

**Reading and
West Berkshire
Branch**

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A FUNTASTIC FUNDRAISER

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Student Verity Beaumont, aged 21, deserves an award for her fantastic fundraising. Her Summer party at Hungerford Town Hall raised a staggering £4,200 for Branch funds and a huge amount of awareness.

Verity took on the huge challenge in memory of her dad Mike Court who died from Motor Neurone Disease three years ago, aged 49.

She explained: "We got a lot from the Motor Neurone Disease Association and this is a way of returning that help."

More than 150 people travelled from as far as Kent, London, Wales and Hampshire for the get-together which featured a hog roast, disco, live band and a raffle.

"Everyone was really generous in donating things," said Verity. "It reduced the costs hugely. Everyone was fantastic."

Verity, who has just finished her second year psychology exams at Winchester University, hit upon the novel idea of using the Association's John's Journey postcards as raffle tickets. Guests paid £5 apiece and wrote their name on the back.

She also displayed MND Association posters in the lavatories where they could not fail to be seen.

Mum Sue Court had every reason to be proud of Verity's achievement. She said afterwards: "I was so proud of her I could burst."

She has really done it all and everybody had a fantastic time."

Lady Hallifax, Association President, who drew the raffle, also praised the youngster who was also given some flowers by brothers Alex and Steve.

Thanks were also expressed to Vodafone, Kerridge Computer Company Ltd., Newbury band Sleepless, the Railway Tavern, Hello Flower, and DJs Dan Hunter and Oliver Young for donations of cash or services on the night as well as many other individuals too numerous to mention.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert



Verity Beaumont and mum, Sue Court, raise a glass to celebrate



Branch beginnings! Read more in this month's Insert...

Switchandgive.com will donate £20 to the MND Association every time you decide to switch energy suppliers. They will compare ALL the suppliers and tariffs and arrange it all for you free. Call 0800 074 0743 (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm) or log on to www.switchandgive.com/MNDAssociation

Ham Village - 5 miles...!



About 20 people turned out on a warm summer evening on the village green to present the £1484.10 from their walk!

‘Well, if that was only five miles, I will eat my hat! I will never do that again!’

Reg and Brenda Stevens organised the Ham Village Green Charity Walk this year in memory of Terry Smith, who died of motor neurone disease in 2004. His widow, Val Smith, wrote this account of the day:

‘Approximately twenty-five of us left Ham Village Green on the morning of Sunday 14 May, climbing Ham Hill,

before branching off at the top, along the Ridgeway. With babies in buggies and dogs in tow, we ploughed on to Combe Gibbet, slipping and sliding through ruts and puddles (or were they ponds?), but still taking time to look at the stunning views all around.

Although the sun stayed behind the haze most of the time, it was very warm. A golden retriever had the right idea, flopping down, belly-first, into a

very muddy puddle and wallowing like a hippo. She was not coming out until she was good and ready! I can assure you, she was not golden when she did finally emerge.

When we reached the gibbet, Jim Eldridge and Nora Rowall were waiting for us with nice cold drinks and biscuits. We all had a welcome break before proceeding down to Inkpen Village and then into Ham and the Indigo Bay Restaurant for refreshments, where most of the men soon downed a refreshing pint (or two!).

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Many thanks to Reg and Brenda Stevens for organising the walk; and to Ted Chapman, who is always willing to print posters for charity events.

But believe me – when Reg and Brenda organise another walk, I am only going if there are no hills!’

Contributed by Val Smith, in memory of Terry.



... AND ROCK‘N’ROLL NIGHT GOES WITH A SWING

Staunch supporter Val Smith also rocked the night away with her friends to raise £900 during MND Awareness Week

A good time was had by all who attended the 1960s night at Hungerford Town Football Club in June. Afterwards a delighted Val declared: ‘I’m over the moon.’

Val and her team of helpers have been actively raising funds and awareness in the Hungerford area since her husband Terry died in 2004 from MND.

Compere ‘Spike’ got the 50 family and friends in the mood for dancing and various raffles and donations helped to produce the pleasing profit.

Val especially thanked helpers Del Vallenge, Reg and Brenda Stevens, Dorothy Mitchener and friends who provided free transport.

The proceeds from the evening were presented, along with those from the Ham Village Walk at an evening presentation a week later. Everyone involved, but especially



Reg and Brenda Stevens with Val Smith and Del Vallenge (right) prepare to present the two cheques to a ‘speechless’ Margaret Moss, Branch Chair. (top picture)

the organisers, were congratulated and thanked, by Margaret, on behalf of all those whom the Branch supports.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

A Tribute to Pamela Hunt

Pamela Hunt needed no persuasion to talk to the press about how specialist nurse Carol Allen is making a difference to people living with Motor Neurone Disease.

Less than a month before she died in May, aged 65, this remarkable woman gave a big boost to our bid to raise awareness of MND.

The interview at Pamela's Shaw home, resulted in a full page health feature in the Newbury Weekly News including the picture featured right and fact files on MND and our drop-in sessions.

Readers were told how Carol had been able to support 31 people – 20 of them living with MND – since taking up the pioneering post in January. A total of £90,000 has been raised by West Berkshire Neurological Alliance and our branch to fund the post for two years and to research its impact.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert



Pamela Hunt is pictured (centre) with Carol Allen (left), John Holt of West Berks Neurological Alliance, and Jane Gilbert, Branch Publicity Officer.

Picture courtesy of Newbury Weekly News

Pamela Hunt 1941-2006

Here Pamela's devoted husband of 43 years, Ken, pays tribute to her courage and fortitude during an inspirational life:

"Pam and I met in 1962 in the Majestic Ballroom Reading. We fell in love and married in October 1963. By 1968 we had two sons of whom we were very proud and life carried on in a good balanced way of home building, work, travel and hobbies.

"Pam worked as an accounts clerk in several local companies but health problems caused her to give up paid employment in the early 1980s. Among other things Pam had breast cancer, which left her with very limited use of her right arm. This was followed by an autoimmune disorder called Systemic Lupus (SLE). Shortly after osteo arthritis began to develop which caused a great deal of pain and resulted in a knee replacement and two fused thumbs.

"So not wanting to be committed to full time work but wanting to keep busy helping in the community Pam embarked on voluntary work, training as a councillor in the early 1990's. This was a very busy period of her life, not only did it provide a

very useful service to very vulnerable people but she found it a very rewarding experience. We have received many tributes from people that she has helped.

"Pam was brought up baptised and confirmed in the Church of England and all her life she held a very strong Christian belief. Through the Church, she continued to support people who were having difficulty, even cooking and cleaning for them when they temporarily could not do so themselves.

"In August 2005 Pam was diagnosed with MND and although wanting to continue with her counselling work she found it impossible. In her usual positive manner Pam still planned for the future and indeed we made the most of some real quality time together after her diagnosis.

"Pam fell asleep very peacefully on 24 May in West Berks Community Hospital with her family around her. The manner of her passing was a tribute to her strength, her Christian belief and to all of us who had the privilege of caring for her in her last few days."

Contributed by Ken Hunt

Congratulations and Celebrations!

Beth's bundle of joy

Congratulations to Branch Contact and Association Visitor Beth Drury and her husband Frazer on the safe arrival of baby Jonah.

He was born on June 29th at their Tilehurst home and weighed 6lbs 9 oz., a brother for Daniel, aged 8, and two year old Max.

Kerrie and Lee wed

Congratulations to two of our loyal Branch supporters who have recently tied the knot.

Kerrie Pearce and Lee Newton are pictured at their wedding in Wantage in May and are now living in Atlanta, USA.



Double celebrations...



for the Pearce family as Kerrie's mum Claire, a regular at the Newbury drop-ins, has become a grand-mother to son Keith's new arrival – Charlie George (pictured).

Phil and Sue

Thatcham's Sue Robins, who many will remember from the Kenneth Branagh film night at Newbury's Corn Exchange in 2000, married her partner Phil Price on Saturday, July 8th, in Weston-Super-Mare.

A honeymoon in Morocco followed.



TEA FOR MND POT

A welcoming cuppa and some delicious cakes have piled on the pounds for the MND Association.

Maureen Bull and her team of helpers in Hungerford served up the all-day refreshments for visitors to a flower festival in the town's United Reformed Church on July 15th.

Their hard work collected £630 for branch funds and brought MND to the forefront yet again in Hungerford.

Association president Lady Hallifax also gave a boost to the helpers when she popped in to sample the refreshments.

Maureen, whose brother died from MND three years ago, and her sister Susan Hale have regularly held a variety of fund raising events in West Berkshire.

Naturally she was delighted with their latest effort and the support of members of the United Reformed Church.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

A Summer Evening of Music

On a perfect summer evening with deer grazing in the park, we were beautifully entertained at St Mark's Church in the grounds of Englefield House by the Farley Singers. The choir of twelve voices, conducted by



David Walder, celebrated Mozart's 250th Anniversary with a delightful performance of Mozart's 'Vespers' accompanied on the piano by Ian Westley, organist at Guildford Cathedral. Solos were performed by members of the choir.

A delicious selection of wines and refreshments prepared by supporters, were served in the churchyard during the interval enabling the music and surroundings to be fully appreciated.

Altogether, a very entertaining and enjoyable evening from this extremely talented group, who freely offer to raise funds for local charities. Appeals made on behalf of the Duchess of Kent House Trust and the local Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association provided an opportunity for all to give generously to the retiring collection.

Contributed by Barry Clouting

Forthcoming Events

**Duchess of Kent House Trust
Collection at The Oracle, Reading** 11th–17th Sept

Volunteers needed—
please contact Gill Cheetham

Drop-in Meeting Monday
Charles Clore Centre, Newbury
or West Berkshire Hospital 2nd October
11.30-2.30pm

Open Meeting Wednesday
Courtyard Marriott 4th October

Talk on Advance Directives/Living Wills
by Rachel Marsden, Oxford Care Centre

Charity Day Saturday
Reading Golf Club 19th August

Summer Tea Party Tuesday
Venue TBA 29th August
2.30-4.30pm

Internet surfers—Surf and save for MND !

www.everyclick.com is an internet search engine with a big difference - it donates half its revenue to charity and the MND Association is one of its beneficiaries.

So, instead of using the usual search engine when you want to surf the web, visit www.everyclick.com FREE and select to support the MND Association.

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FIGHTING MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE