

**Reading and
West Berkshire
Branch**

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Raising funds on holiday? In October there was a major national fund raising event in Rajasthan in North India. Our Chair was in that same area at the same time and was able to see first hand the amazing beauty of the Taj Mahal.

TOP GUNS AIM HIGH

Top shots at a charity clay pigeon shoot at Ashmansworth, near Newbury, aimed high but well exceeded the target with their fund-raising.

Delighted organisers Kieron Black and his partner Jackie Seaton collected £2,715 for the West Berkshire branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association – much more than they had hoped for.

Lady Hallifax, the charity's national president, who received the cash, said she was amazed how generous people were at the event on November 13th.

The shoot at Alexander Farm was also in memory of Hugo Rutland, a former member of the local pheasant shoot, who drowned tragically while on holiday in Portugal this summer.

His widow Claire had asked if the proceeds from the clay shoot could be given to the MND Association which supports Hugo's great friend David Carleton Paget, who is living with the disease.

Lady Hallifax said: "I thought it was lovely to do this for her late husband's friend." After the competition refreshments were served at neighbouring Lower Manor Farm where a toast was made to Hugo.

Guns were charged £20 to shoot in teams of three with the cup presented to Micky Wedge, captain of the winning team.

There was also an auction and a raffle with prizes donated by Roxtons of Hungerford.



Jackie Seaton presents the cash to Lady Hallifax after the clay pigeon shoot. Claire Rutland, who chose MND as the charity to benefit, is pictured next to Lady Hallifax.

Mr Black, who donated his holiday home in Bulgaria for a week, said he now planned to make the shoot an annual event for a charity.

He also thanked Cottrells Office Equipment of Newbury and C.A.P.S. in Reading for their generous support.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

NEW VENUE FOR CHARITY CARDS

Don't forget to visit Cards for Good Causes' new venue at the United Reformed Church, Cromwell Place, Newbury (opposite Marks and Spencer).

The shop is open Monday to Saturday, 10am – 4pm, until December 15th to buy cards and gifts including a selection from the MND Association. All charities receive at least 81p in every £1 from their card sales.

Cards are also available directly through the Branch - contact Val Pearson.



Tribute to George

Regulars at The Bowlers Arms at Wash Common, near Newbury, have been paying tribute to their friend George Pearce, who died from MND in August.

Popular George inspired them to hold a series of fund raising events in support of the Association and cash has also been given to provide a memorial bench there overlooking the cricket ground.

Branch treasurer Barry Clouting went along recently to receive a cheque for £550 at a quiz night on what would have been George's 57th birthday. Trophies were also presented to winners of the pub's successful table football tournament prompted by George's love of football.

And a group of teenagers have stepped out on a walk for George to further boost funds at his local. His many friends had retired there for refreshments following his packed funeral service.

Manager Fiona Talbot said: "George was a very popular figure at the club – he kept his sense of humour as long as we knew him.

"We all felt we wanted to do something and were all very pleased to do it. I was hoping to get £500 and we got much more which is the mark of the man and the respect he commanded within the community."

George's daughter Kerrie was delighted with the pub's support and said the events had been great fun. She has also been working hard selling MND Association Christmas cards at the pub.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

WE TOLD YOU SO!

Star fundraiser Marian Hall is through to the top four of an internal awards scheme run by her employers Vodafone.

In October's Newsletter we suggested she might have even more spin offs up her sleeve following the successful race night she ran in Hungerford.

Marian generated a further £50 by nominating herself for a Vodafone award after raising more than £6,000 at the fun event. She was helped by branch supporters Val Smith and Kerrie Pearce, who also worked for the company.

She is now on course to collect another tidy sum when the results are announced at a prize giving evening on November 29th.

Watch this space . . .



The Sunbeam Talbot 90

Colin's STAR Classic

I had an interest in 1950's and 60's cars from an early age. As a 10 year old passenger in my father's 1957 Morris 1000, I often used to try to identify every car we passed. In those days cars were very distinctive, unlike today where they are derived from wind tunnel tests and all seem to come out looking the same!

Ever since one of my older brothers owned a Sunbeam Talbot circa 1960 I have always dreamed of owning one. I had joined the Sunbeam Talbot Alpine Register (STAR) club with the idea of buying a 1950's Sunbeam and I went to see a car for sale in Derbyshire.

It was 'love at first sight' and I just had to buy it. It is a Sunbeam Talbot 90 MK2A saloon similar to the Monty Carlo winning cars of that era. These cars keep up pretty well with modern traffic and will do 90MPH hence it's name (90)!

All was well when I test drove it but, as I was filling the car with petrol, the man using the next pump pointed out to me that more fuel was going on the forecourt floor than into the tank of the car! However, I managed to get enough fuel in to get home and fit a replacement hose from the club spares shop and I have now had over 6000 miles of virtually trouble-free motoring. Not bad for a 50 year old car!

I have entered the Sunbeam in the STAR National Show for the past 3 years winning the 'Best Saloon' category in 2003 and being placed second and third respectively in 2004 & 5 in the 'Master class' category (for all previous winners of all categories). This is very satisfying as I use my car for everyday transport whereas most of the other Master class owners keep their cars locked away and even polish their engines!

I feel really lucky that after three and a half years I am still largely independent, though well supported by my wife Sandra. Especially it is a real bonus that I have been able to drive my cars much longer than I anticipated at first.

I hope my luck continues but if it doesn't I have enjoyed myself anyway!

Contributed by Colin Moss



Send a message to John

The following letter is part of a hard-hitting but important campaign to raise the profile of MND and the work of the Association. It is largely free of cost to the Association thanks to donations of labour and materials and promoted a recent feature article in the Daily Mail:

“Send a message to John and support the MND Association

I am writing to ask your readers to take a few moments to send a message to a brave young man. By doing so, you will show your support for all the people in Reading and West Berkshire, and the UK, who have Motor Neurone Disease.

John Bell, aged 31, was diagnosed with MND four years ago. There's no worse diagnosis to receive – MND is a rapidly progressing, terminal disease for which there is no cure. MND robs people of their ability to walk, talk or take care of themselves, and most die within two to five years of developing symptoms.

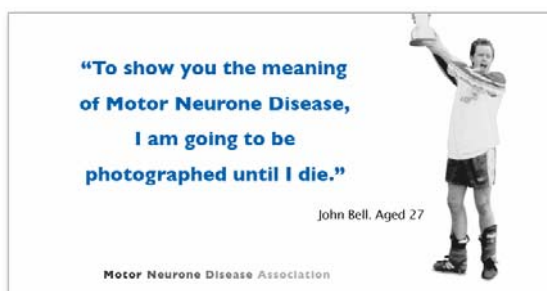
But John has refused to let MND stop him becoming a husband to his childhood sweetheart Charlotte, or a father to his two young sons Gabriel, three, and Samuel, one. More remarkably, John has also devoted his remaining months to raising awareness of MND, which affects 5,000 people in the UK.

Despite his failing health, John from Sheffield, has volunteered to be the subject of an advertising campaign on the London underground, which was launched at two stations at the end of October and will run for the next four months. Commuters passing through Euston and King's Cross will follow John's progress as MND takes its toll.

You too can follow John's Journey with MND on the dedicated website www.johnsjourney.org. You can also use the website to send him a message. Please show your support for John, and for all the other people living with MND, by logging on and sending him a few words.

Thank you for your support.” *Contributed by Jane Gilbert*

One of the hard-hitting posters from the campaign



Being a Volunteer

By Gill Cheetham

I was approached by Reading voluntary Action to give a two minute presentation on 'being a Volunteer' at their AGM. Unfortunately I was unable to make the meeting, but I supplied the following and someone read it for me:

“I never sought to be a volunteer - it came my way through association. At the time I did not realise how volunteering would escalate and fill my life. I am never bored and seldom lonely. There is always something to plan, and somewhere to go, even looking forward at least a year, within the community, or further afield.

On occasions, if I have been treated badly, particularly with volunteer gardening, I quietly withdraw, and move onto the next gardening project.

I cannot believe that my contribution is any more significant than anyone else, but it is useful having skills that help the community efforts on improving the environment, or helping to uphold the law, and even just make the surrounding areas more pleasant.

Designing and constructing a garden at Chelsea Flower Show, for example, with the added bonus of winning a silver medal, brought national attention to our charity, and my gardening club. Events that I work at are so varied, and I would find it impossible to select the best. Meeting other people who are totally committed in their field is also equally fulfilling.”

Contributed by Gill Cheetham

FUNDRAISING SUCCESS AT CARNIVAL

Sandie White, Mari Lewis, Val Pearson and Gill Cheetham raised over £300 on their stall at the Wokingham Winter Carnival on Sunday 27th November. Congratulations to them for their successful tombola and Christmas card sale. They would like to thank all who supported them.

RACECOURSE GRANT FOR NURSE

Our appeal to help fund the post of a specialist neurological nurse for two years has been given a big boost by the Newbury Racecourse Benevolence Fund.

The £1,000 donation comes from the Berkshire Community Foundation, which is handling the racecourse's centenary year grants allocation.

THANK YOU!

Margaret Moss



From "The News"

Flu jabs for carers

Carers across the UK are now entitled to free flu jabs. Launching the 2005 Influenza immunisation campaign, the Chief Medical Officer has said that amongst the new groups recommended to receive flu immunisation are, 'People who are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill'. 'Carers UK' has been campaigning for many years to get free flu jabs for carers and welcomes this decision, as does the MND Association.

Whilst GPs in some areas have responded to local campaigns by carers' groups and been happy to give carers free flu jabs, carers were not on the 'official' list of priority cases and many carers wrote to Carers UK saying they had been refused the jab. Being protected from flu is vital for many carers as they cannot afford to be ill, if someone is relying on them.

Register for Carers Rights Day

Carers' Rights Day takes place on Friday 2 December 2005. It aims to raise awareness of carers and their needs. This year it is centred around older carers with particular emphasis on carers' take up of pension credit. This year there will be a special Carers' Rights Day telephone hotline where carers will be able to order information booklets about their rights.

The free phone hotline - 0808 808 7777 will be operational from 2 December. You can register for Carers Rights Day at:

www.carersuk.org/Newsandcampaigns/CarersRightsDay/Register2005

These articles from MNDA 'The News' are provided by Jennifer Hay

CLOSURE OF THE CHARLES CLORE CENTRE

On 10 October, Newbury and District Primary Care Trust (PCT) confirmed plans to transfer its palliative care facilities to West Berkshire Community Hospital, resulting in the closure of the Charles Clore Macmillan unit in Newtown Road, and saving the trust £40,000 per year. The PCT say the relocated facility will retain the name Charles Clore and will be developed as a single point of access for palliative care services and a rural outreach service for the area.

There is no firm date for the transfer from the present site to West Berkshire Community Hospital as yet and it is likely that there will not be a quick decision to build a new facility.

Charles Clore Macmillan Day Therapy Unit provides many services for people with a life threatening illness, and has been a valuable resource and welcome non-clinical setting for many of our Drop-in meetings, which will continue.

See www.friendsofcharlescloremacmillan.co.uk for more information.

Contributed by Margaret Moss

Forthcoming Events

Carers Group Meeting **Monday**
Duchess of Kent House **15th December**

Christmas Tea **Wednesday**
St Luke's Church Hall, Theale **14th December**
2.30pm -4.30pm

Open Evening with Paul Wickes **February TBA**
Latest research update
Courtyard Marriott Hotel

Drop-in Meeting **January TBA**
Contact Val Pearson for details

VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION VISITOR

Newbury and West Berkshire area
Training provided
For more information about the role,

CONTACT 0118 930 5758

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FOR SALE

SHOWER PROOF CAPE AND
WHEEL CHAIR COVER

CONTACT 0118 930 5758



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all Newsletter readers and contributors on this my 3rd Anniversary Edition

Mary Watson, Newsletter Editor



Contact Details

Branch Contact Beth Thorpe 0118 9421600	Secretary Val Pearson 0118 9789063	Website Mary Davidson mary@rfdg.org.uk
Chair Margaret Moss 0118 9470871	Publicity Jane Gilbert 0118 9714172	Events Coordinator Gill Cheetham 01344 423440
Treasurer Barry Clouting 0118 9410186	Newsletter Mary Watson 0118 9722506	Reg. Care Advisor Carole Kingston 0118 9462057



FIGHTING MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE