

**Reading and
West Berkshire
Branch**

www.mndrdgwberks.freeuk.com

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Mick Jagger performing for MNDA? See page 3...

DOUBLE DEATH

A thriller by **SIMON WILLIAMS**

From 20 FEBRUARY - 31 MARCH

At



BOX OFFICE: READING
(0118) 969 8000

CAPTAIN'S CHEQUE OUT AT READING



Ian Durie and Wynn Bartley present the cheque to Local Branch Chair, Margaret Moss and Secretary, Val Pearson

Outgoing 2006 Reading Golf Club captains Ian Durie and Wynn Bartley were at Kidmore End Road club-house on Saturday 20 Jan to present their Captains' charity cheques to two deserving causes.

Representatives from the local Duchess of Kent House Trust and the Motor Neurone Disease Association were at the Captains' Swansong to accept cheques for £5,880 each.

The bulk of the money - £6,500 - was raised at the Captains' Charity Day back in August and was one of the highlights of Durie's year in office.

He said 'The Captains' Day was the first hot weekend of the year and to move 170 people around the course and have over 100 enjoying the evening function was fantastic. I think we've raised more for the charities than any other captains, but Wynn and I both wanted to support something from which local people would benefit.'

And the assembled audience benefited too—from an entertainer, who gave an excellent interpretation of the Rat Pack and their songs. Local Branch secretary, Val Pearson was one of those “enchanted” by his performance, commenting,

“I have not had a man kneeling at my feet and kissing my hand since God knows when - if ever!”

Reproduced courtesy of the Reading Evening Post and Val Pearson

We recommend...



In the middle of last year, Simon Williams gave his time to entertain us all one summer evening. He was with us at the balloon release for 'Free Spirit'

Now, at the Dinner Theatre in Sonning, he is directing a play he has written.

“Director and writer Simon Williams doesn't disappoint with this ingenious story that

will keep you on the edge of your seats until the last spine-chilling conclusion.”

Details for tickets etc on 0118 969 8000 or www.millatsonning.com

A BIG THANK YOU

The Branch has held a special celebration lunch to thank its big-hearted supporters for all their hard work. About 90 people attended the successful event in the historic tythe barn at Ufton Court, Ufton Nervet, near Reading, on January 28th.

Chair Margaret Moss paid tribute to all the volunteers whose successful fund raising in the last two years had made a big difference to people living with motor neurone disease.

She said the splendid efforts of the Reading and West Berkshire branch had made it one of the Association's most successful groups in the UK. The popular lunch had also been cited by national office as an example of how its branches can raise awareness.

Margaret Moss especially thanked Colin Moss, from Hermitage, who is living with MND, for his impressive visual review of the branch's activities which he presented to the audience on a big screen.

It featured events including the metal detecting rally, the balloon release by actor Simon Williams, a Land's End to John O'Groats cycle ride, marathon runs, sponsored walks and a rock and roll night to name but a few. Margaret also thanked events co-ordinator Gill Cheetham for organising the catering at the lunch – spit-roasted lamb



Tracy and Paul Watkins present their cheque to Branch chair Margaret Moss at the Thank You Lunch.

followed by a range of desserts provided by committee members.

Branch supporter, Timpson Limited, made a donation to help fund the lunch after one of its employees, Eric Roden, from Thatcham collected £936 from generous customers at the Northbrook Street, Newbury, shoe repair shop.

A raffle also collected about £300 towards the cost of the event. Lady Howard de Walden, a patron of the MND Association, and people living with MND were among the invited guests.

Contributed by Jane Gilbert

SPRING INTO ACTION



Spring conferences are an annual one day event. They are great fun and a wonderful way to make new friends and find out information about living with MND. The day focuses on current news both within care and research, giving an opportunity to chat informally and network with other people interested in MND.

These days are aimed primarily at people with MND and their carers, and are free for them. However all are welcome and we encourage all members to attend. If you have been before, why not come again and bring someone new with you.

People who attended in the past said:

"Superb day, superb location, superb facilities"

"I gained a greater understanding of the disease and reassurance on living with MND"

Sounds great doesn't it – why not come? Have a day out in a lovely place, have lunch and meet new people.

*Contributed by Elinor Brien
Training and Development Manager
Motor Neurone Disease Association*

Worried about getting there?

The branch would gladly help with costs (for travel &/or accommodation) if you would like to attend one of these.

The Conference itself is free for plwMND and one carer. Both Oxford and Basingstoke are not too far for travelling and National Office staff have carefully chosen hotels in pleasant locations with the necessary facilities.

A Spring Break? Why not?

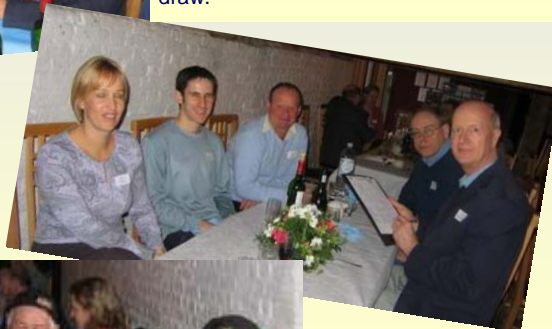
Thank you Lunch - Photo Gallery



Left: Patron Lady Howard de Walden (third left) chats with guests Brenda and Brian Rayner and Ed Gryglewski .

Below: RCA Moira Mosley with guests Ian Watson, Trevor Sprules, Reg Watson and Jim Bradshaw.

Below left: The delicious selection of desserts made by the committee members were a big draw.



Left: Meat roast king Graham Plank and helper relax after a good job done.



A Letter from America

Branch supporter Kerrie Newton writes of her new married life and volunteer work in the US.

Kerrie, grew up in Newbury, and became involved with the Branch when her father George Pearce was diagnosed with MND. He died in 2005, aged 56. She is pictured here with husband Lee Newton at their wedding in May 2006



Hi everyone,
I just want to say a quick hello and to let you know how much I miss being part of the branch. I felt very lost running up to Christmas; I really wanted to be selling Christmas cards on behalf of the branch, like I did the year before!!!!

Here's a little update on what's been happening;

After Lee and I got married in May, I got my Visa and joined him in Atlanta, USA. We are having a great start to married life and are both enjoying our time here. We do miss home and our families very much and like I mentioned I miss helping the branch with their wonderful fund raising events and to help raise a w a r e n e s s o f M N D .

One of the things on my to-do list when I moved here was to find a local MNDA (ALS) branch in Atlanta and I did! At Christmas, Lee and I helped out at their

Christmas Family day, we had a wonderful afternoon helping the children make Christmas cards for their families!!! We surprised ourselves with how much we enjoyed the afternoon; we are not the most natural when it comes to entertaining children!!

Lee and I got to meet the Chairman of the Board, Alan King and Executive Director, Susan Constantine. I mentioned to Alan about the great fundraising events that were organised through the Reading Branch and across the UK. I also talked about the regular drop-in meetings/ evening meetings and how my dad really appreciated the love and

support from all who were involved in setting those up.

The Atlanta Branch organises special events throughout the year, like the holiday party, Walks to D'Feet ALS (which I was so pleased to see on their event calendar) and a Spring time golf tournament, plus many more. I am looking forward to being part of these events. There are 320 people/"clients" registering at the branch suffering with ALS, who live in/ around the city of Atlanta. This figure was shocking! (The Atlanta City population in 2006 was estimated at around 480,000 people).

I am keeping up to date on the latest MNDA news via the Reading Branch website and still love reading the Branch Newsletters. I was sad to hear Lady Halifax had retired as President but I know Lembit Opik MP will do a fantastic job following in her footsteps.

I wish you all a happy 2007!!

HONKY TONK WOMAN!

Tracy and Paul Watkins used their 10th wedding anniversary celebrations as a fun way of raising cash for MND.



The highlight of the party featured Paul donning a Mick Jagger mask and joining a band on stage to perform "Honky Tonk Woman"!

Earlier the young couple from Southcote, Reading, had a service of blessing at the town's Greyfriars Church. They had decided to ask party guests for donations to MND in lieu of presents and set up a

fund online.

A total of £500 was collected in memory of Paul's mum Vera who died from the disease exactly three years ago. A cheque was presented by them to chair Margaret Moss at the recent Branch Thank You Lunch.



Tracy and Paul at the celebrations

Tracy has also decided to become a Branch Association Visitor and is currently doing her training at a series of sessions run by the MND Association.

Association Visitors play an incredibly important role providing friendship, advice and support to people affected by MND, both on the telephone, via email and face-to-face.

In return for their time they make some wonderful new friends and receive free training which has won national recognition. For more information on how you can also become an AV please contact Beth Drury on 0118 9421600.

A Pride of Bracknell!

Recently, Bracknell paid tribute to some very special people at the first ever Pride of Bracknell Awards ceremony held at the Grange Hotel on Thursday 23 November. 'Bracknell News' readers were asked to nominate the people they thought deserved recognition for making the town a special place. One member of MND Association who is very well known to many of you, Gill Cheetham, won the 'Community Spirit' award!



On the evening of the gala dinner and awards ceremony, around 150 people were wined and dined. Celebrity guests Rudolph Walker and Angela Wynter, otherwise known as Patrick and Yolande Trueman in BBC's soap 'Eastenders', presented winners and runners-up with their trophies.

Apart from her hard work for MND Association, Gill is chairman of the Bracknell Gardening Club for the Able and Disabled, started by her husband Rex many years ago. A few weeks before Rex died of MND, the garden club received a silver medal for their entry 'Memories of Rex' in the Chelsea Flower Show 2001. Gill was determined to

continue with his work and the Garden Club, under her chairmanship, was actively involved in the planting scheme in front of St. Joseph's Catholic Church as part of the 'Britain in Bloom' competition. The garden club was given a special gold award by RHS for their contribution.

Her current project involves the re-planting of the water feature at Lily Hill as part of the scheme, supported by the National Lottery Fund, to restore the 19th century landscape. If that were not enough, she is also the chair of the Bracknell Forest Natural History Society and a member of the National Garden Scheme, opening her garden annually under the Yellow Book Scheme to raise funds for various charities, including our own.

Gill is very concerned about environmental issues and, as a member of the the Bracknell Forest Environment Partnership, was a leading figure in the 'Going Green' Fair held in Bracknell last summer.

She is presently working on a Breathing Places application for a woodland area within the borough, in conjunction with local environmental groups. In her acceptance speech, Gill said that receiving an award was a great way to recognise the work she had done for the community over the years and to make people aware that 'there are an awful lot of good things going on!'

Contributed by Val Pearson

Forthcoming Events

Open Garden for Charity

10 Shaftesbury Avenue
Harmans Water, Bracknell

Contact Gill Cheetham on 01344 423440

Sun
1st April

Drop-in Meetings

St. Luke's Church, Theale
Thatcham Baptist Church

Mondays
11.30-2.30pm

26th March
30th April

Spring Conferences

The Paramount Hotel, Oxford
The Hampshire Centre Court,
Basingstoke

12th May
20th May

MND Association AGM

Wed
25th April
7.30-9.30pm

Pub Quiz

North Star Pub
Maidenhead

Sat
14th April

Would you like to form a team?

Contact Gill Cheetham on 01344 423440



Message in a Bottle Scheme

The Lions 'Message in a Bottle' scheme is a simple idea designed to encourage people to keep their personal and medical details on a standard form and in a common location - the fridge.

Bottles are free of charge and can usually be found in your local chemist or doctors' surgeries. You may also find you can obtain one through your nearest Neighbourhood Watch group, Age Concern, Council Offices, Housing Associations and other places including Police stations.

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FIGHTING MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE