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MND Association | Reading and West Berks

News Letter



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From grief to giving back – the personal journey that inspired an MND Charity of the Year nomination

An exciting partnership with a major IT distributor has got off to an amazing start thanks to a heartfelt campaign from MND Dream Team volunteer Claire Maslen.

Claire, a Catering Supervisor at Theale-based Westcoast, put forward the Association's Reading and West Berkshire Branch in an impassioned bid to become the firm's chosen charity this year.

And the 52-year-old mum from Southcote, near Reading, was over the moon when her colleagues gave her nomination the most votes.

Claire described the moment she learned the fantastic news: "I felt completely overwhelmed and quite emotional."

Her inspiration came ten years after losing her close friend Helen Jay to motor neurone disease.



Luke and Wendy are pictured with (from left) Westcoast's Claire Maslen, Abigail Bowyer and Emma Sines

Claire explained: "Our sons played football together from the age of five, and over the years I became very close to her. When she was suddenly diagnosed with this incurable and devastating disease, the West Berkshire branch provided incredible support to the whole family. Seeing the difference they made is why I felt so strongly about nominating them, and why I've remained involved with the charity ever since."

More than 400 employees from Westcoast's three sites were told about the impact of MND at a successful kick-off meeting in February. Claire was joined by Association Visitor Wendy Gouldthorpe and Luke Robson, the Association's Relationship Fundraiser.

Claire said: "It gave Wendy and me the chance to highlight the incredible work we do locally and to share why this cause means so much to me. Twelve years ago, when my lovely friend Helen was diagnosed, the Branch team were all there for us — and that's what inspired me to give something back.

"Since then, I've been genuinely overwhelmed by the support and positivity at work. The momentum has been amazing." Charlie Dyson, aged 21, one of the Westcoast team, bravely took on a sponsored head shave raising £646 (picture on page 2), while other colleagues are getting involved by cycling, running, baking cakes and even planning the ice bucket challenge. An Easter raffle and mini egg competition also netted £430.

And Claire's dedication hasn't stopped at her nomination. She has taken on a remarkable personal challenge to raise both funds and awareness by joining fellow fundraiser Lee Didcock on the final leg of his 7in7 for MND walking challenge in May (see story on page 2).

Claire said: "The final leg is from Oxford to Reading, so I decided to join him. As I'm not the fittest and now in my fifties, I hoped people would sponsor me, knowing it's no small feat for me to take on walking thirty miles with a challenge like this."

Continued on page 2

From grief to giving back - continued from page 1

Westcoast says: “Together, we hope to honour Helen’s memory, support families facing MND, and help fuel the search for better treatments and, one day, a cure.”

The Association’s Luke Robson praised the partnership which has given the opportunity to share the important work being done in the fight against MND.

He added: “We’re incredibly grateful for Westcoast’s commitment throughout 2026 and we know their support will have a significant impact on our local MND community.”

You can support Claire’s 30-mile walk on May 22nd here:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/claires-mnd-walk

Jane Gilbert



Charlie Dyson after the shave. Looking good!

We’re counting down to Lee’s awesome 7in7 MND Challenge

There are just a few weeks to go until Lee Didcock strides out on the challenge of a lifetime for his dear pal Kevin Jefferies.

Lee, who lives in Wokingham, is bravely walking the equivalent of seven marathons in seven days raising funds and MND awareness.

He is setting off from Anfield football stadium on May 16th - as dad-of-five Kevin, who is living with MND, is a massive Liverpool fan - and covering 192-miles to Reading’s Atrium pitch on May 23rd. There he will kick-off a re-union football match (see flier on page 3) involving friends of Kevin, who lives at Spencer’s Wood.

Lee said: “It’s our way of showing to Kevin that we are here for him. Kevin is one of my oldest friends, I have known him since I was eight-year’s old.”

The 7in7 MND Challenge will be the culmination of months of tough physical training as Lee has been striding out in all weathers most weekends. He and his cousin Dave Purton recently undertook the punishing Hyrox challenges at London’s Olympia to hone their physical strength.



Dave and Lee take on Hyrox.

All Lee’s funds are being split three ways – 50% to MND Association Reading and West Berkshire, 35% to Kevin Jefferies’ family support and 15% to MND Association Research.

Follow Lee’s epic bid to make a big difference to families affected by MND on Instagram @mndchallenge – 7in7 for MND and check out the online donation page by scanning the QR code on our flier.

For those who don’t do QR codes, you can use this link:

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/7-7mnd

We’ll be following Lee every step of the way!

Jane Gilbert



Saturday 23rd May
Kevin Jefferies' supporting
MND Association Reading & West Berkshire

Gate and bar open from 12noon, and kick off 1pm.

Venue - The Atrium Health Club, Scours Lane, Reading RG30 6AY

50% of all money raised will go to MND Reading Association Reading & West Berkshire.
35% - Kevin Jefferies - Family support, and 15% MND Association - Research.

Please donate here: https://h7.cl/1iaQ0

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Chris Rocks Fest for MND

Music fan Mark Pearson is helping to make everyday matter for his close friend Chris Cullen who is living with motor neurone disease.

Since schooldays the pals have shared a love of music, films and literature - as well as a good laugh. And when Chris, from Wokingham, was diagnosed with MND a music festival seemed the perfect way to celebrate their shared passion while raising money for a cause close to their hearts.

Mark said: "I was devastated when he told me about his diagnosis and realised I had to do something to support the MND Association, but also to give Chris, his family, and myself, something positive to focus on."

Chris Rocks Fest is being held on June 20th in a paddock next to Mark's house in Marston, Wiltshire, and is being hosted by Game of Thrones actor Clive Mantle, who is a friend of Mark.

Mark's wife Sarah is also helping to give Chris, aged 67, and his wife Anne a night to remember.

He said: "It is designed to run from 4pm to I2pm, with a live disco at the end to make sure everybody gets up and dances!

"There will be a bar, the profits from which will go to the MND Association, and food stalls. All the volunteers and the bands will wear CHRIS ROCKS FEST T-shirts, supporting the MND Association.

"We've already raised more than enough to cover the costs of the festival so all surpluses will go to the charity as well as revenue from tickets, of which we're hoping to sell 400.

"In brief, it's been, and still is, a roller coaster (think mini Glastonbury!) but the amount of support and encouragement we've received, both from businesses and the public, has been overwhelming. Most of all, I've been touched by how much Chris and Anne's families have thrown themselves into this, offering all their support at what must be such a difficult time for them.

"And last of all, Chris, of whom I'm so proud. He's been amazingly strong and determined to enjoy life while he can. It's given me the strength and desire to make this a day to remember for everybody. Since I started this campaign, I've heard many stories of people who have lost loved ones to MND and I hope this event will do its bit to raise awareness of the disease and funding for the Association."

Chris, who worked in advertising and marketing for forty years until Covid, said: "Mark is a very dear friend of mine, whom I've known for 60 years. He was one of the first people I told about my diagnosis of MND. He ran the idea of a festival past me a few weeks later. He wanted to do something that would help the MND



Chris, on the left, with friend Mark

cause but would also be personal to me and to our friendship. I love my music – hence the festival.

"It has been truly amazing how he and his lovely wife, Sarah, have gone about organising this event. The effort that they have put in to make this day in June really special is something extraordinary. Despite the MND prognosis, I feel very lucky to have such a kind and generous friend, as well as the support of my wife, Anne and all the family and friends who will be there on the day."

For details on how to donate or buy a ticket visit:

https://tinyurl.com/chrisrocksfest

Jane Gilbert

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

Vivace Voices sang loud for MND

Women's choir Vivace Voices has hit its highest ever note raising an amazing £2,049 to help fight MND.

The record-breaking total is thanks to generous donations at its Christmas Concert in St Mary's Church, Burghfield and carol singing at Asda in Lower Earley.

Bravo to the singers, their musical director Ian Westley, and choir member Liz Aldersley who nominated the branch in memory of her dear friend Mick Foster who died of MND last June.

Liz, who was delighted with the result, said she was determined the choir would raise at least £2,000 in memory of Mick.

It was a wonderful tribute to him and several other loved ones of the choir who had been affected by this devastating disease.

Our volunteers were thrilled to receive this bumper cheque from the choir at its singing practise in February.

Jane Gilbert



Liz Aldersley, watched by Ian Westley, presents the magnificent cheque to (from left) Barry Dodds, Kim Facer, Jane Gilbert and Mary Dodds.
For the eagle eyed, an extra £10 was donated after the cheque was printed!



Wedding bells for Emma and Charlie



Congratulations to Emma Dalfsen and her new husband Charlie Banton who are making every day matter despite being affected by MND.

The happy couple tied the knot at historic Ufton Court on February 19th surrounded by their loved ones including Emma's delighted dad Ray Dalfsen, who is also living with MND.

Emma's six children and two grand-children all had key roles in the ceremony; son Harry was a groomsman and grandson Cailo, aged four, who often attends our Drop In meetings, was the smartly dressed ring bearer.

We are delighted for them all.

Jane Gilbert

Business club's brilliant gift to help fight MND

Wokingham Probus Club heard about the vital work of the Association after a tasty steak and ale pie lunch at Coppid Beech Hotel in February.

Relationship Fundraiser Luke Robson and volunteer Association Visitor (AV) Wendy Gouldthorpe were invited to speak after the charity was chosen this year by Chair John Briault who lost a close family member to MND.

John is pictured with Luke and Wendy after a collection at the lunch



raised nearly £700 for the MND Association.

Luke described the generous gift as "brilliant" saying much of the amount would be spent on support for people living with MND in the Berkshire area.

Probus is not primarily a fund-raising body; emphasis is on friendship, lunching together and social activities. However, one charity is supported each year by Wokingham members who are retired, or semi-retired, professional, business people.

Jane Gilbert

Little superstar Ethan smashes it for family friend

Young supporter Ethan, aged 7, smashed the Reading Mini Marathon raising more than £1,000 in honour of a family friend who is living with MND.



The little superstar ran the fun 3K race alongside his dad Chris while mum Emma, sister Katie, aged 5, and three-year-old brother Jamie were cheering them on.

Ethan said: "A good friend of my mummy and daddy has recently received a diagnosis of motor neurone disease. He got my daddy into running park runs, so I'm now going to run my first mini marathon for him."

The family, who live in Woosehill, Wokingham, were inspired by their close friend Jamie Miles, a 45-year-old dad with three young children, from Earley.

When he was diagnosed with MND, the family was determined to take on a fundraising challenge in aid of the Association's Reading and West Berkshire branch which is supporting Jamie, his wife and family.

Ethan's fantastic effort involved running around Reading's Green Park on March 22nd finishing to collect his medal at the Select Car Leasing Stadium.

He has raised a magnificent £1,110 plus £247 in gift aid so far and he is keeping his appeal going for another few weeks.

"Please help me raise money to help this charity who will be helping them and others," says Ethan on his online donation page here:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/emma-connor-11

Jane Gilbert



Art Café is another showstopper

We had another stunning showstopper at the February Art Café in beautiful Whitchurch-on-Thames.

The MND Dream Team was out in force proudly displaying the new Association branded colours.

And our amazing fundraisers Lee Didcock and Claire Maslen even nailed a 13.4-mile training walk for a slice of the coffee and cake action.

We also greeted Reading Joggers Chair Jolyon Roe who made a swift divert from his morning run to discover the delights of the Art Café where a huge slice of home-made cake and a cafetiére of freshly brewed filter coffee is on offer for just £3.50 - it's a no brainer!

Clever Crafter Barbara Moore was another surprise visitor arriving with three large boxes of beautiful hand stitched items for the branch to sell at various events.

Huge thanks to organiser Katie Cooper, her hardworking team, and all our loyal customers who raised a wonderful £500 to help fight MND.



Be sure to catch us next time serving the best value coffee and dreamy cakes in town for a heartfelt cause.

90th Birthday Cheers for Gill



Super gran Gill Schuller is a regular volunteer at our Drop-in events despite reaching the remarkable age of 90.

And Branch Chair Andy Jones paid tribute to her dedication with a surprise birthday celebration at the March support group meeting.

"Gill is always here making sure people are OK," he said presenting her with a bouquet of flowers and a cake on behalf of the Dream Team.

Mother-of-three Gill, from East Reading, has a heart felt desire for an effective treatment – and eventual cure - to be found for motor neurone disease. Sadly, she lost both her husband Ervin and then daughter Ildiko to MND within ten years of each other.

She said: "The same drug (Riluzole) was offered to my daughter as my husband, and nothing had changed in those ten years."

Now two of Gill's seven grandchildren and one of her sons are taking part in research studies at the Oxford MND Care and Research Centre.

We hope she had a wonderful time celebrating her big birthday on April 13th.

Jane Gilbert

We're feeling the love from Calcot Evening W.I.

It's great to hear that the MND Association came out on top for support after a vote by a local women's group.

Thanks to the members of Calcot Evening W.I. the branch has another £500 to spend on helping people living with MND make every day matter.

Branch Chair Andy Jones and Association Visitor (AV) Wendy Gouldthorpe were delighted to collect the generous cheque at the group's annual general meeting in March at Kennet Valley Free Church.



Both Andy and Wendy spoke about the important work of the MND Association, shared facts about MND and highlighted the wonderful support the branch was able to give last year.

Andy said: "Wendy spoke about her role as an AV and brought home the impact of the disease giving examples of how the branch has been able to make a difference to quality of life for people living with MND."

President Anne Springer told how the money had been raised from events such as coffee mornings, cake sales and raffles.

They are a small group and this was a significant achievement for them to raise £500, added Wendy.

Jane Gilbert

Kim's egg-cellent Easter Bake and Raffle

Big-hearted Kim Facer has hosted another fantastic Easter fundraiser in memory of her beloved bestie Maz Swann.

This year's fourth eggstravaganza at Purley Park Trust raised a cracking £383 for the MND Association thanks to Kim's hard work and the generosity of everyone involved at the assisted living residence where she works.



Kim is pictured (third from right) with some of our MND Dream Team and her wonderful helpers from Purley Park Trust

Delighted Kim, who is also one of our MND Dream Team, shared her heartfelt thanks saying: "To all my dearest, most generous and kind friends — thank you for always answering my call for donations to my Easter bake and raffle in support of the MND Association Reading and West Berkshire, in memory of Maz Swann. Forever loved and deeply missed."

Kim said the kindness and support truly made a difference to the event on March 23rd, bringing smiles and a real sense of community spirit to everyone at Purley Park Trust, near Reading, a charity which supports adults with learning difficulties.

After all, who can resist a delicious slice of cake (or two!) and an Easter egg treat?

Jane Gilbert



QUIZ

1. I'll have what she's having
2. ...., phone home
3. That'll do, pig
4. I'll be back
5. Mrs Robinson, you're trying to seduce me. Aren't you?
6. Houston, we have a problem
7. Go ahead, punk, make my day
8. I could have been a contender
9. I love the smell of napalm in the morning
10. A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti
11. I see dead people
12. Surely you can't be serious. I am serious, and don't call me Shirley
13. You're going to need a bigger boat
14. I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse
15. Take your paws off me, you damn dirty ape
16. Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn
17. My Mama always said, "Life was like a box of chocolates"
18. In space no-one can hear you scream
19. They call me *Mr* Tibbs
20. No-one puts baby in the corner

Thanks to Alec Jenkins for another super quiz. See page 16 for answers

Reading Joggers have smashed it!

"We said Never Again!", declared a trio from Reading Joggers when they signed up for the town's half marathon in March.

Tracy Hawkins, Tracy Pandya and David Hawkins were inspired to take up the running challenge by the fantastic work of our volunteers. And they smashed it, raising a brilliant £1,220 between them.

Their efforts were just part of an impressive year-long fundraising campaign in memory of two much-loved colleagues, Andrew and Nicky, who both lost their battle with MND.



Congratulations Reading Joggers Tracy Pandya, David and Tracy Hawkins – they smashed it!

After a slow start, Reading Joggers picked up the pace with a host of successful and fun events ranging from a car wash to a flutter on the horses at a race night. Recently, a successful quiz in February raised an amazing £800. Congratulations to winning team Let's Get Quizzical!

Tracy Hawkins, who led the fundraising year with her husband Dave, said:

"A huge thank you to everyone who has given their time volunteering, whether it be marshalling or washing cars, who have donated prizes, bought tickets, and attended our events. We wouldn't have been able to do this without you."

The final total is still to be announced as the joggers have a few more awesome challenges in the pipeline.

Paula Lees, another member of Reading Joggers, ran the Reading Half as a training run for the big TCS London Marathon on April 26th.

Paula says: "I am raising money for the MND Association Reading & West Berkshire branch after the support and comfort they provided for two of my running colleagues and their families over the last year. Sadly, we lost both within a month of each other.

"It is a fast and cruel disease and I will do anything I can to raise money for volunteers like those in the Berkshire branch to keep support going for all those who need it."

You can support Tracy, Tracy & Dave's Reading Half Marathon challenge here:

https://localgiving.org/fundraising/TTDRWBMNDA

Check out Paula's TCS London Marathon page in aid of Reading and West Berkshire Branch:

2026tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/paula-lees

And the best of luck to Occupational Therapist Katy Page-Rumsey, from Caversham, who is also running the TCS London Marathon raising funds for the Reading and West Berkshire Branch. She proudly wore the new MND colours for her training run at the Reading Half Marathon.



Katy is pictured wearing her MND running vest at the Reading Half Marathon

Katy says: "I work in the area as an OT and have been so grateful for the valuable work you all do for a lot of my patients."

"It is also a charity that is personally important to my family so thought what better opportunity than see if I can raise a little bit for a very important cause. It is a very long way to go and I have my longest training run this weekend of 20 miles!

"I'm definitely not a fast runner… but my main aim is to get to that finish line!"

Give Katy's fundraising a push by donating here:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/katy-page-rumsey

Jane Gilbert

Dottie and Gail's right royal day out



Our brilliant ambassadors Dottie Channing-Williams and Gail Pearce were delighted to be invited to the MND Association's royal rebrand reveal.

Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, was guest of honour at the special event in January to showcase the new brand.

And she spent time chatting to people living with MND and their loved ones during the event at One Great George Street, London.

Dottie, who lost her beloved husband ex-jockey Steve Jobar to MND had asked Gail, whose husband Paul is living with MND, to be her plus one. Dottie said she felt honoured to be invited and enjoyed chatting with The Princess Royal.



She said: "I told her I don't know where I would be without the MND Association because they know more than the NHS. People living with MND don't get what they need soon enough."

The reception, attended by about eighty guests and hosted by broadcaster and Association patron Jeremy Vine, shone a spotlight on the new brand, five-year strategy and commitment to make every day matter for people affected by MND.

The rebrand marks the most significant change to the charity's identity in more than a decade and responds directly to feedback from more than 5,500 people – including people with MND, carers, researchers, volunteers, clinicians, supporters and people who didn't know the charity.

At the heart of the new identity is a modernised logo, a fresh signature colour, terracotta, and a set of distinctive fingerprint-inspired visuals symbolising the individuality of every person's experience of MND.



The refreshed brand aims to strengthen engagement, attract new audiences and support faster progress in research, campaigning and high-quality care.

Tanya Curry, Chief Executive of the MND Association, said: "It's been more than a decade since we reviewed our brand, and so much has changed in that time – the expectations of people with MND, awareness of the disease and the challenges people face, and the landscape we work in. Now it's our turn to change.

"While there'll be lots of talk about a new logo and a new colour, this is about much more than that – it's about us being bolder and more ambitious, striving harder and faster to improve the lives of people diagnosed with this brutal disease now and into the future."

Jane Gilbert

Dying well – is it possible?

A remarkable man who captured his journey with MND through his drawings has helped to inspire a powerful and thought-provoking talk.

Dr Jane Bywater, Clinical Lead for Palliative and End of Life Care with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, delivered a wide-ranging public lecture at Bradfield College on what it means to "die well".

She explored the emotional impact of dying; why honest conversation is vital, and what patients and families most value at the end of life.

Dr Bywater told the audience about a remarkable man from the Newbury area, who was an artist and one of her patients a few years ago.

"He wanted to capture his illness through his art to be shared with friends," she said. He had MND which affected his ability to paint and draw. In a way his images were all the more powerful because he had been affected (by the disease)."

The artist communicated his innermost feelings through his drawings and handwritten messages with one of them reading: "The process of dying takes a lifetime."

Dr Bywater said there was a huge gap in palliative care provision and stressed the need for people to talk about "Dying Well".



Dr Bywater is pictured receiving a bouquet from Bradfield College sixth-formers Amelie and Kat

"If we don't talk about it, we can't have an honest conversation," she said, adding that churches and communities can also make a difference.

Drawing on contemporary research and vivid case studies from clinical practice, Dr Bywater showed how personalised care, compassionate communication and strong human relationships can reduce fear and suffering. Pain can be addressed, she said.

Dr Bywater also answered questions from the audience about Assisted Dying and the current Bill being debated in Parliament. She admitted having worries about the Bill fearing there would be less money for palliative care and people might feel pressurised, worrying about their relatives. The exact means of delivering Assisted Dying would also need to be costed and examined in an evidenced based way.

The public lecture in February, organised by the Bradfield Deanery Spiritual Development Group, included sixth-formers hoping to apply to study Medicine at university, alongside A-level Ethics students for whom questions surrounding palliative care and assisted dying are particularly relevant.

Jane Gilbert



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Sisters get inked with MND symbol

Sisters Hazel Lewis and Teresa Hamilton have been inked to help raise vital funds and awareness of MND.

Here they are pictured at the March Drop-in meeting proudly showing their cornflower tattoos which were part of a wonderful £1,000 fundraiser.

When mum of two Hazel, aged 51, from Tilehurst, was diagnosed with MND last September she decided to have a big party.

Hazel, an insurance underwriter, said: "I hired The Cromwell Centre in Woodley and invited 100 of my friends from all over the country. I had a bucket collection and an online donation page. I was determined that it would be a happy occasion."

She and her sister Teresa, aged 66, who lives in Woodley, got their tattoos done together the week before the party.

"I thought I would never have one," said Teresa who decided to use it as a fundraiser asking for sponsors at her bridge club.

Hazel, who works from home, says her employers Zurich insurance group, has been extremely accommodating since her diagnosis and will match all the funds raised.

She added: "I would like the money to come to my local branch of the MND Association to support all the work you do."



Sisters Theresa and Hazel show their beautiful tattoos

Footnote: The blue cornflower is the symbol of hope for MND around the world because of its fragile appearance but hardy nature. Like the cornflower, people living with MND show remarkable strength in coping with this devastating disease.

Jane Gilbert



Our branch will be attending the event and running a tombola stall.
We're looking for donated items to help support our fundraising efforts.

If you can assist, please contact Mary at events@mndrwb.org

PLEASE NOTE NEWBURY SHOWGROUND IS NEAR JUNCTION 13 OF THE M4 AND NOT IN THATCHAM

Green-fingered Jacqui's labour of love grows bigger every year

Volunteer Jacqui Warbey's Easter plants and cake sale outside her home in Woodley was a record-breaker raising a cracking £1,520.

Mum-of-two Jacqui's hard work paid off with her annual event becoming a popular local fixture in aid of the MND Association.

Here she shares how her labour of love has given a big boost to Reading and West Berkshire Branch funds.

"My Plant and Cake Sale on Easter Saturday was the eighth event that I have held on my driveway raising funds for the MND Association in memory of my husband, Richard, who passed away from MND in 2017.

"I started with just the plants in September 2020 and remember standing at my back gate in a panic as more than six people were standing on my driveway at the same time. My inspiration for doing this was Lin Jenkins who had managed to continue fundraising during lockdown by selling from her driveway.

My Easter sale seems to have become an established community event with regulars who look forward to snapping up a bargain.
"I have fabulous family, friends, colleagues and neighbours who



support me as well as complete strangers who are happy to grow plants for the cause. I must have had over 600 garden plants and getting on for 100 houseplants at the start of the day as well as 18 cakes. People are so generous, offering to lend me tables and gazebos, bake cakes, grow plants, help on the day or simply give me a parking space on their drive to leave more room for those coming to buy plants and cake!

"There was a huge amount of preparation starting last year when I asked people to take cuttings for me. Then four weeks before the sale I started baking and pushing the publicity.
"This year my younger son, Christopher, used AI to make a digital poster which made it easy to ask friends to share on their WhatsApp groups .

"It was an early start on the day itself so I could finish off some of the cakes before turning attention to the outside around 7:30am as the first volunteer helpers arrived. Our first customers were already browsing by 9:50am.

"The first hour and a half was manic with plant enthusiasts looking for a bargain, though due to the weather, there weren't many takers for a cuppa. It quietened down as the day progressed which allowed more time to chat to people. Sadly, too many of them have some connection to MND.

"The wind was picking up as the day progressed and I was worried about the gazebos. Luckily, they were fine and once we had drawn the raffle at 4pm we managed to clear the driveway within the hour. We made £1373.47 by the end of the day!

"It was certainly the most money I have ever taken on the day itself. Later I received further donations for plants I had left out on my driveway, bringing the grand total to £1,520."

Jacqui Warbey

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

Kitty is on track to run the Hackney Half



Branch Publicity Officer Jane Gilbert is super proud of her daughter Kitty who will be putting on her trainers again to help fight MND.

Kitty, aged 34, is running the Hackney Half Marathon on May 17th raising funds in memory of her beloved granny Pamela Wyatt who died of the bulbar palsy form of the disease 26 years ago.

And Kitty, from Bucklebury, is hoping it will be a little easier than her running debut at the Royal Parks Half last October where she raised more than £2K for the Reading and West Berkshire Branch.

"It's a cause that means a great deal to me," she said, adding that she was also aware of the seemingly increasing numbers of young people being diagnosed with MND.

To support Kitty's bid to boost funds for the MND Association click here:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/kitty-gilbert-2

A golden goal for Paul and Lin

West Berks football referee Paul Jenkins and his wife Lin – our well known MND fundraiser - are celebrating a golden goal with fifty years of marriage in the net.

Paul, aged 75, met Lin in the middle of a field, when he joined Beenham F.C. in the early 1970s. They finally tied the knot with a love match in 1976 and now live in Tilehurst.

Paul continued to play for Beenham until their first wedding anniversary when he was badly injured with a broken leg while playing at Reading's Palmer Park.

He didn't play football again and, instead, took a course to become a well-known referee.

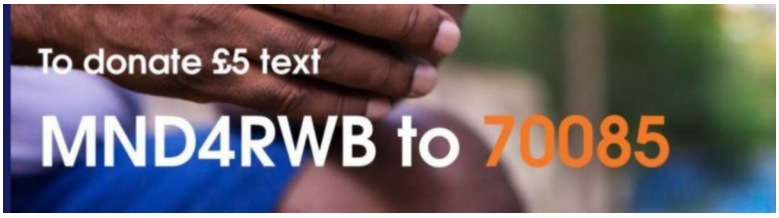
Lin says: "All these years later he is still to be found, on a regular basis, officiating matches for men, women and youngsters in the Reading and West Berkshire leagues. Many people are amazed that he can still run at his age!"

While Paul is on the football pitch, Lin is kept busy raising funds for the Reading and West Berkshire Branch. She is regularly seen at fetes, jumble and car boot sales in the area selling an array of donated goods to raise vital funds and awareness.

Lin and Paul, who are now grandparents, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on Saturday 11th April, at a lunch with their family at The Spring Inn, Sulhamstead, close to where their love match began.



Jane Gilbert



Dates for 2026:

26th May

7th July

22nd September

27th 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.

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,

Thanks to Big Yellow, Reading, for supporting Reading and West Berkshire MND Association

ANSWERS

1: When Harry met Sally; 2: ET; 3: Babe; 4: Terminator; 5: The graduate; 6: Apollo 13; 7: Dirty Harry; 8: On the Water-front; 9: Apocolypse now; 10: The silence of the lambs; 11: The Sixth Sense; 12: Airplane; 13: Jaws; 14: The godfather; 15: Planet of the apes; 16: Gone with the wind; 17: Forrest Gump; 18: Alien; 19: In the heat of the night; 20: Dirty dancing

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

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