY</b>   |
| <b>Fri. 7<sup>th</sup> February</b> | <b>OPEN DAY – Liz Woolley.</b><br>Children and experiences of the Second World War in Oxfordshire. |

**Don't forget to bring your own lunch to our Open Days.**  
If you have ideas for speakers or entertainers, please let us know.

## HELP AT A GLANCE

**MS Society helpline – 0808 800 8000** (Freephone)

**MS nurse advice line – 01865 234461**

[ouh.ms@nhs.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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**

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