

**Reading and
West Berkshire
Branch**

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RACE NIGHT'S GALLOPING SUCCESS

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A race night held at Hungerford Town Football Club has raised a galloping £6,044 for branch funds.

The hugely successful event was organised by Marion Hall, in memory of her husband Basil, who died from MND, aged 57, last September.

About 120 people attended the fun evening which featured a raffle, and an auction as well as horse racing on a big screen. A corporate donation afterwards helped realise the final fantastic result.

Stewart Hofgartner, of Hungerford's Below Stairs, auctioned items such as a week at a villa in Spain, a signed England cricket bat and a microlight flight to bring in £1,800 of the total.

Delighted Marion could not believe how successful the evening had been.

She said afterwards: "We counted it up three times because we didn't believe how much we had raised."

The evening certainly was a fitting tribute to Basil who was a well known carpenter in the town, she said.



Marion with some of the helpers at the Race Night

Marion, a reception supervisor at Vodafone, also had help from three other members of staff, which enabled the event to qualify for a £2,000 donation from the Vodafone UK Foundation.

Kerrie Pearce, whose dad George is living with MND, helped to get auction prizes and Val Smith, who lost her husband Terry to the disease, ran the raffle.

Help and support also came from Hungerford Round Table and Furr jewellers in the town.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

DIARY DATES

What is this fellow up to? See John Austin's letter on page 3



MND Awareness Week **18th—26th**

Drop-in Meeting **27th June**

Summer Afternoon Tea Party **24th August**

MND Awareness Week 18-26 June 2005

Would you like to raise awareness of Motor Neurone Disease and show solidarity with the 5,000 people who live with MND in the UK? Then why not wear a wristband?

National Office has issued a batch of blue and red wristbands to try to spark conversations about their significance and give the wearer a chance to explain a bit more about

MND and the Association. Maybe you know someone who is likely to wear one, who understands what they stand for, and who is able to spread the word to others like the pub landlord or the journalist for the local paper? They are also the height of kids' fashion right now!

To get your wristband, call Val Pearson.

CALENDAR GILS' SIP AND TELL AT RECENT AGM

Two of our Hungerford calendar girls revealed some of the secrets of their fund raising success at the recent branch annual general meeting

Their sip-and- tell reflections on how they raised £4,150 by baring all captivated the audience after the formal business at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Padworth. And it was the perfect finale to a year of achievement by so many branch supporters.

The collection of pencil and pastel sketches by artist Sue Arkell (pictured left with fellow organiser Sue Court) was one of a host of varied activities which helped produce an income of more than £43,000 for the year ended on January 31st.

Chair Margaret Moss highlighted the successful year which included well attended drop-in meetings for people living with MND, their visitors and carers.

It was also a year in which the branch mourned the death of popular Association visitor Monnica Stewart who touched so many lives.

But one of Monnica's many projects – the appointment of a specialist neuro nurse for people with rare and complex conditions – is about to become a reality.

Treasurer Barry Clouting told how the total raised by the branch stood at £34,000 with £11,000 of our contribution to West Berkshire Neurological Alliance still to be gathered.

He said: "I continue to be impressed by everything that people do to support this branch." Barry pointed out that 56 per cent of the branch income had come from fundraising.

Ruth Clark, the Association's volunteer development co-ordinator for the region, said it was fantastic to find out what a successful year the branch had had and great fun to hear about the calendar girls.

She also presented a 2004 OSCARR to the branch for its passionate publicity and bronze (five years) long service awards to Gill Cheetham, Jane Gilbert, Margaret Moss and Beth Thorpe.

Carole Kingston, regional care advisor, also congratulated the committee on behalf of the board of trustees for "doing such a brilliant job".

Thanks to supporters like the calendar girls a lot more people in Reading and West Berks are aware of the devastating effects of Motor Neurone Disease and the branch has been able to maintain its spending on patient care.



Calendar girls tell all . . . Sue Arkell and Sue Court pictured at the branch AGM

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

Our Treasurer reports....

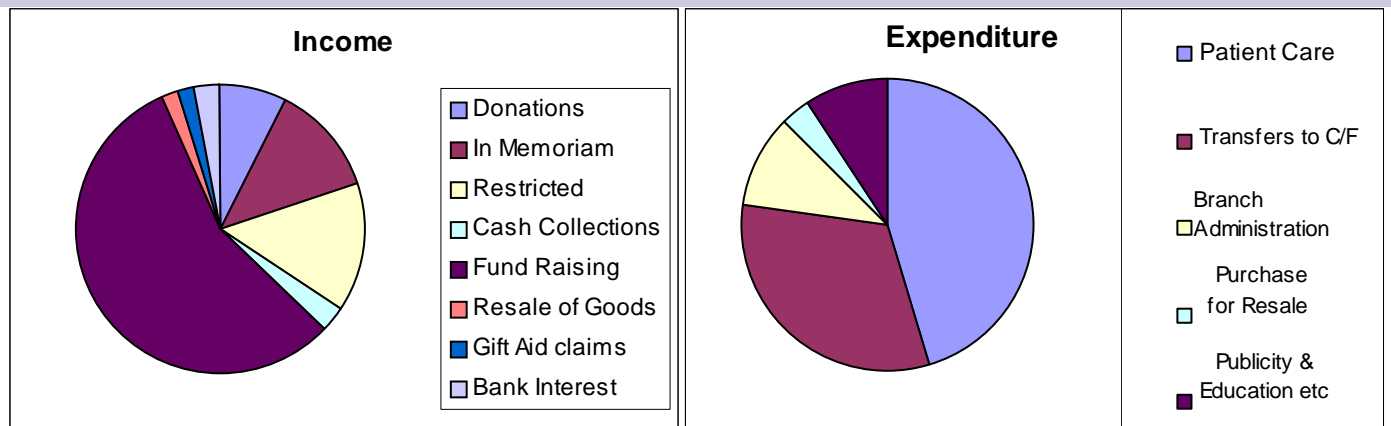
Sincere thanks to everybody who contributed to another successful year for the finances of the Branch. In summary, a year in which receipts rose; Patient Care expenditure was maintained; and overall expenditure the lowest for five years. The results (in round figures) are:

Income during the year: £43284

Outgoings during the year: £24502 (excluding £6217 allocated for 'Restricted' future expenditure)

Balance at the year end: £54411.10 (2003/ 04 £35313)

Contributed by Barry Clouting



MEMORIAL FOR LIBRARIAN ALAN



Reading Central Library closed its doors to allow staff to attend the memorial service of popular colleague Alan Hankin who, as he always stressed, had been living with MND.

The brave bachelor was still working in the local studies department until the day he died after collapsing at his new specially adapted home in Tilehurst.

Alan, aged 47, moved to Sundial Close from his Kensington Road home just six weeks earlier as the progression of the illness made it increasingly difficult for him to care for himself.

Having left his native Lancashire to study at Reading University 30 years ago, Alan became a regular on the terraces at Elm Park.

Despite his diagnosis in August 2003, he rarely missed a Royals game at the Madejski Stadium, and even drew the winning number in a Golden Gamble raffle during the 4-0 victory over Crewe in October.

He also fought to highlight MND and exactly a year ago completed a three-and-a-half mile fundraising walk at Englefield shortly before being confined to a wheelchair.

Rhodri Thomas, library services manager, told the Evening Post: "Alan was passionate about the library and about local studies and many library users will have been helped by him over the years. He will be greatly missed."

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

A tribute to Harold Robinson

Our President Lady Halifax pays tribute to Harold Robinson, who died recently:

'I met Harold shortly after his wife, who had MND, died. He arrived at our local plant sale determined to raise money for the local branch, and he outstripped us all, raising a tremendous amount of money. He continued to attend MNDA meetings and was one of the most dedicated and reliable people one could be privileged to know.

During one plant sale, which he organised himself, he raised an amazing £700, half for the Branch and half for the Duchess of Kent House where his wife had spent her last days. The Branch has lost a reliable and loyal supporter and I have lost a good friend.'



Fun with the squirrels by John Austin

John has had MND for 30 years and entertained us all with this account at one of the drop-in meetings



Watching the cleverness of squirrels on TV overcoming various difficult obstacles to get at a bag of peanuts reminded me of an episode when I tried to stop squirrels stealing the nuts we put out for the birds when we lived in Crowthorne with a long, wide garden open to woodland at the back.

We used to hang bags of nuts from the bird feeder, but very quickly the squirrels found that, by climbing the feeder and biting the bottom out of the bag, they could drop down and eat all the nuts on the lawn at their leisure. In an attempt to thwart them I strung a 60ft. line on thin piano wire from a tree near the back fence and secured the other end to a hook screwed into the barge-board of our chalet at about 20 ft. high. From the centre of this wire, I joined about 6ft. of strong cord hanging down with a bag of peanuts at the end. The squirrels' attempt to reach the bag were pure slap-stick comedy, but, with daring tightrope skills, they succeeded.

But I was not to be beaten and hatched another fiendish plot, involving the squirrel equivalent of an army assault course, which, by using tremendous skill, intelligence and agility, they overcame, claimed their prize and thumbed their noses at us.



So, victory to the squirrels. I dismantled my pathetic defences and simply started buying extra nuts for giving us so much enjoyment in watching their antics.

My last memory of the occasion is of Mavis sitting on a step in our garden with the squirrels eating nuts from her hand.

A DAY AT THE RACES

A bucket collection at Newbury Racecourse's Dubai Duty Free Day raised a magnificent £1,600 for branch funds.

Volunteers were overwhelmed by the generosity of some of the punters emerging from the popular meeting in April. They were also impressed with the heightened awareness of Motor Neurone Disease.

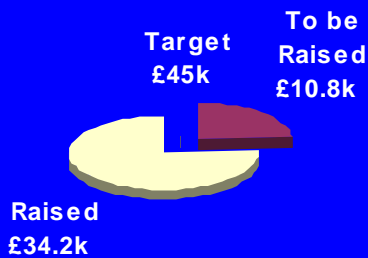
Special thanks to volunteers Kerrie Pearce, Nicky Britton, and their team of collectors, and to chair Margaret Moss, and treasurer, Barry Clouting, who counted the mountain of cash.

Our picture shows collectors: Jane Gilbert, Kerrie Pearce, Nicky Britton, Alec Jenkins and George Pearce. Lady Hallifax was busy collecting at another exit at the time the photograph was taken.



Contributed by Jane Gilbert

Dr Monnica Stewart Appeal for Neurological Nurse



Ready, Steady, Bake...

National Office has produced special thumbs up biscuit cutters and sugar craft cake transfers, featuring the MND Association logo. Would you be prepared to hold a coffee morning during MND Awareness Week and sell cakes and biscuits with the logo to friends or work colleagues?

If you are interested, please contact Val on 0118 9789063. Or contact MND Association Biscuit Cutter Offer, PO Box 22, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4QE or call the Enquiry Line on 0870 600 5540 between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Forthcoming Events

MND Awareness Week and Walk to D'Feet MND

**Saturday
18th–Sunday
26th June**

**Drop-in Meeting
Charles Clore Centre**

**Monday
27th June
11.30am–2.30pm**

with Joanna Knott and Val Pearson

**Tea Party
Summer afternoon tea party
Reading Canoe Club**

**Wednesday
24th August**

Details to follow

**MNDA Reading and
West Berkshire Branch**

**National Office
OSCARR Award
Winner, 2004!**



Awarded to the Branch for Excellence in the publicity of the Branch's special project—the Dr Monnica Stewart Neurological Nurse Appeal.

← What we have raised so far.....

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FIGHTING MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE