

May 2011

This issue: From the Chair... Support Update... Focus on Fundraising... Future Events...Contacts and further information... Confirmation of member details form

From the Chair



The Annual Meeting took place on 2nd April and really kick started the year for the Branch. Moving into 2011, at the forefront of our minds will be the change of government, the new structure of the MS Society and how these changes may affect the way in which the Branch operates.

A combination of highs and lows were shared with attendees at the Annual Meeting; officer reports from the committee show how hard they are working to help as many people affected by MS in the community as possible. It was therefore disappointing to see so few members at the meeting, with neither nominations nor offers of help being received from branch members. It was also sad to note the absence of a Speaker at the

meeting without notice.

On a positive note, in an effort to improve communication, one of our members in the Brentwood / Billericay area has kindly agreed to forward emails to members in those areas with an email address. The emails will contain information about services provided by the local council, GPs, the NHS and volunteer groups. If anyone in that area does not wish to be included in these communications please let us know.

At the Annual Meeting we also advised that the two minibuses had been sold to another branch. It was no longer considered viable for the branch to continue to maintain them, as it is possible to hire fully equipped vehicles as and when required for a fraction of the cost. The branch is still fully committed to meeting transport requests, but would ask that at least a week's notice given, with the exception of emergencies, for all transport requests.

Finally, I recently had the pleasure of meeting Debbie McIntee, a determined young lady, who will be climbing Kilimanjaro in early September to raise money for the MS nurses and the purchase of a portable bladder scanner. See more details and how to support her in the enclosed letter.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our social evenings,

Regards,

Les Lodge

Support Update

by Ann Davis, Branch Support Officer

IT Can Help

If you came to the Tuesday Social in February (not many people did because the weather was horrible!) or you made it to the Annual Meeting at the beginning of April, you will have heard me talk about an organisation called “IT Can Help”. This is a charity run by volunteers and supported by the Chartered Institute for IT. It offers free help for disabled people and can help by:

- Diagnosing and fixing most computer related problems
- Installing and setting up hardware, software, internet, email and accessibility settings
- Giving impartial advice on IT equipment and software to suit your interests and abilities

IT Can Help works closely with AbilityNet, an organisation which specialises in computing for disabled people. All their volunteers are CRB checked.

If you need their help the contact details are:

Freephone: 0800 269 545

Email: help@itcanhelp.org.uk

Please contact me if you have any questions about this on

Mobile: 07548 898 945

Email: anngdavis4@hotmail.com



Monday Club Exercise Class

Every Monday morning between 10.30 and 12.30 an exercise class is held at Springfield Parish Centre, St Augustine’s Way, Chelmsford CM1 6GX. We have a fitness instructor, Kelly Spiers, who takes us through a range of exercises to get us to use as many different muscle groups as possible. She is able to personalise a lot of the exercises so that they are suitable to people with a range of mobility problems. You just do what you can.

The exercises are done mostly sitting down, although a few can be done standing by those who are able. We also have two sets of parallel bars to help with standing and walking. Each session ends with a relaxation period – much needed after all that exercise!



We have a break half way through for a drink and a chat. All you need to bring is 50p for the drinks machine – the rest is free. So why not come along and join us? A couple of people who joined us recently had just finished a 6 week course of physiotherapy with the NHS. Their physiotherapist recommended coming along to us to build on the work done on the NHS course. Once people come along and try us out they find it very helpful and keep coming back!

Would it help you? If you fancy giving it a try just turn up at Springfield Parish Centre any Monday morning (apart from Bank Holidays) at 10.30am or if you want more information contact: Marilyn Tween, telephone: 01245 267951, or email marilyntween@hotmail.co.uk.

EXPERT PATIENT PROGRAMME **LOOKING AFTER ME**

Central Essex Community Services, part of the Mid Essex Primary Care Trust, run two FREE courses for people with long term health conditions and for their carers.

The **EXPERT PATIENT PROGRAMME** (EPP) is a free six week course for anyone living with a long-term health condition. The course aims to help you take more control of your health by learning new skills to manage your condition better on a daily basis. It deals with many of the issues and topics you face every day including:

- Dealing with pain and extreme tiredness
- Coping with feelings of depression
- Relaxation techniques and exercise
- Healthy eating
- Communication with family, friends and health professionals
- Planning for the future

The **LOOKING AFTER ME PROGRAMME** is a free course for adults who care for someone living with a long-term health condition or disability. The course is about you, how to make time to look after yourself and your own health needs. It aims to help you take more control of your situation and make a difference to your life and deals with similar issues to those listed above for the EPP.

Looking After Me does not cover carers' rights or benefits, nor practical caring skills such as lifting and handling, although there will be information available on these topics at the course.

Both these programmes are led by trained tutors who themselves are either living with a long-term condition or have experience of caring for a relative. They both run over six weeks with one, two and a half hour session per week.

For details about Expert Patient Programmes and Looking After Me courses in your area, to register your place on the programme or just to get more information contact:

Tel: 01376 333 286
Email: carol.roe@midessexpct.nhs.uk

(Ann Davis, Support Officer)

Online library catalogue

The new MS Society web-based library catalogue is now online. The library database provides easy access to the titles of hundreds of articles and publications from the MS Society, as well as links to key publications and articles on MS produced by other organisations.

Search the library database at www.mssociety.org.uk/library. Everyone can browse the catalogue online. You can also reserve items and monitor your loans by setting up your own membership account. For details please contact the librarian on 020 8438 9000 or at librarian@mssociety.org.uk.

(information from the MS Society's publication Teamspirit, May 2011 edition).

Map MS: Share your story through the Map MS Project

Record and upload a 30 second video and put MS on the map!

Many people affected by MS want to share their experiences and hear about what it's like for others. That's why we're giving anyone whose life is touched by MS the opportunity to share their story through the Map MS project. It will put hundreds of MS stories all in one place, and raise awareness of MS.

- Upload your clip - 30 seconds ideal, 1 minute and 100MB max - at www.mapms.org.uk.
- See your clip online from early May on our dedicated MS Week website www.mapms.org.uk.
- Get inspired by the other videos that will start appearing from then onwards

Anyone with a connection to MS can join in. If you aren't online, can your children or grandchildren film you, or do a clip of their own? All they need to do is go to www.mapms.org.uk - they'll know what to do.

Do share your story – anyone with access to a computer and webcam or a smartphone can do it. If you are not online, encourage other people like your family, friends and colleagues to film their story and put MS on the map.

The videos will be added to a map of the UK, so if you live in Glasgow, for example, your film will pop up at that location.

(information from the MS Society's publication Teamspirit, May 2011 edition)

Focus on Fundraising

Quiz Night

This month the Branch held it's first event of the year, the Quiz night.



Once again the night was a great success and enjoyed by all. Roger, the quizmaster, certainly produced a challenging set of questions which made it a fun evening. We had great support from Allen Ford of Romford who sponsored our raffle prizes; crystal glasses, a Marks & Spencer £50 voucher and a digital radio to name a few.

The evening raised approximately £900 for the branch.

A **BIG THANK YOU** to Lilian & Richard for all their hard work in making the night a success.



From the Editor

Since issuing these newsletters we have noted that there are some discrepancies in member details which are kept by the National Office.

Therefore, to ensure that records are correct and you continue to receive the latest information from the Society, please complete the tear off slip at the end of this Newsletter with your details and we will then forward them to the National Office. Please note that we will only share your details with the National Office for the purpose of improving records kept, we will not share them with any third party.

We are also looking for fundraising ideas or suggestions for future events; why not make use of the same slip to put your ideas forward?



Every year CAMRA (the Campaign For Real Ale) hosts a beer festival in Chelmsford. This year it will be held in Admiral's Park, Chelmsford from Tuesday 12th July until Saturday 16th July 2011, from 12 noon until 11pm each day. Two charities are invited to each festival and I'm delighted to say that this year the Brentwood and Chelmsford Branch of the MS Society will be one of those charities. The other is Families In Focus which supports families with children who have disabilities or special needs. I'm delighted because last year the two charities raised between them over £11,000 so I'm hoping that we can repeat and hopefully exceed that amount this year.

So we need volunteers to come along and help. It will be our responsibility, along with representatives from Families In Focus, to run the soft drinks stand. We will also be running some raffles and holding collections. If you would be willing to help, whether it's for an hour or half a day or even longer then we would love to hear from you. The more people we have the easier it will be for all concerned. You will, of course, have free entry to the festival and we will subsidise your food and drink. The really busy times are Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Saturday afternoon is also busy as it is the family day so there will be all sorts of attractions, such as a bouncy castle, for the children.

Thank you to those who have already volunteered. We will be in touch closer to the date when we know how many people we have and we are able to draw up a rota. Some of you have asked about parking, and I am pleased to confirm that you will be able to park close to the soft drinks area right next to the marquee.

So please, we'd love to hear from you if you'd like to help us raise some much needed funds for our branch of the MS Society, however little time you can afford to spare. And of course spend some time sampling some real ales or simply enjoying the friendly, relaxed atmosphere in the sun (I hope!).

If you would like to be involved, or you just want some more information about this wonderful, enjoyable event, please contact Ann Davis on 07548 898 945 or anngdavis4@hotmail.com by 28 June 2011.

(Ann Davis, Branch Support Officer)





Future Events

We would love to hear from you if you have any suggestions for future events. Please contact us on the Branch number, or make a note on the slip at the end of this Newsletter and let us know.

Date / time	Event	Cost	Location	Details
20 th May 2011	Cake Break	Cakes!	You decide!	To kick off MS Week why not hold a cake break event. Register for your free Cake Break host pack online at www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak or call 0845 481 1577 (when registering please quote Teamspirit).
31 st May 2011, 7.30pm	Monthly Social Gathering	Free of charge	Margaretting Village Hall, Wantz Road, Margaretting	A chance to meet your committee and other Branch members over a drink and to enjoy some of the treatments, such as reflexology or massage, on offer.
23 rd – 29 th May 2011	MS Week	Free of charge	-	Don't forget to support the MS register programme and put MS on the map. Go to: http://www.mapms.org.uk/
Collection days:				
4 th June 2011	Collection day: Chelmsford	Your time!	Chelmsford	Please contact a member of the Committee if you are able to spare a couple of hours to help out at any of these collection dates.
12 th – 16 th July 2011	Chelmsford Beer Festival	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

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Confirmation of member details form

Please complete in capitals and return to: Les Lodge, Chives, Domsey Lane, Little Waltham,
Essex CM3 3PS.

MEMBER NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POST CODE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Please note that we will only share your details with the National Office for the purpose of improving records kept, we will not share them with any third party.

Do you have any fundraising ideas or suggestions for future events? Then please share them with us below:

