

**Reading and  
West Berkshire  
Branch**

**April 2006**

**ISSUE NO 40**

[www.mndrdgwberks.freeuk.com](http://www.mndrdgwberks.freeuk.com)

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## IAN SEIZED THE DAY!

When Ian Watson's mother Sue died last month from Motor Neurone Disease he was determined to be positive despite his grief.

The brave young man continued with his plan to run the Reading Half Marathon and inspired huge support from his family, friends and colleagues.

He now expects to collect a whopping £5,000 in sponsorship from the run on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Afterwards he declared: "It's absolutely brilliant – I am over the moon. It has really helped me to do something positive."

Ian set up a website for online giving and very soon was piling on the pounds in donations. His moving account of Sue's condition helped enormously to raise awareness of MND.

He told how in June, 2003, Sue, a full-time secretary from Earley, near Reading, began to experience pain in her right arm.

had left. This ranged from a Norwegian cruise to see the Northern Lights to a helicopter ride over the Grand Canyon.

The following year Sue needed a wheelchair and was eventually confined to her chair or bed barely able to move or communicate.

Sue, who had once enjoyed line dancing and playing bridge, died peacefully on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Her funeral was at St Nicholas Church, Earley, where she was a regular member of the congregation.

Despite his half marathon triumph Ian was disappointed with his time of 1 hour 56. He had been aiming to finish in less than 1 hour 40 but had been beset with knee problems and finally came home with a mixture of running and walking determined not to give in.

The fantastic atmosphere among the crowd cheering on the 13,000 runners helped Ian who also knew that partner Sophie was waiting for him at the finish line.

For him the most important thing was to raise money and awareness of MND but he also admits to having caught the running bug and plans to be back next year.

*Contributed by Jane Gilbert*



**Ian Watson squares up to Sunday's challenge to raise funds for MND**



## Free Spirit

**Monday 29 May 2006  
at 6.30pm**

**Join us for a symbolic  
release of white  
helium-filled balloons,  
in memory of loved ones  
no longer with us.**

If you are interested in taking part, please contact Val Pearson (see back page)

**If you can, please make a donation to the branch to support those who are still living with MND today.**



**Reg and Sue Watson at their daughter's wedding in July 2004, when Sue was still able to walk with the aide of a stick.**

The way she and her husband Reg handled the diagnosis three months later was "inspirational", wrote Ian. They both took early retirement and travelled to as many places as they wanted to see in the time they

Another marathon man with MND close to his heart is 27-year-old Charlie Pearson who is running the BUPA London Marathon on April 23<sup>rd</sup> in memory of his cousin Chris. We wish him good luck for the 2006 event.



Sylvia Hemmings chose the MND Association to benefit this year from her participation in this Paris to Hayling Island annual cycling event, which has established a substantial track record, both in the world of cycling and that of charitable fund-raising. It combines the challenges of cycling 228 miles over three days and raises at least £150 for each of the charities involved.

This year was the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first ride in 1986 by Peter McQuade, who rode solo with the help of one support vehicle to raise £1500 for research into cot deaths.

More than 100 riders set off collecting in excess of a record £105,000. All costs come out of the entry fee met by the cyclists, and so 100% of the funds raised go to the chosen charities. The riders are backed up all along the way by a volunteer support crew, as they ride between 50 and 80 miles each day.

Sylvia Hemmings is a friend of John and Mavis Austin from Calcot, Reading and water skied with John for a number of years. John was a very active member of the ski club before he was diagnosed with MND and Sylvia is determined "to do her bit, however small, to help him and others living with MND". She moved to Hayling Island three years ago and has joined in the ride each year since then, presenting the money raised to the Reading Branch.

Branch Treasurer, Barry Clouting, received the cheque for £240 this year from Peter McQuade, President of the Association of Charitable Endeavours.

The next ride takes place from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and Sylvia would welcome more local sponsors from Berkshire, as she finds most of her friends and work colleagues either ride themselves or sponsor others.

Sponsorship cheques for Sylvia, made payable to Sylvia Hemmings, may be sent to Barry Clouting (see back page for contact details). Please say if you wish to make a Gift Aid Donation.

The body responsible for organising the Paris to Hayling Charity Cycle Ride is known as the Association for Charitable Endeavours. For more details, visit [www.hayling-cycle-ride.org.uk](http://www.hayling-cycle-ride.org.uk)  
*Contributed by Barry Clouting*

## A school dressing down for MND!



Tori Tompkins, 15, raised money for MND recently by suggesting a "dressing-down" at her local school.

When Tori suggested to her School Council that they support her charity (MND Association) by holding a non-uniform day at her school, Newlands Girls School in Maidenhead, they agreed. Each student would have to pay £1.50 for the privilege of "dressing down" for the day.

Tori enlisted help from local branches to address the school assemblies and enlighten the students about MND and how their wearing of non-uniform

would benefit the Association and those living with MND.

Gill Cheetham and I were there on different days and were both impressed by the atmosphere in the school and by the complete silence and great attentiveness. We were greeted warmly and encouraged to think that, in future years, we might benefit again from fundraising efforts.

I do not yet know what amount was raised but a share of 900 £1.50s is certainly worth the drive in rush hour to Maidenhead. Thank you Newlands Girls School – we wish you all well and thank you for your wonderful efforts

*Contributed by Margaret Moss  
(We thank The Maidenhead Advertiser for the photograph of Tori, above.)*



Thank you  
for your  
help

The Duchess of Kent House Trust – the charity supporting the hospice of the same name in Reading and serving Berkshire - is very grateful for the close co-operation that has developed over the years with the local branch of MND Association.

Both organisations support those with life-shortening diseases, and some members have also come into our care. The DOKH Trust came into operation 5 years ago and currently pays for two beds (nearly £200,000 p.a.) which would otherwise not be available, as well as entirely or substantially funding the supporting services.

Chosen as regional charity of the year at The Oracle Centre, Reading the charity has been given the opportunity of a second fundraising week there, from Monday 17 April, and we hope we can again rely on your support, with which we strive to continue raising funds to benefit our patients. Thank you so much for your help.

*Contributed by George Solly, DOKH Trust*

# AN EXTRA SPECIAL AGM

This year's branch Annual General Meeting was extra special with not just one guest speaker but two. A mix up in the management committee's normally smooth running machine meant the audience at Padworth's Courtyard Marriott Hotel was doubly and diversely entertained.

Professor Christine Collin spoke amusingly about her travels through India by bike before National Office's finance expert Malcolm Watkins told us how our money was spent.

## GENERATING FUNDS

Mr Watkins, director of finance and operations, opened his talk by saying: "Thank you for inviting me even if you weren't expecting me!"



Branch treasurer Barry Clouting said this year's total income of £45,000 was a very good result and improved on last year.

He also thanked the branch for providing the passion behind the figures – Reading and West Berkshire branch once again lies fifth or sixth in the country in the income stakes.

National Office's expected income for 2005/06 is about £7million with nearly £1m coming from the branches. (While branches spend their money locally a percentage of it is transferred to central funds).

The inventiveness of the fund-raisers and the generosity of donors was simply amazing, he told the meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup>. (See back page for the Treasurer's Report).

## ACCOLADES AND AWARDS

It was also a night of accolades and awards for various achievements. Platinum Long Service Awards (20 years) were presented to Joyce Iles and Phillip Adams



Carole Kingston receives a bouquet of flowers from Branch Chair, Margaret Moss, as thanks for all her hard work and support at her last public gathering before she stands down after nine years of working with the branch.



Phillip, Jennifer and Joyce with their Long Service Awards

who have been with the branch since its inception. Jennifer Hay, Vice Chair and minute taker, picked up a bronze award for 5 years service.

We also wish Joyce—a founder member of the Branch - a very happy 80th birthday. The committee presented her with a bouquet of flowers to mark her big day.



Regional Care Advisor Carole Kingston presented the branch with an MND Association OSCARR (commended) for great awareness raising from its stand at West Berkshire Community Hospital.



Chair Margaret Moss spoke about the aims of the branch and how fortunate it was to have such a talented team.

## OUR CROWNING GLORY

In her address, Chair Margaret Moss said: "Our crowning glory this year must be the appointment of our specialist nurse. We have had enormous support for our project and we are just thrilled with what she is doing."

Since January, nurse Carol Allen has had contact with about 30 people in the area living with MND as well as other patients with rare and complex neuro conditions.

Although the funding for the post is almost there the branch still has another £3,000 to collect in the next 18 months.

Margaret also thanked the talented team, who make up the Branch Committee. The following were elected to the management committee for 2006/07:

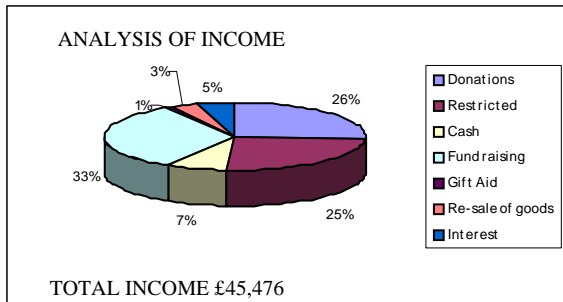
Phillip Adams, Gill Cheetham, Barry Clouting, Jane Gilbert, Jennifer Hay, Maureen Hodgetts, Margaret Moss and Val Pearson.

*Contributed by Margaret Moss*

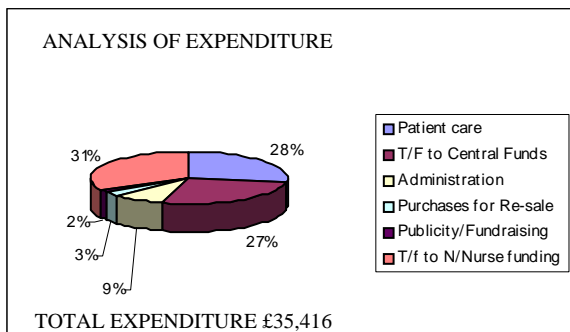
# TREASURER'S REPORT

by Barry Clouting

The year ended 31st January 2006 was a successful year with continuing growth of income, enabling the Branch to offer significant contributions in response to all requests for care and support for local people living with MND and provision of the funding of the West Berkshire Neurological Nurse appointment.



The Committee extends very grateful thanks to everybody who has supported the Branch in such a wide variety of ways throughout the year. The inventiveness of the fund-raisers and the generosity of donations are simply amazing, producing many wonderful success stories so vividly shown in the colour copying of the Newsletter.



The total funds allocated to the Neurological Nurse Project (Target £45,000) are £41,696.50.

Despite an increased cost of administration, which partly results from this, it is however crucial that we keep awareness of the disease at the forefront, therefore eye-catching easy reading Newsletters are an essential element to our success.

*Please remember, if you pay UK Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax and make a Gift Aid Declaration, we can reclaim on your donations 28p on every £1 you give.*

*Contributed by Barry Clouting, Hon. Treasurer*



Gillian Bevan plays a character with MND in *Holby City* and Lembit Opek, MP, and his fiancée donate their winnings on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" on 15th April.

## Forthcoming Events

### CHARITY FUN WALK

Englefield Estate

Sunday  
21st May

£3 per adult/£5 per family towards the  
Duchess of Kent House Trust

Contact Val Pearson  
for any events details

### Drop-in Meetings

St. Bernadette's, Pangbourne

Thurs 20th Apr  
11.30- 2pm

Charles Clore Centre, Newbury

Thurs 18th May

### Spring Conferences

10.30am-4pm

Solent Hotel and Spa, Fareham, Hampshire  
The Grand Hotel, Torquay  
Hilton Puckrup Hall, Tewkesbury, Glos

23rd April  
7th May  
21st May

### Summer Ball (in memory of Mike Court)

Hungerford Town Hall

Fri 16th June

### Concert - The Farley Singers

(MND Awareness Week—Ticket only)

St. Marks Church  
Englefield

Saturday  
15th July



### A Spring Evening with Simon Williams

Monday 29th May  
Courtyard Marriott Hotel

The renowned actor from "Upstairs, Downstairs", "Holby City" and more will recount tales from his profession and delight us with his entertaining reminiscences.

#### ENTRY BY TICKET ONLY.

Contact Val Pearson on 0118 9789063 or by e-mail on  
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## Contact Details

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**FIGHTING MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE**