

**Reading and
West Berkshire
Branch**

June 2006

ISSUE NO 41

www.mndrdgwberks.freeuk.com

In this issue

<i>It's a stitch-up!</i>	2
<i>Another Dressing-Down for MND!</i>	2
<i>An Evening with Simon Williams</i>	2
<i>Carole calls it a day</i>	3
<i>3 Peaks Challenge</i>	3
<i>Marathon Man Charlie</i>	3
<i>Scottish evening at Irish bar</i>	4
<i>Forthcoming Events</i>	4

An Evening of Music and Wine



with
**The Farley
Singers**

Sat 15th July
7.30pm

St Mark's Church
Englefield

With a special performance of Mozart's "Vespers" accompanied by the organist from Guildford Cathedral

No charge -
Charity Donations only

FREE SPIRIT 2006



Simon Williams centre stage at the balloon release

A cloud of one hundred white helium-filled balloons soared in the skies above Newbury as a moving memorial for people who have died from MND.

The branch's symbolic Free Spirit release was part of a successful event as a forerunner to this year's MND Awareness Week (June 17-25). It also helped to raise more than £2,000 to provide care and equipment for people locally still living with the disease.

Actor Simon Williams took centre stage and gave the signal for the balloon launch on a blustery evening outside Padworth's Courtyard Marriott Hotel. Each one carried a tag stating in whose memory it had been released.

Earlier, the Rev. Juliet Straw, assistant curate of the Mortimer benefice, led prayers and a minute's silence for those who had died and their friends and relatives.

Some people were visibly moved as the balloons soared upwards and drifted gracefully away into the distance.

Simon Williams later told a packed audience how touched he had been by the tribute and highlighted the bravery of those people still living with MND. (see inside story)

Balloon donations, a raffle and ticket sales for Simon's talk all contributed towards the pleasing profit.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert



Free Spirit balloons reach for the skies

Oracle Collection in aid of MND

Thank you to all who supported the last two collections in the Reading Oracle. In April, MNDA supporters raised £1,123 of the £4,510 takings for the week! Well done!

Next Collection: w/c 11th September-Please support in any way.



It's a stitch-up!



Newbury cobbler Eric Roden has stitched up a windfall for branch funds totalling nearly £3,000.

Instead of charging for a quick stitching job or an eyelet Eric asked his customers to make a donation to the Motor Neurone Disease Association. During the past year he collected nearly £1,000 and now his boss at Timpson Shoe Repairs has almost doubled that figure.

Eric was inspired to collect the cash by his friend and fellow Thatcham resident Graham Hodgetts who lost his battle against the disease last July aged 59.

Although the firm nationally collects for ChildLine he persuaded chairman John Timpson to let him collect in the Newbury shops for the charity that supported Graham and his family.

Eric began collecting at the Kennet Centre heel bar and later moved to the Northbrook Street shop where he is manager. In a year he amassed £936 from generous customers and was then told his boss had decided to give double the amount raised, bringing the total to nearly £3000!

He said of his bumper collection: "It's such a shame that Graham isn't here to benefit from it."

The pair first met when Eric's hairdresser wife Lisa visited Graham's wife Maureen at the Hodgetts' home in Sydney Close. Eric remembered how Graham had walked with the aid of a stick initially but soon was confined to a wheelchair.

This week Eric, of Almond Drive, presented the final cheque to Barry Clouting, treasurer of the West Berkshire branch of the MND Association, who declared: "What a boss to have."

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

Another dressing-down for MND!

Staff at MMA Insurance PLC in Reading have donated the proceeds of one of their monthly "dress down days" to the Reading and West Berkshire branch.

Mari Lewis, an MMA employee, whose father Roland Lewis is a plwMND, proposed the MNDA as a beneficiary and £407.72 was raised.

Contributed by Roland Lewis

Last month, Tori Tompkins, 15, also raised money for MND by suggesting a "dress-down day" at her local school.

The Farley Singers

This talented group of a dozen singers take pleasure in making music and raising funds for local charities.

Join them on 15th July when they will be commemorating Mozart's 250th Anniversary in the beautiful surroundings of Englefield House.

(see front cover for details)

An evening with Simon Williams

The actor Simon Williams, who lives at Nettlebed near Henley, freely gave his time recently to talk about his colourful life in the theatre and television where he has appeared in a host of programmes from *Upstairs Downstairs* to *Bergerac* and *Holby City*.

And it was as a speaker on a QE2 cruise around South America that he came to the notice of branch vice-chair Jennifer Hay and her partner Roland Lewis.

The pair was so impressed with Simon's humorous recollections that they asked if he would support an MND Association fundraising event. He immediately agreed without even asking first for the location.



Chair Margaret Moss thanked the actor for his great support and also the Courtyard Marriott Hotel for generously providing the venue and canapés.

The next day Simon Williams even took time to congratulate the branch and sent a message of thanks to Roland and Jennifer.

He wrote: "It was such a lovely evening to be part of – beautifully arranged and with such a warm lovely atmosphere. Well done, congratulations.

"Thank you for the lovely wine and for all the care you took... ."

With every good wish, Simon"

Carole calls it a day



Carole receives a bouquet of flowers from Branch Chair, Margaret Moss, as thanks for all her hard work and support..

Regional Care Advisor Carole Kingston retired at the end of May after serving the Association's central region well for twelve years.

Carole, who lives in Caversham, was presented with flowers and a card at the branch AGM in April when many branch members were present.

On behalf of the committee, Chair Margaret Moss and Secretary Val Pearson also gave her a daylight standard lamp (pictured) so that she can take up her hobby of embroidery when she has time on her hands.

Margaret said: "We wish her well and much enjoyment and once again thank her heartily for her work with those people living with MND".



Contributed by Margaret Moss



MARATHON MAN CHARLIE RUNS AGAIN

Marathon man Charlie Pearson has taken another 26 miles around London in his stride.

This year the 27-year-old teacher, whose family live near Pangbourne, was a bit slower than usual after he qualified as an elite runner for running a previous marathon in under three hours.

He told the Newsletter afterwards: "I did just about manage to stagger round in 3hrs 23 mins – so a bit slower than usual but at least I beat Gordon Ramsay!"

The reason for his more leisurely pace was a gruelling cycle ride from land's End to John O'Groats the week before.

Charlie has collected £1900 in pledges for the branch after the run in memory of his cousin Chris thanks to his pupils at the Bath comprehensive school where he works.

The popular teacher has done several assemblies on the subject of MND and says he has had an excellent response from the teenagers.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

3 Peaks challenge for Berkshire team



A team of four from Berkshire are climbing the highest peaks in the UK - Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scafel in England and Snowden in Wales within 24 hours!

They will be raising much-needed funds for two charities: The Motor Neurone Disease Association (MND) and The Thames Hospicecare.

One of the team members, Mark Blacker from Reading, chose the charity as his mother has MND, and would love to get support from local people. The other team members are Martin Cranfield, John Marsden & Derek Didcock.

A spokesman for the team said, 'We wanted a challenge and quickly realised we could also raise money for charities that have affected our lives. We have received great support from many people especially from A&D Roadshow in Middlesex, who have kindly lent us their Minibus. Big thanks also to directors and employees of German Swedish and French Carparts, for

their support and sponsorship".

The challenge starts at the base of Ben Nevis at 5pm on 10th June, it is non-stop after that. The team will have to climb a total of 26 miles through mixed terrain in the day and during the night. The weather will be varied, from warm and sunny to the potential of snow at the top of the mountains.

'We will have to be prepared for any kind of eventuality, especially with the weather. We will not only be taking ourselves up the mountains but lots of different clothing as well as food and drink', said a team member.

The challenge is complete when the team reach the bottom of Snowden by 5pm the following day, having climbed all three peaks within the 24-hour goal.

You can sponsor the team and donate to their chosen charities by visiting the following website:

www.justgiving.com/challenge3peaks

Contributed by Martin Blacker

SUCCESSFUL SCOTTISH EVENING AT IRISH BAR!

by Justine Pearson

Deeply moved by Jamie Doran and Jeff Healey's documentary on Jimmy Johnstone – *The Lord of The Wing*, landlady Eileen Noctor decided to hold a charity event recently at Maidenhead bar, Noctors, showing the film.

The aim was to raise funds and awareness for Motor Neurone Disease, a cause which Eileen has keenly supported over the years and from which Jimmy sadly died earlier this year.

The event was a great success and the funds raised were presented to local Branch Contact, Beth Drury.



Beth Drury celebrates in true Scottish style with (l to r) piper, Ian Anderson, Noctor's owner, Eileen Noctor and Producer Jeff Healey. (Photograph courtesy of Mark Oulson-Jenkins)

Landlady Eileen Noctor only acquired the bar in central Maidenhead a year and a half ago, naming it Noctors in honour of her husband Mick. Since then, mainly due to her Gaelic sense of hospitality and charming bar staff, it has become the Irish pub of Maidenhead.

Since the death of Jimmy Johnstone a commemorative CD has been released featuring a remake of The Pogues classic *Dirty Old Town* sung by Jimmy himself and Jim Kerr of Simple Minds fame. The single went straight to number 1 last month in Scotland and the track is also available as a ringtone download and digital I-tunes download. Profits from all sales go to MND. For more information or to purchase visit www.jimmyjohnstone.com.

Contributed by Justine Pearson

Forthcoming Events

MND Awareness Week	17th–25th June
Drop-in Meeting Charles Clore Centre, Newbury	Mon 10th July
Summer Ball (in memory of Mike Court) Hungerford Town Hall	Fri 16th June
Rock & Roll Rave Up Hungerford Football Club	Sat 17th June 8pm
Concert - The Farley Singers St. Marks Church Englefield	Saturday 15th July 7.30pm

Nationwide Award Nomination

Our Branch have been nominated by a mysterious benefactor for an award for voluntary endeavour! Watch this space!

1950's/60's Rock & Roll Rave-up with entertainment by 'Spike'



at Hungerford Football Club
Saturday 17 June 2006 at 8pm

Food, Bar and Raffle in aid of MND Association

Contact Val Smith on
01488 680843

Tickets £5

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 TBA



FIGHTING MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE