



Multiple Sclerosis Society

WYRE FOREST &  
DISTRICT BRANCH  
NEWSLETTER

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016**



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www.thelcomingstz.info



## CHAIR'S CHAT

Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year to one & all. I hope you all had a good Christmas & that anything you got as presents & you don't really want, don't forget to bag them up & give one of us a call, we will arrange collection. If you liked everything all well & good, at least family & friends are listening to you throughout the year. My Christmas was spent with family, so I didn't have to lift a finger, not that I could as I am in relapse, but the mind was willing. Don't feel sorry for me, I sent the wrong letter to Santa, so it's my own fault, darn Royal Mail.

Anyway, the weather up until this week has been reasonably kind to us, but my heart goes out to all those poor people in Cumbria, Yorkshire & Scotland who have had to suffer the floods. For those of you who don't know I used to work for the Environment Agency, & I will only defend them so far. They need to get the rivers dredged, then this would not happen like they are, but the Government keep cutting budgets & it will be so costly to do the job, but that is no excuse. Enough of the politics as it gives me a headache.

We hope to have a few events this year to tempt you, we look forward to seeing some of you this year. I understand that some of you are unable to get about so easily, but those that can, come on down & be counted.

My letter is going to be shorter than normal as I am finding hard to type & the old brain is having trouble keeping up with the pace, but look after yourselves & keep warm during this cold spell. Don't go out unless you have to, if someone else you know can do it for you, then don't be afraid to ask.

Best wishes until next time.

Julie x

p.s Sorry if the newsletter is slightly late, but we have been waiting for some information. Better late than never.

JSC x

## NEWS

### **MS Society Awards 2016: new Branch of the Year Award**

The MS Society Awards are returning this year and we're introducing exciting new categories including 'Branch of the Year'.

Building on the success of the 'Volunteer of the Year Award' we want to honour branches who are demonstrating a continuing commitment to enriching the lives of people with MS.

You can nominate branches across the UK – big or small. We know that branches are out there making a real difference and the MS Society Awards are a chance to recognise and celebrate their contribution.

For more information about the Awards including the full list of categories and how to nominate see 'Nominate your star of the MS community'.

### **Local Networks Programme**

A huge thank you for giving your views on the Local Network Programme proposals.

These proposals set out a practical and ambitious way to better support volunteers, help local branches flourish and support more people affected by MS across the UK.

Hundreds of you came to our volunteer forums, our best turnout ever, and you were positive about the proposals overall.

Having taken volunteer feedback into account and in discussion with staff, the trustees have approved the majority of proposals with the guidance that we, as staff, look at the issues you raised. You told us you wanted us to look at the model of two different ways to be a branch. In particular you wanted to know how branches could move between the two types of group and whether we need to use different names for these groups in an external context. We'll take this feedback on board.

We'll come back to you in the Spring volunteer forums with the timescales and planning detail we know you want.

Your experience and insight is essential to the success of this programme. Please continue to let us have your views by contacting us on the email below or talking to your Local Network Officer (LNO).

## MS: Enough update

This month the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for MS will meet at Westminster to launch a review of the employment support people with MS receive. The review will be focusing on both the support available to help people stay in work, and the support provided when people with MS are no longer able to work. This includes disability benefits such as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

As part of the review, the APPG want to hear the experiences of people with MS. To be the first to hear about how you can share your experiences, make sure you've joined our campaigns community by visiting [www.mssociety.org.uk/campaign](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/campaign)

### Meeting the Minister

In November, we met with the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP. We discussed the issues highlighted in our *MS: Enough* report, and voiced concerns many people with MS shared about the change from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

This meeting was the start of an on-going conversation with the UK Government about what needs to change. We know that achieving some of these changes will be a challenge, but we'll continue to work with the Minister to ensure the experiences of people with MS are heard.

To hear more updates on the campaign visit [www.mssociety.org.uk/msenough](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/msenough). Thank you for your continued support with this campaign.

## Nominate your star of the MS community

Nominations for the 2016 MS Society Awards are now open until 19 February.

The MS Society Awards are a fantastic opportunity to recognise the stars of the MS community and their contribution during the year of 2015.

We're looking for people who:

- have brought about a real difference to people affected by MS
- have demonstrated innovation
- have changed things to improve the lives of people affected by MS either locally or nationally
- stand out from others providing a similar service/contribution

You can nominate in the following categories:

- Branch
- Carer
- Young Carer
- (under 18)
- Campaigner
- Digital media
- Employer

cont/.....

- Fundraiser
- Young Fundraiser (under 18)
- Media
- Professional
- Political Supporter
- Research
- Volunteer

Anyone is welcome to nominate – we want to hear from you!  
You can submit your nominations via the MS Society website at  
[www.mssociety.org.uk/awards](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/awards).

The Awards ceremony will be held in London in April, during MS Week.

## MS Life 2016

The MS Society's leading information and lifestyle event, MS Life, is returning in 2016. MS Life is the biggest event in Europe for people affected by MS, and is an unmissable opportunity to come and meet other volunteers from across the UK.

There will be 40 different interactive information sessions as well as a huge lifestyle exhibition to browse while making new friends and finding out what's new in the world of MS.

Following on from the success of MS Life 2014 held in Manchester, MS Life has a new home for 2016 – London. We're also moving the event to later in the year, so the dates to mark on your calendar are **17-18 September** at ExCeL London.

You can find more information on the MS Life website at [www.mssociety.org.uk/mslife](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/mslife)

## Teddies

Thank you to everyone who has donated Teddies and raffle prizes last year. We have had a good array of goods, which have gone on to good homes. Without your generosity, we would not be able to raise the funds we do. We still need your generosity, so don't stop thinking about us, especially as we have the Jumble Sale in February

## New Resources

We have one new resource available to order from the online shop:

*Claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP)* For people with MS who are going through the PIP claims process, this booklet looks at whether you're eligible to claim, as well as looking in detail at the assessment process, including completing the PIP questionnaire, the face-to-face consultation and how to challenge a decision.

### Updated resources

*Hearing* This factsheet provides an overview of MS-related hearing problems, how to manage them and explains how the brain processes information from the ear.

*MS Helpline leaflet* This leaflet gives information about the support the MS Helpline can offer people affected by MS, including a re-useable card with the MS Helpline contact details.

You can find up-to-date versions of all our most requested publications on the MS Society website Key Publications list, which is updated monthly: <https://www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-resources/key-publications>

Resources can be ordered from the online shop at <http://shop.mssociety.org.uk>.

Or you can obtain copies by phoning Denise Bedrock, Support Officer on 0300 9991011.

## Quiz-tastic

Eyes down, pens ready as 8 teams took part in the first Quiz Night held at the Gainsborough Hotel. The Quiz Mistress for the evening was our very own Julie Cox, who took no prisoners when it came to the marking of the answer sheets. The winners' were the Millers Maltesers who was presented with a trophy, winner's medals and a bag of sweets. They were the only team who got the question right on the one word James Bond films. The team with the lowest score were awarded a tin of baked beans. There was a picture round with one picture that stumped everyone; it was Zara Phillips, Princess Anne's daughter. Every team thought it was a gentleman such as, Paddy Ashdown. I admit it was a poor resolution, but honestly, poor Zara. This year Millers Maltesers will be defending their title on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November, if you think you can beat them why not enter a team, see if you can walk off with the title and trophy - he/she who dares wins!!!!



## FUNDRAISING UPDATE



## VACANCY

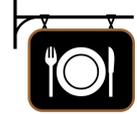
If you, or anyone you know is interested in volunteering for the MS Society, also if you are interested in joining the committee. There are numbers of roles someone can take on e.g. fundraising, newsletter editor, and support to name a few, and only taking up a few hours a month. If you are interested, please get in touch with Julie or Denise, details of which can be found on the back page, or email [wyreforest@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:wyreforest@mssociety.org.uk) for further information. **YOUR BRANCH NEEDS YOU!**

## Yoga

We are still running the weekly yoga sessions which is held on a Thursday afternoon 2pm – 3pm at St Cecilia's Church, Hoo Road, Kidderminster. It is all done either sitting or lying down. To book your place please contact Denise, come along & give it a try.

## **WHAT'S COMING UP**

### **SOCIAL**



The following lunch meetings have been arranged:-

**Wed 10<sup>th</sup> February – The Mitre Oak**

**Wed 16<sup>th</sup> March – The Mitre Oak**

### **MINI BUS TRIPS**

#### **Monday Night Group Pantomime 2016**

The MNG are performing Cinderella, and we are taking a trip to see them on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2.30 matinee performance. If you are interested in going, the ticket prices are; Adults £11.00, Seniors and children £9.00. If you would like to go then you need to call the MNG direct, telephone 07593 175776 to see if they have any more tickets left.



**Wed 24<sup>th</sup> February – TBA (call Denise closer to the date)**

*All dates are subject to alteration at short notice*

Book your place with Denise on 0300 9991011. We are always in need of volunteers in all areas, but is there anyone who would like to help as Escorts/Wheelchair Pushers to go on trips etc? Please contact Denise.

## **Donations of Unwanted Items**

Thank you to all the people that have already donated items which they no longer need or want. But, we are asking again for more items, especially cuddly toys, which will be used as raffle or tombola prizes. Please, please, please, have a look in your cupboards and drawers to see if you have anything – we are desperate for items. Don't forget, at the Christmas Meal in December, we have a huge raffle and need around 50 prizes for this alone. We can come and collect if necessary, so don't put off doing that spring cleaning and give us a call.

## **INFORMATION ZONE**

New and updated information booklets:- MS and your Emotions, Short Breaks. Work and MS - an employee's guide, MS in the work force - and employers guide, Speech difficulties, Swallowing difficulties and Talking about treatments. These are all available from Denise Bedrock or to download from the the MS society website, [mssociety.co.uk](http://mssociety.co.uk).

**Our Website** Don't forget our website - have a look at it regularly – it contains a lot of useful information, dates, contacts etc. If you have any information that you think would be good to be included on the site, please contact Julie and it will be passed onto Phil Lench our Webmaster. <http://www.wyreforestmsgroup.org.uk/>

**Our Facebook Page** Have you been having a look at our Facebook Page? If not, have a look – it gives you lots of information on Social and Fundraising Events, as well as links to other useful sites. [en-gb.facebook.com/MsSocietyWyreForestDistrictBranch](https://en-gb.facebook.com/MsSocietyWyreForestDistrictBranch)

## **Branch Details**

The branch has two new email addresses, they are;  
[wyreforest@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:wyreforest@mssociety.org.uk) or [wyreforestsupport@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:wyreforestsupport@mssociety.org.uk) and don't forget the branch's phone number is 0300 9991011. We need people to use this number, so that we can analyse types of calls and who is using the number. Denise loves talking to you all, so please start using the right number.

## Do You Need Financial Help?

The Society has money available to help members financially.

The procedure is easy and totally confidential.

For grants under £200 you need only send a letter stating how much is required and for what purpose to Denise. The request will be discussed and voted on within 28 days.

**NB We cannot award retrospectively so do not order the item before applying for help.**

**NB** We are constrained by Head Office so that we can only contribute to ONE session per person per year for Respite Care.

For larger amounts Head Office requires that we use an application form which Denise will help you to complete if necessary. The request will be considered by the Committee in complete confidence (no names used) and a decision made as to whether we can meet the request ourselves as a branch, whether we need to apply to other grant-giving organisations or if we will ask Head Office for additional funds. In the case of larger grants we will need a letter of support from your social worker or doctor.

In the first instance please contact your MS Support Officer Mrs Denise Bedrock 15 Coniston Way, Bewdley, Worcs, DY12 2QA Tel: 0300 9991011

## CARERS CORNER

There are Carer Groups all around Worcestershire, and two within the Wyre Forest. They are a valuable source of information and provide support and comfort to the long suffering carers of people with MS. If you have never been to a group, then why not give it a go.

### **Carer Groups: Where and when:**

Kidderminster: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in month, 2pm – 4pm at Kidderminster Library, Market Street DY10 1AB

Stourport: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in month, 11am – 12.30pm at Methodist Church, Parkes Passage off High Street DY13 8DJ

Tenbury Wells: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in month, 1.30pm – 3.30pm at Tenbury Wells Library, 24 Teme Street WR15 8AA

### **Courses and Informations Sessions for Carers**

#### **Legal and Financial Sessions – (Wills, Trusts, Lasting Power of Attorney etc)**

8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 10.30am-12.30pm - Kidderminster Library, Market St. DY10 1AB

## **First Aid for Carers**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2016 - 10am-12.00pm – British Red Cross, Lax Lane, Bewdley DY12 2DZ

If you would like to go to a session, then please ring Worcestershire Association of Carers on 0300 012 4272 or email [referrals@carersworcs.org.uk](mailto:referrals@carersworcs.org.uk).

*Carers, if you have got something to say or want to share stories or ideas, then get in touch and it will go into the newsletter*

## **RESEARCH**

# **Damage to myelin producing cells could trigger nervous system inflammation**

**Published date:** 16 Dec 2015 at 9:29AM

Taken from the MS Society website

**A new study provides evidence for oligodendrocyte (myelin making cell) death as a key event in triggering inflammation in the central nervous system.**

## **A new model of MS**

In MS, the immune system launches an attack on myelin, the cause of which remains unclear. In this study from the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, researchers used a mouse model to investigate whether oligodendrocyte death could trigger the immune attack that occurs in MS.

In this study, approximately 30 weeks after recovering from oligodendrocyte loss, the mice went on to develop a secondary disease characterised by extensive myelin and nerve loss, mimicking aspects of progressive MS. This provides evidence oligodendrocyte death could act as a trigger to an immune response against myelin.

The researchers then went on to show it was possible to prevent this trigger despite the death of oligodendrocytes, with specially developed nanoparticles. Development of this nanoparticle technology could lead to a clinical trial in people with MS in the future.

## **Conflicting theories**

Many researchers currently believe MS is caused by an event outside of the nervous system triggering an immune response in certain people. As a result, confused immune cells enter the brain and attack the myelin resulting in a range of debilitating symptoms. This is known as the outside-in hypothesis.

However, this study provides evidence to suggest MS may begin from inside the central nervous system, with damage or abnormalities to myelin and myelin-making cells triggering immune attacks and inflammation. This is known as the inside-out hypothesis.

## Dual impact study

This laboratory study demonstrates two promising findings.

1. It provides early stage evidence damage inside the central nervous system causes an immune response which can be prevented using nanoparticle technology in mice.
2. It provides an effective new mouse model which could be used for testing therapies designed to protect the nervous system in the future. This is encouraging as current models have a number of limitations.

Further research is now needed to understand the role of oligodendrocyte death in relation to the immune system attack on myelin, but targeting myelin repair is already a key strategy for many research groups within the field of MS. This research further illustrates the importance of finding therapies that can protect and repair myelin making cells as effective treatments for people with MS

## Understanding the needs of people with MS

Around 10,000 people with MS completed the My MS, My Needs survey in 2012, making it one of the largest surveys of people with MS in the UK. The findings have proven highly effective in lobbying for changes to national guidelines on the care and treatment of MS.

Early next month we'll be launching a new version for 2016. This will highlight where people are getting the treatments, services and support that they need, and where improvement is needed. Such information is vital for our work and will help us to work together to improve MS services.

### Everyone's response matters

For us to gather a clear picture of what it's like to live with MS in the UK, we need as many people to fill in the questionnaire as possible.

### Getting involved

If you're an MS Society member look out for the questionnaire arriving on your doorstep soon. You can also complete it through the MS Register. Please do take a few minutes to share your experiences.

If you have any questions please get in touch with the Research team.

## JOKE

First grade teacher, Ms. Brooks, was having trouble with one of her students. The teacher asked, *'Harry, what's your problem?'*

Harry answered, *'I'm too smart for the 1st grade. My sister is in the 3rd grade and I'm smarter than she is!*

*I think I should be in the 3rd grade too!'*

Ms. Brooks had enough. She took Harry to the principal's office.

While Harry waited in the outer office, the teacher explained to the principal what the situation was.

The principal told Ms. Brooks he would give the boy a test. If he failed to answer any of his questions he was to go back to the 1st grade and behave. She agreed.

Harry was brought in and the conditions were explained to him and he agreed to take the test.

Principal:

*'What is 3 x 3?'*

Harry:

*'9.'*

Principal:

*'What is 6 x 6?'*

Harry:

*'36.'*

And so it went with every question the principal thought a 3rd grader should know.

The principal looks at Ms. Brooks and tells her, *'I think Harry can go to the 3rd grade'*

Ms. Brooks says to the principal, *'Let me ask him some questions.'*

The principal and Harry both agreed.

Ms. Brooks asks, *'What does a cow have four of that I have only two of?'*

Harry, after a moment: *'Legs..'*

Ms. Brooks: *'What is in your pants that you have but I do not have?'*

The principal wondered why would she ask such a question!

Harry replied: *'Pockets.'*

Ms. Brooks: *'What does a dog do that a man steps into?'*

Harry:

*'Pants.'*

The principal sat forward with his mouth hanging open.

Ms. Brooks: *'What goes in hard and pink then comes out soft and sticky?'*

The principal's eyes opened really wide and before he could stop the answer, Harry replied, *'Bubble gum.'*

Ms. Brooks: *'What does a man do standing up, a woman does sitting down and a dog does on three legs?'*

Harry: *'Shake hands.'*

The principal was trembling.

Ms. Brooks: *'What word starts with an 'F' and ends in 'K' that means a lot of heat and excitement?'*

Harry:

*'Firetruck.'*

The principal breathed a sigh of relief and told the teacher, *'Put Harry in the fifth-grade, I got the last seven questions wrong...'*

## Social and Fundraising for 2016

Cut out the table and put in on your fridge as a reminder

### List of dates and events for 2016

January 14/15 <sup>th</sup>	Tesco Collections
February 19 <sup>th</sup>	Jumble Sale
March	
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Open Shop Volunteer Drive
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Cake Break
June	Alternative Therapy Day
July 8 <sup>th</sup>	Games Night Bewdley Flag Day
August	Jumble Sale BBQ
September	Race Night
October	
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	Halloween Theme Quiz Night
December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 11 <sup>th</sup>	Bewdley Lights Festival Christmas Dinner

## Quiz Answers from the last newsletter

1. What date is St Stephen's Day? **26th December**
2. In Charles Dickens' novel A Christmas Carol, who was Scrooge's dead business partner? **Jacob Marley**
3. London's Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is traditionally given by which country? **Norway**
4. Name the original eight reindeer from the 'Twas the night Before Christmas' poem? **The reindeer were:- Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen**
5. Which Christmas carol includes the lyrics '...To save us all from Satan's power, when we were gone astray..'? **God Rest You Merry Gentlemen**
6. What colour are the berries of the mistletoe plant? **White**
7. What are the names of the three wise men said to have brought gifts to the baby Jesus? **Balthasar, Melchior & Gaspar**
8. What is New Year's Eve called in Scotland **Hogmanay**
9. What Christmas item was invented by London baker and wedding-cake specialist Tom Smith in 1847? **Christmas Crackers**
10. In which modern country is St Nicholas's birthplace and hometown? **Turkey**
11. From which country does the poinsettia plant originate? **Mexico.**

Congratulations go to Val Hinton who sent in the correct answers to the Christmas Quiz. She wins a supermarket voucher – happy shopping!!!

## USEFUL CONTACTS



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