motor neurone disease association

Reading and West Berkshire

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News Letter



A terrific tee off for MND

Ninety generous golfers have hit the fairways to raise a whopping £12,350 to help support families affected by MND.

Managing director David Elliott organised the fun day at Goring and Streatley Golf Club in honour of his friend Paul Pearce, who is living with the disease.

"It was a great day and everyone was so generous," said David, from Upper Basildon, near Reading.

David, who runs Open Door Recruitment based in Pangbourne, worked closely with Keith Sessions, the golf club's Membership and Society Liaison Manager.

Keith has friends who have MND too and some members have lost loved ones to the disease, explained David.

He said: "I would like to mention Keith, who is known to us all as 'Wobbly'. Around 90 golfers came together on April 25th to play the fantastic, conditioned course, the sun was shining and lots of fun was had."

The magnificent total raised for the MND Association's Reading and West Berkshire Branch included proceeds from an auction of prizes generously donated by local companies.

"Their support played a key role in the success of the event and we're truly grateful for their generosity," said David.

Prizes ranged from David Beckham and Thierry Henry signed shirts to boat trips, four-ball rounds at other golf courses and restaurant vouchers.

There was even an impromptu sponsored Yard of Ale drinking challenge with several pints of Guiness in a traditional long glass swiftly downed by James Gesner, pictured right, raising £250. Impressive!

"He didn't flinch – easily done!", said David, who hopes next year to organise another day on the greens whilst making a difference.

Jane Gilbert



Organiser David Elliott (second left) with playing partners Peter Hart (left), Colin Lengahan and Paul Rainsden (right).



Registered Charity No 294354

The MND Association is my lifeline, says Angela

Carer Angela Hay and her husband Graham Attridge, who is living with MND, discovered they were not alone after attending their first Drop-in support meeting.

"We now diary date the meetings and that will take precedence over anything else," they said urging others to find the courage to walk into the monthly sessions run by branch volunteers at The Calcot Centre, near Reading.

Here Angela, from Newbury, bravely shares how these friendly get-togethers have helped them to cope after receiving the shattering diagnosis of MND.

She writes: "When my husband received his diagnosis of MND it felt as though the world had collapsed around us. It was on 25th April, 2023.

On August 1st, 2023 we went to our first Association meeting in Calcot.

The intervening months were filled with conversations with family and friends - 'Are you sure?' 'How do you know?' 'Can it be something else?'

We also had conversations with specialists, employers, and estate agents.

But we had not had any conversations with people who were living with MND or who knew about living with MND.

I had a conversation by chance with the wonderful Helen Varley at Glenvale Nurseries in Southend Bradfield. When I told her about Graham's diagnosis, she immediately knew what life would be like for us and told us about her dear friend Jane Gilbert who volunteers for the local MND. She told me about the wonderful work of the Association and said that we must go along and speak to Jane. The seed was planted - excuse the pun!

Initially, this was very much something I needed to do. Graham wasn't too fussed. He had been very pragmatic about the whole situation whereas I was on an emotional roller coaster.

I remember arriving at The Calcot Centre and sitting in the car. I had no idea what to expect or what I would see. Did I want to see other people with MND. Would they all be like Rob Burrow?

This is an extract from my diary at the time:

I felt quite nervous before I went in. There were quite a few people there. Sandwiches were provided on tables. A lovely lady said hello to us and went to sit down with us and another couple of ladies. They both had lost someone to MND. One lady whose name I forgot, asked me how I was after we had told them about Graham's diagnosis. I said I was anxious and felt myself get upset because it was another defining moment which compounded that this is happening. She stroked my arm and was very supportive. When I left she gave me a huge hug which I really needed.



Angela and Graham looking very glamorous on their recent cruise holiday

Now, two years on the MND Association is my life line.

I have met the most incredible people, those currently living with MND and those wonderful people who have lived through supporting people with MND and continue to support those of us who are still on that journey.

I meet people who 'get it'. I can offload my own frustrations, and no one judges me. They understand. Hugs are so important, and I get many of those.

Kim Facer, who was the 'lovely lady' I met on my first day, still gives me the most wonderful hug. She is a super star as are all the volunteers!

If you have any hesitation about going to one of the meetings my advice would be to find the courage to walk in and do it. You will never look back.

Graham and I are no longer alone on our journey. We diary date the meetings and that will take precedence over anything else.

We enjoy the conversations, the sandwiches and camaraderie that unites everyone.

Please come along and be part of this wonderful unique, inclusive and supportive Association. "

Thrilling race night is a MND winner

An exciting sell-out Race Night, organised by loyal branch supporter Claire Maslen, was a popular winner raising a massive amount of money to help fight MND.

About 120 punters placed their bets and cheered on their horses in April as they watched races on the big screen at Tilehurst Royal British Legion Club whilst enjoying a tasty supper.

Claire writes "It was a truly fantastic evening! I'm absolutely thrilled to announce that our virtual race night for MND raised an incredible £4,763. The atmosphere was buzzing with excitement and generosity.

"A massive thank you to everyone who participated and made it such a success. Your support, whether through sponsoring races or horses, donating raffle prizes, or helping out behind the scenes, made all the difference.

"This significant amount will go a long way in supporting local families in the West Berkshire community. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"
The Committee say a massive thanks to Claire, her tote assistant Sue Roberts and all their hardworking helpers. And of course to all the punters who came along to help make the evening go with a swing.



Claire kneeling at the front with all her Dream Race Night Team

Events Co-ordinator Mary Dodds and Association Visitor Jan Gryglaszewska presented Claire with flowers on behalf of the branch.

Claire has been a loyal supporter of the branch since her close friend Helen Jay died of MND in 2016.

Jane Gilbert



Happy punters at the races!



Checking the tote!

TV's Austin bakes for MND

A guest appearance from Austin, TV's Junior Bake Off 2024 winner, was the icing on the cake for Jacqui Warbey's successful MND fundraiser.

Young Austin, who lives in Emmer Green, arrived with some delicious lemon butter cream cupcakes he had made for Jacqui's customers on Easter Saturday.

Jacqui and Austin's dad Tim are former work colleagues, and she followed the young baker's progress when the TV programme was broadcast earlier this year.

"I was so pleased when he won," said Jacqui.

"Recalling that they had come to my plant and cake sale last year, I asked Tim if Austin would like to be my celebrity guest this year.

"Austin joined us between 11am and 1pm and brought along his winner's trophy, a delicious chocolate and strawberry gateau, some cookies and some lemon cupcakes with MNDA on - someone had done their homework!"



Jacqui's fantastic cake and plant sale held in memory of her husband Richard, who died of MND eight years ago, has now become a popular event for her friends and branch supporters. This year she raised an amazing £1,234 with, hopefully, a further £350 in match funding from her employer Vodafone.

Planning began last summer with Jacqui taking plant cuttings and asking friends for plants and cakes. She also took a charity leave day to bake.

A fabulous Easter hamper donated by branch supporter Claire Maslen with help from Mary Dodds was an Eggstra special raffle prize.

Jacqui is also very grateful to friends and neighbours who helped in a variety of ways on the day.

She added: "We did Richard proud with this year's sale. It was a busy but successful day. It never ceases to amaze me just how many people have some connection to MND."

A big Thank You to Austin who also gave the MND Association Reading and West Berkshire Branch a shout out on his social media.

You can follow him on Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/_austin_bakes/

Jane Gilbert

Kim's Easter fundraiser was eggs-cellent!



The third Easter cake sale and egg raffle at Purley Park Trust raised a cracking £484 to help fight MND.

Organiser Kim Facer, a branch committee member who works at the assisted living residence, said: "I am thrilled with everyone's kindness and generosity".

Our volunteers were also delighted to be part of the eggstravaganza in April which featured delicious coffee, cakes, cute knitted chicks and a mega Easter egg raffle in which every resident won a prize.

Kim is grateful to all her friends and colleagues who donated the eggs and helped her with the baking. And she gave a special shout out to her house manager Vic Gerring who donated the proceeds from the sale of her beautiful cards and painting.

Kim is pictured right with Branch Committee Member Linda Green and her grandson Ellis.

Jane Gilbert

Sunshine and smiles at the Art Cafe

Spring had certainly sprung at the Art Cafe on March 8th - the sun was shining, the daffodils and crocus out in glorious bloom at Whitchurch-on-Thames.

We were treated to the church bells ringing as we set up the room and were not quite prepared for the number of people that came through the door at 10.30.

We had so many locals, supporters and people affected by MND flooding in to be greeted by a table laden with beautiful home-made cakes. We even ran out of chairs, and the local church was kind enough to lend us some. By 12.30 the cake table was empty!

It was wonderful to see so many turn up for our cause raising a record £462.50.

Huge thanks to the Dream Team for the help, the amazing bakes and support.

Katie Cooper





Paddy Lunn and Debbie Webb serve branch supporter Kerry Findlay



Congratulations to Cliff and Carol Allen who were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary at the Art Café

To connect with us on Facebook please click on the following link:

https://www.facebook.com/mndrwb/

Chief Scientist shares exciting research news

"In a world full of adversity we must still dare to dream" – Rob Burrow

Chief Scientist Dr Brian Dickie MBE quoted the MND legend's final words in a recent uplifting and impressive update on the Association's latest research programme.

"We are starting to dream of the day when we can really start to crack this disease and treat it.

"MND research is a marathon and not a sprint," he said on the eve of the Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon. "I really do think we are heading in the right direction and taking up pace."

Dr Dickie revealed news would be announced soon of an exciting development using artificial intelligence to coordinate research databases globally.

He was speaking at a meeting organised by the Branch following its donation of an amazing £105,000 to research work, the remainder of a West Berkshire woman's legacy.

The funds will be used to support two clinical research studies at the University of Oxford led by Dr Alex Thompson where his team are using the latest techniques to identify biomarkers or fingerprints of MND in blood and cerebrospinal fluid samples. One of the projects will look at data from people's health records to discover if cholesterol influences the risk of developing MND. Another will examine clumping of a particular protein which can be seen in brain and spinal cord cells of people who have died of MND.

Dr Dickie told the invited audience at the Calcot Centre that scientists were getting closer to understanding the complex disease. The Association is funding 133 grants worth more than £24m with another £3m in spending shortly.

"MND has gone from being a Cinderella disease right to the forefront of research," he said explaining the causes were believed to be multifactorial – two thirds genetic versus one third environmental with ten per cent of cases having family history. Through IVF those who carry a risk gene can now ensure it is not passed onto any future children.



Dave Sayer, Christine Wilcockson, Margaret Moss, Brian Dickie MBE, Jane and David Lewis.

Dr Dickie also stressed the need to find a way of diagnosing MND earlier.

"It is still taking a year from disease onset to diagnosis which is not good enough," he said.

The collection of samples from young family members who carry a familial MND gene but have no symptoms could open the possibility of more rapid diagnosis and early treatment. The Association is in early talks to expand the Oxford-based ACORN Biobank study.

Another project is testing drugs quickly on 50 patients at Oxford and Sheffield in a bid to find effective treatment. There is increasing research into exercise and the way people are "wired" rather the effect of the sport itself, he added.

Branch Chair Margaret Moss said the branch was honoured to have Dr Dickie as a speaker and stressed that the branch considered the funding of research work one of its important aims alongside the day-to-day support of families affected by the disease.

A Question-and-Answer session rounded off the informative and inspiring afternoon.

Jane Gilbert

Newsletters

If you would like to change the way you receive newsletters (post or email) or if you do not currently receive your own copy and would like to be added to our mailing list (post or email) please contact

Kerrie Newton: secretary@mndrwb.org

Sign up for a champion Ray of Hope MND bloom

The chance to buy a prize-winning MND Begonia grown in honour of Reading's Ray Dalfsen has now been revealed.

It took five years to raise the specimen bloom for exhibition and aptly-named Phil Champion now has 24 beautiful plants from which to take about 120 cuttings.

Phil, a former Reading man who played football with Ray, says he will have a small number of tubers available to sell this autumn to help fight MND.

The waiting list to buy a tuber costing £25 is now being opened by the Reading and West Berkshire Branch which is supporting Ray and his family on their MND journey.

Tubers sell commercially for £50, says Phil who has keen interest for his prize-winner which is registered as The Ray of Hope and was awarded best in bloom at both the national championships and Southport Show.

He is also hoping to sell 100 tubers next year at £25 each to suppliers who can expect to retail them at double the price. He is kindly donating all proceeds to branch funds.

The idea for the Ray of Hope MND Begonia came from Phil's brother-in-law David Ling who is delighted that a few of the tubers will soon be available.

He said: "I wanted to leave Ray a legacy which he now has and that will be ongoing. It's rocking and rolling from this year with a small amount.

"Phil is a great guy and he is doing this for the love of Ray."

To register an interest or join our waiting list email Branch committee member Kim Facer: contact@mndrwb.org.



Begonia facts: The plants are sold as a tuber (bulb) which die down for winter and need to be stored frost free. They are normally grown under glass but can be grown outside. Plants can only be reproduced by taking cuttings off previous year's plants which take nine months to produce a tuber (bulb) ready to create a plant the following year.

Follow the growing from greenhouse to showbench on Phil's Facebook page – Phils Begonias.

Jane Gilbert

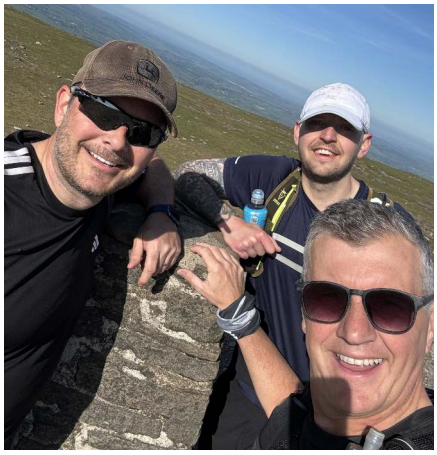
We can help in so many ways . . .

We are the Reading and West Berkshire branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, and we are your local point of contact. You might be surprised at how we can help you and people living with MND, their families and carers. We do a lot more than just providing voice banking, fundraising and organising the social events you read about in this newsletter.

We are all volunteers and most of us have had a close connection with MND. We work with professional health care providers to try and ensure people living with MND get the best possible care and advice. We also have a few hard working trained volunteer Association Visitors (AVs) who can offer guidance and support.

Don't be shy, use the contact details so we can discuss with you how we might be able to help.
Email: contact@mndrwb.org Tel: 07760 854975

A big shout out to all our amazing MND athletes



Marc Lenaghan (right) and friends on the Three Peaks Challenge



Sue Wheal with her finishers medal



Paul, Kathryn and Steve flying the MND flag at Reading Half

They smashed it!

Congratulations to all our amazing supporters who have run, walked, swam or made some cool moves to help fight MND.

Between them they have raised thousands of pounds making a difference to families affected by the disease as well as helping to fund vital research work.

The MND Association is also very grateful to its supporters who have fundraising challenges and events in the pipeline. They include Reading Joggers which has chosen the Branch to be its charity of the year in honour of two much loved enthusiasts who lost their lives to MND – Nicky Sayer and Andrew Lenaghan – as well as friends living with the disease.

A team from the running group recently formed a guard of honour at the funeral of former runner and Reading School chef Andrew Lenaghan, who died suddenly on April 8th, aged 60.

As a heartfelt tribute his younger brother Marc Lenaghan smashed the Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon on May 11th in 4 hours 9 minutes shortly after completing the Three Peaks Challenge in 8 hours 50 minutes. Marc was running in honour of Andrew and their father, who both died of MND.

"It was very emotional," Marc said, "but the positivity of the supporters on the marathon course really helped."

Next up for Marc is the epic Ironman in Leeds on July 27th when he is planning to raise funds for the MND Association.

Andrew also inspired one of his Reading School colleagues to run the Reading Half Marathon raising around £1,000 in aid of the branch.

Mother-of-three Sue Wheal from Woodley, said when she found out that Andrew had MND: "It really got to me as he used to be a runner, and I don't want to imagine how I'd cope without it. It's my way of giving him hope. "

A neighbour of Andrew, David Smith from Ford's Farm, Calcot, is taking on a big 50k walking challenge on the ancient Ridgeway as part of the Race to the Stones event on July 12th.

David, a strong walker, aged 72, said: "All I must do is smash my target in memory of my dear friend Andrew. This time last year we were both working in Linear Park at Calcot together. It's heartbreaking to see how much has changed in that time.".

Now David believes it is payback time to support the Association in memory of Andrew who regularly volunteered to help neighbours and good causes.

"To help to eradicate and improve the lives of people living with MND, I intend to walk the 50k Race to the Stones if the old legs allow it, which I'm pretty sure they will," he added.

Brothers Paul and Steve Morgan-Russell proudly wore their MND Association running vests for the Reading Half Marathon in support of two mums in their family living with MND.

Teacher Paul was raising funds for the branch on March 23rd in honour of their mum Juli while for Steve, whose mum-in-law also has the disease, it was a warmup for the Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon where he raised £5,000.

Continued on next page.

A big shout out to all our amazing MND athletes - cont

Steve says the MND Association and the Leeds Marathon are very close to his heart and he was thrilled to be running it for the charity.

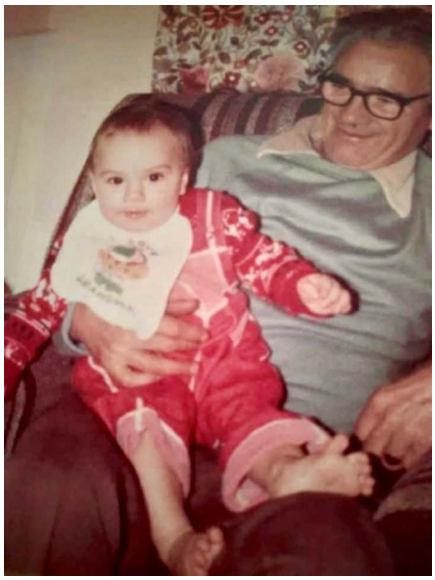
He said: "My Mum and my mother-in-law are both living with MND and it's taken a colossal toll on them and our family. I'm hoping that any money I raise will help in supporting those living with MND and their families, as well as contributing to the search for a cure for this horrible disease."

The brothers met up at the Reading Half Marathon with Kathryn Maunder-Hand who was also proudly flying the flag for MND. Kathryn is a former teaching colleague of their mum Juli who is being supported by the branch.

Also running at Reading was Sam Wigglesworth, aged 27, from Southcote, who took on the challenge in memory of family friend Helen Jay, who lost her battle to MND in 2016.



Sam Wigglesworth proudly wearing his MND vest



Baby Mark with granddad Peter

Sam raised a wonderful £1,560 to help the branch continue its support to local families. His mum Claire Maslen also organised a brilliant Race Night for branch funds (see separate story on Page 3).

Association Visitor Jan Gryglaszewska is super proud of her nephew who pushed himself through the Manchester Marathon in honour of her inspirational dad Peter Brennan MBE.

Mark Brennan was a young boy when he lost his granddad Peter, aged 64, to MND 31 years ago.

"It broke my heart", said Mark, now a 44-year-old father-of-two, who raised £765 after pounding the streets of Manchester on April 27th.

Jan said: "I am really proud of Mark and it's a lovely way to keep the memories of my dad alive."

Supporter Kathy Madden's cool moves in March made every minute count for the MND Association.

Kathy, from Wash Water, near Newbury, did a combo of walking, running and mowing the lawn for 1,652 minutes raising £165. And well done to her for exceeding her target.

Making a splash is Sarah Foster who is attempting to swim 6KM in May for the "amazing" MND Association.

She writes: "This is very close to my heart as my dad was diagnosed with this incurable disease in 2022.

"This disease is really horrendous and affects people in so many different ways. I am taking on this challenge to help support this charity and raise as much awareness as possible."

As the Newsletter went to press Sarah was nearly at the halfway mark on her challenge and had already raised a marvellous £694 for the Association.

Help her to make an even bigger splash by donating to her online fund - see next page.

A massive THANK YOU to all our super star supporters! It's not too late to donate to their online pages listed on page 10.

Jane Gilbert



Cool moves from Kathy Madden

How to sponsor our amazing athletes featured on pages 8 and 9

Sponsor Sarah here: www.facebook.com/donate/1417844799232006/10163203147565908

Sue's donation page: https://localgiving.org/fundraising/for-Andrew-Lenaghan-and-MND

You can support David Smith here: https://www.justgiving.com/page/dave-smith-4?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=015

Paul's fundraising page: https://www.justgiving.com/page/paulmr-readinghalf-mnda?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=015

Steve's online page https://www.justgiving.com/page/steve-morgan-russell-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=015

Check out Sam's localgiving page here: https://localgiving.org/fundraising/Sam-s-Reading-Half-for-MND-Association-in-memory-of-Helen-Jay

Mark Brennan's Manchester Marathon fundraising page: https://www.justgiving.com/page/mark-brennan-2765?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=015

Check out Kathy's donation page: https://socialsync.app/fundraiser/cr-9mkx6dl6q9779

Hoedown for branch committee members

Fancy footwork was on show when branch members Jan Gryglaszewska, Mary Dodds and Linda Green joined the Tilehurst Square Dance Club for some fun on the floor!

Not only that, but the club made a very generous donation of £800 to the branch.

Huge thanks to all the members for their warm welcome and support for local people living with MND.

Want to get your feet tapping? Beginners meet on Monday evenings from 8-10pm at Beansheaf Community Centre, Calcot.

For more details email:

tilehurstsquaredanceclub@gmail.com

Jacqui McGachie



Pat Jenkins (Chair), Jan Gryglaszewska, Mary Dodds, Linda Green and Kath Sammars (Caller Coordinator)

Lin's fundraising season is in full swing

Branch Fundraiser Lin Jenkins' busy season of selling donated items at car boot sales and summer events is in full swing.

Here she is pictured at Burghfield May Fayre on May 11th sporting a top hat to match one of the colourful performers from the visiting circus group.

Lin took along her stock of camping and picnic equipment to sell, the majority of which she had salvaged from the Reading Festival site last August, and raised a wonderful £155 to help fight MND.

"What a great day this was," she said. "We were blessed with lovely weather, and I have never seen the event so well attended. The whole field was crowded. We arrived with two very full carloads, and left with just one, and not quite full at that.

"Again, we met some lovely people, and heard some lovely, but sad stories. People just like to come and chat to us, which is wonderful. I may not be making quite as much money this year, in these austere times, but I certainly feel we are doing some good in other ways as well. It is lovely when people come and seek out our MND stall."

Lin's stock has also been flying off the shelves at car boot sales packed with buyers and sellers aware of the need to re-use and recycle.

On Beanpole Day, at Caversham Court, buyers snapped up Lin's used garden equipment and tools. And her retro items proved popular on Sunday 4th May at Lambourn Vintage Machinery and Country Sale. "What a success this was (apart from the freezing cold wind)," she said. "Not only did we sell a lot, but it was a lovely, friendly atmosphere."

A favourite event of Lin's is Yattendon Fete which she was due to attend on Spring Bank Holiday Monday with her well known Washing Line Game. It's a poignant day for the family as her husband Paul and brother-in-law Alec, who is living with MND, grew up in the village.

Whenever there is not an "event" you can find Lin on Saturdays at Bunns Car Boots, Prospect Park, Reading, or My Car Boots at Thatcham Memorial Ground each Sunday.

She adds: "As usual, thanks to my family and friends for their help throughout the year, with a special mention to Julie Dix."

Jane Gilbert



Lin's upcoming events

Lin has a number of events planned over the next few months, including:

Sunday, June 1st at Tadley Treacle Fair, Saunders Fields, Tadley RG26 4FF, signed from A340 Aldermaston Road

Saturday, June 7th/Sunday, June 8th at Stoke Row Steam Rally, Hill Bottom, Whitchurch Hill, RG8 7PU

Saturday, June 14th at Pangbourne Fete, The Meadows from 12-7pm

Saturday, June 21st at Winnersh Fete, Bearwood Recreation Ground, Sindlesham

Sunday, July 6th at Theale Fete

Saturday, September 20th at Spencers Wood Fete.

However, we are sure she will be popping up at many other venues so look out for her throughout the summer (and autumn, winter and spring).



Thanks to Alec Jenkins for another great quiz. Answers can be found on the back page.

Join Louise, a friend and supporter of the Steve Jobar MND Race Day, on her delightful journey.





Cheers to The Wishing Well!

Raise your glasses to The Wishing Well pub in Oxford Road, Reading, where its birthday drinks were sold to help make a difference.

The Craft Union Pub company donated 10p to the Association's Reading and West Berkshire Branch for every tipple sold on May 14th.

"Together, we can raise funds for a cause that truly matters," said the pub on its Facebook page.

A whopping big cheque from Terry's wonderful walkabouts



Terry is pictured with Ruth and Ray Dalfsen, their daughter Emma (front right) and granddaughter Emily, aged 13. Branch Chair Margaret Moss (right) received the cheque.

Big hearted Terry Dixon has raised a whopping £2,750 to help support local families affected by MND.

And it's all thanks to a chance meeting with Ruth Dalfsen who went on one of local history guide's fascinating Reading Walkabouts. Several years later Ruth's husband Ray was diagnosed with MND and Terry decided to choose the Association as one of his charities for the year.

"It was a no brainer when the opportunity came along," said Terry, as he presented the cheque at the April Branch Drop-in support meeting.

"It's special for me to give this money for the wonderful work you do."

Ruth and her family are equally thrilled and grateful for this amazing donation. During the past year Terry raised a similar amount for ABC to read and gave a smaller donation to a military charity. His fundraising total so far has reached a massive £25,700 for a host of good causes.

What a hero!

Jane Gilbert

Derek celebrates big birthday at Branch Drop-in



Cheers to Derek Hince who enjoyed a surprise 80th birthday celebration at our March Drop-in support group meeting.

We had previously pictured Derek enjoying our bakes at the Art Café and decided the image should feature on his special birthday cake.

He and his wife Sally loved the surprise as well as the Buck's Fizz shared with all our MND community.

Former art teacher Derek, who is living with motor neurone disease, said: "I thought there was something happening, how nice, then I realised it was for me!"

Derek and Sally have been busy planning a few fundraisers in aid of the branch. They are opening their garden in Purley-on-Thames on July 12th, from 2-4pm. (For more details contact the branch).

And on September 27th their son-in-law's six-piece Mighty Triple O Band will be rocking for MND at Purley Church from 7.30-9.30pm. Save the date!

Jane Gilbert

Andrew and his friends walk the Kennet and Avon for MND

Andrew Johnston and his friends set themselves a challenge raising funds for MND by walking 15 miles along the Kennet and Avon Canal from Great Bedwyn to the Plough on the Green, Newbury, on May 24th.



Groundsman Andrew (50), from Greenham, lost his mum Joan to the disease four years ago during Covid. Now his friend Sasha-Marie Banning is facing the same heartbreak as her mother is battling with the disease.

He said: "Every step we take will be in memory of my mum and in support of those living with MND".

You can sponsor Andrew and his fellow warriors here:

https://localgiving.org/fundraising/MNDWarriors

Jane Gilbert

Win a beautiful beachfront home - and support MND research!

We're very proud to launch a new partnership with the Omaze Million Pound Draw, which will raise a minimum of £1 million to support MND research.



As part of the partnership, Omaze is offering those taking part the chance to win a beautiful beachfront home in Sussex worth £4 million, along with £250,000 in cash.

Omaze will also donate at least £1 million to the MND Association to develop its pioneering Research Nurse Network – a life-changing project which will give people living with MND the opportunity to take part in clinical trials and revolutionise the future of MND research. So by entering the draw you're supporting our incredible research work.

Look out for adverts which will be appearing on television and across our social media channels.

To enter the draw go to :

https://www.mndassociation.org/about-us/who-we-are/raising-awareness/omaze-million-pound-house-draw

Dates for 2025:

3rd June

15th July

19th August **

23rd September

28th October

Drop-in Meetings - An open invitation

You are warmly invited to our Drop-in Meetings

The Calcot Centre, 3 Highview, Calcot, Reading RG31 4XD

12.30 - 2.30pm

These meetings are an opportunity for you to share experiences and thoughts, meet with friends who understand. We would be very pleased to see you. Please feel free to bring a relative or friend - all are welcome.

If you haven't been to a Drop-in before and feel anxious because you don't know what to expect, you are not alone so please read the story on page 2.

RSVP to secretary@mndrwb.org or call 07760 854957.

A selection of sandwiches will be available.

The venue has wheelchair access, toilets and car parking on site.

From junction 12 of the M4 head on the Bath Road (A4) towards Reading. You will pass Sainsbury's/IKEA on your left and in a few hundred yards at the next roundabout take the first exit onto Royal Avenue. Take the 4th road on your left, Highview, and the centre is on the left (signposted). Click here to view venue in Google maps,

** **Please note that instead of our usual Drop-in on August 19th, there will be a Branch Tea Party at Burghfield Sailing Club, Hangar Road, Reading RG7 4AP. Afternoon tea will be served from 2-4pm. There is plenty of parking.**

Get in touch with MND Connect on 0808 802 6262

MND Connect is available Monday to Friday between 9am - 5pm and 7pm - 10:30pm.
Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones within the UK and do not appear on itemised bills. You can also email **mndconnect@mndassociation.org**

ANSWERS

1: Taylor Swift 2: John Parrot 3: Sheryl Crow 4: Walter Sparrow (UK actor) 5: Jodie Foster as Clarice Starling 6: Ann (Annie) Nightingale (DJ) 7: Robin Williams 8: George Woodcock (Trades Unionist) 9: Jay Leno (US commedian) 10: Sir Christopher Wren 11: John Bird 12: Chris Martin (Coldplay) 13: Janet (Jan) Ravens 14: Clair Goose (British actress) 15: Eddy "The Eagle" Edwards 16: Alan Partridge 17: Peter Finch 18: Charlie Drake 19: Andy Crane 20: Chesney Hawkes

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