

January 2011

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From the Chair

A happy and prosperous New Year to you all!

The severe weather at the end of 2010 disrupted us all and I hope it did not adversely affect you or your celebrations. Regrettably the visit to the Albert Hall for the Christmas Carol Concert had to be cancelled due to the snow and ice. The cold also affected the amount collected at the last collection of 2010; unfortunate as this was the first time we had collected at Sainsbury's in Springfield. The poor weather however did not get in the way of our appetites, and the Christmas meal at Bartellas was a great success. We thank Bartellas once again for their valuable support.

2010 was an interesting year with the National Office implementing many changes. Only the next few years will see if these changes are a benefit to members and all those in the community affected by MS.

This year's Branch annual meeting will be held on 2nd April. As the Society has changed its charitable status these annual branch meetings will no longer referred to as Annual General Meetings (AGM). Going forward there will be one AGM which will be organized by National in September, and the Branch meeting will be referred to as an Annual Meeting (AM). The Branch will also have a new Charity Registration number in line with the change in charitable status.

The AM provides the forum for the committee to report on the highs and lows of the various activities it undertakes on your behalf. It also gives members the chance to ask questions or to raise any concerns they may have either with the Branch or the Society. The AM also means the election of the branch committee; any member can put themselves forward for any position. The three main offices are Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. There is a pressing need for someone to undertake the position of Secretary as the duties are being currently shared between two committee members who already have other responsibilities. If anyone is interested in this role or would like to become a volunteer within the branch please contact me. Notification of the AM and relevant forms are attached. The more volunteers we have will help to reduce the workload on the current committee members and may allow the branch to expand its activities.

Regards,

Les Lodge

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Out and About



The wintery conditions at the end of 2010 did nothing to dampen the spirits of all who attended the Christmas Meal at Bartellas. The food was delicious and throughout we were accompanied by the sounds of Michael Bublé as the tribute act sang the evening away.

After we had been fed, watered and were beginning to feel merry the disco started and those feeling brave showed off their moves on the dance floor. Martin was a particular inspiration as he boogied the night away in his wheels – thank you for being a great dance partner!

What's on in 2011?

New date for MS Week 2011

MS Week 2011 runs from Monday 23 May to Sunday 29 May, not the last week of April as previously advised. With Easter and the Royal wedding competing for attention over that week, we got together with the other MS charities to find another date that would give us a better opportunity to get heard.

During MS Week this year we'll be putting MS on the map through our unique MS register programme. Our aim is to map every person with MS in the UK.

The MS register will provide the first ever comprehensive picture of what life with MS in the UK, making it easier to fundraise and lobby for vital drugs and services.

The register will give a better idea of how many people have MS, what treatment and help they are receiving and the impact on their daily lives.

Cake Break

Cake Break this year will be on Friday 20 May 2011 – a great way to get MS Week off to a sweet start! Put the date in your diary now and look out for more information about registering.



Research News

Groundbreaking MS Society research has shown that damage to myelin can be reversed using stem cells.

The results come from [the Cambridge Centre for Myelin Repair](#) and the [Edinburgh Centre for Translational Research](#), two of the Society's [major investments](#). We hope these results lead to clinical trials in people with MS in the next five years and the possibility of treatment within 15 years.

Chief Executive Simon Gillespie said: "for people with MS this is one of the most exciting developments in recent years. It's hard to put into words how revolutionary this discovery could be and how critical it is to continue research into MS. We're delighted to have funded the first stage of this work and we're now considering funding it further."

(taken from the MS Society website, for full details go to www.mssociety.org.uk)

Fundraising Update

We start our collections in May and hope that the amount we collect in 2011 will be more than in 2010 so that we can continue to fund the branch activities.

Can you spare a couple of hours to support your Branch? Please let a member of the committee know if you are able to help at any of the collection days in 2011. Dates can be found on the events page at the end of this newsletter.

We do need more people to help on collection days; please do not expect the regular few to always do it. This is important if you want the branch to continue to be successful.



BT Free Priority Fault Repair



If you have a long-term illness or disability you may be eligible for this priority service. It is available on standard BT lines and provides priority treatment in the event of a fault occurring on that line. Priority is given ahead of other jobs, but immediate repair cannot be guaranteed.

For further information contact BT on telephone number: 0800 800 150.

The Census 2011 – Help tomorrow take shape

The Office of National Statistics carries out a census of the population every ten years; the next will be 27th March 2011.

Census information helps public bodies to plan services needed in the borough such as schools, hospitals, housing and transport. The census will generate 35,000 temporary jobs across the country.

For more information telephone: 0845 6044 013 or visit www.censusjobs.co.uk.

(Source for the above two articles: Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services (CVS))

Future Events



With the excitement of Christmas having passed, plans are starting to take shape for the 2011 calendar of events. We will advise you of any future events as they are booked and look forward to seeing you there. If you have any suggestions for future events please contact a member of the committee.

Don't forget!

As well as the special events we plan, we meet on the last Tuesday of each month at Margaretting Village Hall for a social to which all members are invited. These meetings are an opportunity to meet your committee and other members over a drink and to enjoy some of the treatments on offer such as reflexology and massage. The new start time for these meetings is now **7.30pm**, and the next one will be held on **22nd February**.

Date	Event	Cost	Location	Details
22 nd February 2011, 7.30pm	IT hints and tips & monthly social	Free of charge	Margaretting Village Hall, Wantz Road, Margaretting	Join us for the monthly social meeting and get some tips on improving your IT skills.
29 th March 2011	Liz Watling, Benefits Adviser, & monthly social	Free of charge		Liz Watling, Benefits Adviser, joins us at the monthly social.
May (date to be confirmed)	Quiz night	TBC	TBC	Watch out for details of the quiz night planned for May in the next edition of the newsletter.
Collection days:				
7 th May 2011	Collection day: Wickford	Your time!	Wickford	Please contact a member of the committee if you are able to spare a couple of hours to help out.
4 th June 2011	Collection day: Chelmsford	Your time!	Chelmsford	
16 th July 2011	Collection day: Billericay	Your time!	Billericay	
6 th August 2011	Collection day: Brentwood	Your time!	Brentwood	

Contacts and information

Branch website: www.bcmss.co.uk

Branch contact telephone: 07548 898945

MS Society Website: www.mssociety.org.uk