

# SWINDON MS & NEURO THERAPY CENTRE

Supporting those with Neurological Conditions



# Autumn 2019 Newsletter

# WELCOME

Welcome to our Autumn 2019 newsletter.

That was an eventful summer! So much has been going on that it has been a challenge to try and cover it all in this newsletter. But we've made every effort to cover as much as possible – and hope you enjoy the pages that follow.

Sarah Heppenstall talks about our Community Fundraising activities (of which there continue to be many) and for which we remain hugely grateful. We hear from Kathryn Beale, our new Grant Fundraiser, about the wide range of work that she's doing on our behalf. Roger Durie gives us his thoughts about buying a second hand scooter on a budget. Louise talks about the many changes and challenges that we've had to deal with in our staffing and volunteer teams over the last few months. We hear about the plans for the Christmas meal (it comes around so quickly!), the upcoming AGM, brilliant work by Nationwide volunteers on our behalf and much more.

Looking back over the summer, there were a couple of personal highlights I'd like to mention. Well, actually, the first (Ride 100) was both a highlight and a frustration. Four of us rode on behalf of the Centre this year – and raised over £5,000 thanks to generous sponsorship by lots of brilliant friends and relatives! That's a highlight. Not quite so good, from my perspective, was the fact that the event is just getting so big now that 'ride' was less the order of the day than 'walk'! Because of the sheer numbers of people in the narrow Surrey lanes, I ended up walking 8 miles of the 92 that I was able to complete on the course....and because of delays was not allowed to ride up Box Hill (actually, every cloud and all that!). I did complete over 100 miles on the day though – as I parked 10 miles away from the start line and 6 from the finish!!

One highlight that *was* just a highlight was the work of two further groups of MSc students from Bath University on our behalf. The International MSc programme has a 'development track' element each year in which students are given a small amount of 'seed funding' and asked to raise funds and awareness for either a Bath or Swindon based charity. Our involvement in this programme started when I was at Zurich and we helped Bath University to put it in place several years ago – and it's great that we get invited back each year..

Two teams of students worked on our behalf this summer. 16 bright young folks from China, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, The Philippines, India, Pakistan, Sweden....and County Cork! To raise funds, one team held a games event in a Bath park and asked people to try and score (football) goals wearing heavy weights on their legs (to simulate an MS symptom). The other team held a 'blind lunch' in a Thai restaurant in Bath – again, simulating one of the MS symptoms (temporary sight loss) in asking people to eat their main course wearing a blindfold. Between the two teams, more than £700 was raised on our behalf – and awareness of our Centre raised within a very wide



population as a result of their efforts.

That's enough from me, for now, though. I hope you enjoy the rest of the newsletter and find it informative and motivating. On the subject of 'motivating', the staff and volunteers continue to motivate me hugely – and I am sure that they do that for all of you, too. It has been a challenging time lately, with sickness, retirements, life and job changes and other personal challenges all conspiring to make the balance between work we want to do and people we have on hand to do it a tricky one to maintain. The whole team have done a brilliant job, though, and I know that support and encouragement from everyone in the 'Centre Community' makes such a difference. So thank you to our brilliant teams who keep the Centre running – and to all of you, our members, for your encouragement, understanding and support as we navigate through some tricky waters!

See you at the AGM!

Best wishes

**Tim Culling**

(Chair of Trustees)

# Annual General Meeting

Friday 22nd November 2019 1:00pm

Lunch will be provided at 12:00pm

Please let Sian or Julie know if you are attending  
and would like lunch

# MEMBER NEWS

## Comings and goings...

Sara Pryke, who very ably ran our exercise classes and assisted regularly in the upstairs gym left us in July for pastures new. We wish her well but she will be missed by our physio team and many Members who enjoyed her classes. Sarah Heppenstall has been running the classes when she has been able to along with doing her Fund raising job too. We are currently looking for a replacement for Sara who will be able to join our physio team so we will keep you updated.

We said Goodbye to Allan Woodham, Foot Health Practitioner, who has come for many years to offer foot health to our Members. Many thanks to him. We have a new Foot health practitioner, Sue Messenger, joining us from October so we look forward to seeing her at the centre.

I am reluctant to say that we said 'Goodbye' to Pat Wilson in August as she is still continuing to come to the centre. Pat is no longer working as our centre administrator but is now volunteering instead and helping us with fundraising and admin tasks as well as filling in on reception which is extremely helpful. We miss her in the office, which feels very empty without her, but it's great she is able to volunteer for the centre, as well as give herself more time to enjoy meeting with other Members and attend exercise classes and the gym. THANK YOU Pat for all you have done and we'll miss the daily production of the Tunnocks caramel bar along with an abundance of



## **NEW FOOT HEALTH PRACTITIONER**

**FROM OCTOBER 2019**

Sue Messenger is next coming in on 18<sup>th</sup> November and monthly after that. If you would like an appointment, please see Sian/Julie or ring us on 481700. Costs is £15 payable to Sue on the morning.

satsumas which all of us helped you to eat!

We welcome Jackie Wray back temporarily, assisting in the office until we have appointed our new Finance and administration officer.

We are pleased to have Amanda Lever, Operations Manager back following a period of sick leave. We are also pleased to hear that Andy Collier, one of our Senior Oxygen Operators, is doing well and we look forward to him joining us again once his treatment has finished.

## QUIZ NIGHT

Openwork are organising a Quiz night for STC members on Tuesday 12th November . Places are limited so strictly for members only at first with a reserve list being made for Carers and Partners, please see Sian/Julie to book your place. Food orders need to be made by Monday 4th November and the choices are Fish and Chips, Sausage and Chips and Veggie burger and chips

## HOLISTIC THERAPIES

CARRIE MICHAEL IS AVAILABLE AT THE CENTRE SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK. Would you like to try a holistic therapy? Reflexology, Reiki, Bowen Technique, Hopi candles, Indian Head Massage and Kinesiology. Please contact Carrie on 07771517766 to make an appointment or talk to her about therapies available. Payment of £20 is payable direct to Carrie.

# SCOOTER BUYING

## Buying mobility scooters on a limited budget

For those of you who have limited finances like myself and do not want to use your DLA/PIP to fund a scooter there are numerous bargains to be had when buying secondhand scooters online via E-Bay, Gumtree, Pre-loved etc.

To quote my own experience, having bought both a car boot scooter and an 8mph full size scooter in the last two years (and several others beforehand ) there is very little to go wrong and any faults would normally be very apparent when trialling. The only assumption that you would have to make is that the batteries may need replacing and these would cost circa £60-00 for a boot scooter and £150-00 for the larger 8mph machine ( these are often at the end of their life because scooters have been left uncharged for too long prior to sale) Replacing batteries is straightforward for any competent D.I.Y. er.

If you are considering a boot scooter be aware that many do not have suspension and this can be uncomfortable if you have a back problem or frequently encounter very uneven surfaces.

To illustrate the possible savings, I bought my two scooters as follows

Model	Age	Cost new	What I Paid	Cost of Batteries
Drive Viper 8mph	2 years	£2500	£400	£150-00
Pride Apex Raid (boot scooter with suspension)	2 Years	£800 (min)	£300	£55-00

As far as boot scooters are concerned Motability will contribute to an electric hoist if you have a Motability vehicle and these make loading and unloading much easier.

I originally thought I would cope without a scooter and not 'give in' to using one but I often reflect on how grateful I was to Ben Shewring for persuading me to try one and then selling me his spare one for £50-00. I've never looked back!

**Roger Durie**

# FUNDRAISING UPDATE

## LOVE YOUR OXYGEN

Thank you to all those who donated to our Love your Oxygen Tank week in February. We now have 4 new chairs in the chamber.

## NATIONWIDE GRANT

We had a very generous Grant from Nationwide this year which has allowed us to purchase a new chair for the gym, 4 sets of wallbars and some more equipment for our gym classes. The wallbars have enabled our classes to extend both across the room and in numbers. More details about the classes are below.



## QUIZ

Our Annual quiz was held at Supermarine Community Room on September 27th. We had a good attendance with 14 teams and a great selection of Puddings to sample. Thank you to Gary Walker for being our Quiz master and Joe on scores. And thank you to all those who made Puddings and came along to this event.

## EXERCISE CLASSES

The weekly Exercise classes have changed slightly according to demand and feedback. If you would like to attend and see which classes suit you, please have a chat to any of the physio team, Carol, Carolyn or Sarah.

Monday 10:am —Seated and wall bars class

Wednesday 10:00am —Seated only class

Friday 10:00am —Seated, Standing and Floor mat class.

# CITIZENS ADVICE

## **Welfare Benefits – do you know what you’re entitled to?**

Thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund, members of the MS and Neuro Therapy Centre are able to access one to one benefits advice from a Citizens Advice Welfare Benefits Caseworker at the centre.

There are also monthly Citizens Advice drop-in talks on various subjects. The next talk, about grants available, will be on Monday 21 October at 11.30am.

Caroline visits the Therapy Centre weekly to see those who would like advice on many aspects of benefits, including :

- General benefits entitlement – whether you are receiving everything you are entitled to, and whether you are on the correct rate.
- Challenging decisions – including Mandatory Reconsiderations and appeals up to first tier tribunal and upper tribunal levels.
- Grants available.

Sometimes it’s difficult to know which benefits you might be entitled to claim, especially if you haven’t looked into it before.

Some benefits depend on the other income coming into the household, and some are contribution-based, so depend on the National Insurance contributions that you’ve made.

There are another set of benefits, such as Personal Independence Payment, that don’t rely on either of the above, but are awarded to people who meet the criteria because of particular circumstances or illness/disability.

It is worth finding out if you can claim benefits, as you could be missing out on money that you are entitled to. This could help with day to day costs of living and – where related to disability or illness, can help towards additional expenses. Citizens Advice can advise about eligibility, and the way to claim, which varies with each particular benefit.

Some benefits require forms to be completed – especially those which are awarded due to illness or disability such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Citizens Advice Welfare Benefits Caseworkers are skilled at supporting



people to complete forms.

We can also help where people have a decision that they don't quite understand, and are uncertain whether to challenge or accept the decision.

We advise people considering challenging a decision to seek help, especially if they already have an award, because challenging a decision can lead to awards decreasing as well as increasing or remaining the same.

### **What next?**

If you would like advice about benefits entitlement, challenging a decision or grants entitlement, please contact the MS Therapy Centre to arrange an appointment.

Caroline is available for one to one appointments on the following dates:

2, 9, 16, 23, 28 October

7, 11, 20, 25 November

4, 9, 19 December

## **JOIN US FOR THE MONTHLY DRAW**

**1st Prize £150**

**2nd Prize £45**

**3rd Prize £20**

**Prizes are drawn on the 7th of each month (or nearest working day) with entry for only £1 per week paid in 4 instalments of £13 payable on 5th September, 5th December, 5th March and 5th June. Next draw entry point is for the December Draw so your application form and payment (by standing order or cheque) needs to be at the centre by 5th Nov.**

**Please contact the Centre for an application form or further information.**

# OUR STARS

## Ride London

Months of training, thousands of pounds raised and all 4 of our cyclists gathered at the Olympic park in London to begin their 100 mile cycle to explore the Surrey Hills and see the London sights. Well done to Mark Lever, Tim Culling, Chris Speller and Sarah Heppenstall who cycled, walked and battled to the finish line. Between them they raised over £5300 which is an amazing amount. Thank you.



## Amy Cave-Ayland

Well done Amy Cave-Ayland and DW Fitness First for doing an 8 hour spinathon to raise money for the Centre. They have so far raised an incredible £1250.22.



## Jennifer Merritt

Thank you to Jennifer Merritt for running the Swindon Half Marathon and raising £336.35.



## Victoria Gazzard

Trevor Gazzard's daughter Victoria took on 22 London Bridges and 22 miles of walking and raised £373.

## RAFFLES

Our Summer Raffle and Party back in July was held at a fun bring and share lunch and we raised £1150 from the raffle.

Our next raffle will be held at the Christmas Party on Wednesday 11th December and we have some amazing prizes including a night away with dinner at De Vere Cotswold Water Park for 2. Raffle tickets will be on sale from mid October. If you can have some extra tickets to sell around friends, social groups or work please contact the Centre.

# SHOPPING

## Amazon Smile



If you are an AmazonSmile customer, you can now support Swindon Therapy Centre For Multiple Sclerosis in the Amazon shopping app on your Android device! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. If you have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, open the App on your Android device.
  2. View Settings and select AmazonSmile.
  3. Follow the in App instructions to complete the process.
- AmazonSmile is not currently available for iOS users.

## ONLINE SHOPPING



Thank you to our amazing supporters shopping online with easyfundraising. £13.93 was raised in September for the Centre by people just clicking through the easy fundraising site before they do their online shopping. Your support really does make a difference, so don't forget there's 3,300 shops and sites you can raise free donations with.

Please make sure you shop the easyfundraising way every time you buy something online:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/msswindon>



## CHRISTMAS CARDS

We have our Centre Christmas Cards on Sale with 6 different designs. They are £3.50 for a pack of 10 or £10 for 3 packs. These and many crafts created by our members will be on sale at our Handmade Fair on Saturday 9th November. More details are on the back of this Newsletter.

# THANK YOU

The centre cannot survive without **your** support.

Over half of our income comes from donations from generous individuals and amazing fundraising efforts. Thank you so much to all those who have organised or hosted collections, run fundraising events, or chosen us as their charity partner this year, including....

TR Register, Kennet Valley Group

Blunsdon WI

Chippenham WI

Thamesdown Rotary

**Thank you to the following stores for allocating us a collection**

Co-op, Old Town

Tesco Metro, Town Centre

Orbital Shopping Centre

**Thank you to the following who have made Donations**

Pride of Swindon

Old Town Rotary

Shakespeare Live

Bushton and Clyffe Pypard WI

Bath University MSc Student Teams

# THANKS TO

With special thanks to the following Trusts, Foundations and companies. Without your support we simply would not be able to offer the range and scope of services that we do for people with MS and life limiting neurological conditions.



Douglas Arter Foundation

DNO Consulting

The Jack Lane Charitable Trust

Dr T C Wilson Charitable Trust

And finally, thanks to the following Trusts who have awarded grants to Swindon Therapy Centre's new roof and car park



The John Rayner Charitable Trust

# Handmade Fair

**Saturday 9th November  
10:00am—12:30pm**

**At**

**Swindon Therapy Centre, Bradbury House  
Westmead Drive, Swindon SN5 7ER**

**Entrance by donation**

Come and support the Centre and buy seasonal gifts. There will be a selection of crafts, drink and food for sale from local crafters plus refreshments and a tombola.

Please come along and bring your friends and family.



SWINDON  
MS & NEURO  
THERAPY CENTRE

Get in touch with the centre, We're here to help

Please get in touch and tell us your ideas and feedback. We would love to hear from you.



[stcswindon@msswindon.org.uk](mailto:stcswindon@msswindon.org.uk)



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Bradbury House, Westmead Drive, Swindon SN5 7ER