

## **SOUTH HERTS BRANCH NEWSLETTER**

**OCTOBER 2019**

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

My first few months as Chair of the South Herts have been very busy. I have attended three wonderful events and met some inspirational people.

In June I was invited to National Office in Northampton to take part in a question/answer session about my role as a new Chair. I was accompanied by the chair of the Leicester branch who has been in office for 30 years and was also a founding trustee of the association - quite a daunting companion to have on the day! We were interviewed by a Watford branch member who is a Fleet Street journalist and the audience were members of staff from national office and other interested parties from around the country who joined in via video link where our views were sought on the support we receive within branches. It was great to meet so many people from NO - the amount of support available is quite amazing - very reassuring for me, as new Chair.

Also in June, Jenny Fellas, our wonderful Association Visitor, and I attended the 40th Anniversary celebrations of the MND Association - please see Jenny's article about this in this newsletter.

Again in June, Roger Widdicombe - Regional Fundraiser for East of England and I visited The Annex Hair Salon in Berkhamsted who had held a fundraising event on our behalf.

We were delighted to receive a cheque from Daisy Hawkins, the salon manager, in the sum of £1260.83. The salon is holding another event to raise funds for our branch in October. A huge thank you to Daisy and her staff for all her efforts on our behalf - Daisy holds these events in support of her aunt who is living with MND.



Recently, we held a very successful and extremely enjoyable Quiz Supper which raised £800 for our branch and this month our very popular and enjoyable Ladies Lunch was held at Chenies Manor - details to follow.

Over the past few months I have also been visited by various members of NO staff to help me in my new role. I am determined to be able to support as many people as possible in our area and raise awareness of this awful disease. I thank my fellow committee members and staff at NO for helping me so much.

If you would like to get in touch with me, my contact details are:

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Home Phone: 0208 207 5086  
Mobile: 07930 462870

## **PAST EVENTS**

### **40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

To mark the Association's 40th Anniversary and to coincide with Global MND Awareness Day the Association planned a free event for volunteers at Boughton House in Northamptonshire by kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch.

Two volunteers from each branch were invited to the event. I and Hetty Smith (Chair of the South Herts Branch ) were delighted to go to this special day on 21st June.

It was a beautiful day and the house known as The English Versailles looked absolutely stunning. The house is not often open to the public and is surrounded by rolling parkland and formal gardens. The Duke of Buccleuch and Sally Light (Chief Executive of the MNDA) welcomed us to Boughton House in a magnificent marquee set up in the glorious grounds where we enjoyed delightful light refreshments.

All the volunteers were then split into three groups so that everyone could enjoy three activities that had been organised for everyone.

The first activity was an MND research session presented by Professor Ammar Al-Chalab, neurologist at King's College Hospital and researcher at King's College London who talked about the hopeful research he is involved in in collaboration with colleagues from all over Europe. The whole audience of about 200 guests, were quite concerned when we learnt from Brian Dickie of the fears of the Association as to how Brexit could potentially effect research as the Association collaborates a great deal with European partners.

The second session involved a general unguided tour of part of the house.

Thirdly was a garden tour with the Duke of Buccleuch.

We then all had a superb buffet in the marquee.

The afternoon sessions were hosted by Chris James (Director of External Affairs of the the MNDA).

There was a talk by the original founders of the Association and this was followed by a session about the future with the MND Association Directors Dr.Brian Dickie (Director of Research Development) and Nick Goldup (Director of Care Improvement).

The final session was an inspirational talk hosted by the family of Professor Stephen Hawking about the Stephen Hawking Foundation and the work that is continuing .

Finally we all gathered on the Lawn for a 40th Anniversary photo to mark the event.

It was a most enjoyable, informative and exciting day and Hetty and I felt very privileged to have been part of such an amazing event.

Boughton House is a beautiful house and the gardens surrounding it are stunning and the Duke of Buccleuch was a wonderful, entertaining host.

Jenny Fellas - Association Visitor

## Chenies Manor Lunch



South Herts Branch held our 5<sup>th</sup> annual Ladies Lunch in September this year.

Chenies Manor so kindly allowed us to use the café in the beautiful gardens again. Our grateful thanks to them. It really wouldn't be the same if we had a different venue. The weather was lovely which answered our prayers, as the previous couple of days had been quite miserable.

Amanda Clements (our wonderful caterer) again did us proud with a lovely lunch. Guests are full of praise for her wonderful home cooked food – and there is plenty of it!

This year the gardens were in full bloom with dahlias bursting with colour and the guests had plenty of time explore the gardens with their Prosecco. (This year I remembered to bring it – last year I had to dash home to get it!)

Special thanks to Mr & Mrs Macleod-Matthews for allowing us to use the venue again, and for confirming we will be able to have our lunch there again in 2020.

We were able to raise approx. £780.00 from the event.

See you next year!

Lesley Ralston - Vice Chair

## FUTURE EVENTS - Supporting other branches

### North Herts Gala - 3rd November 2019



We are pleased to support this event. Please come and join us on 3rd November in Stevenage. Booking details on flier

## SUPPORT FOR PwMND

Since our last newsletter in June we have been able to support four people living with MND in our area by partly financing from our branch funds (with the balance coming from National Office and the Name5 Dottie Foundation) specialist equipment needed

Requests for specialist equipment are made through Occupational Therapists and we are so pleased to be able to provide this on a timely basis. Waiting for Social Services to do this is not a viable option as, due to the progress of the disease, equipment is required as and when requested.

## **NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED**

Our branch is looking for volunteers to join our committee. We would love to welcome people to join our team to help us to continue making a difference locally to those affected by motor neurone disease.

***We are particularly keen to attract a new Treasurer*** as our current treasurer, Alison Murdoch, is stepping down at the end of this year to fulfil other commitments she has. We thank Alison very much for the years she has spent making sure we have been financially well organised! We will miss you!

We are also in need of help with fundraising - to do this, you do not necessarily need to come to our committee meetings (which are held every two months on a Monday evening in St. Albans). If you would like to hold coffee mornings or any other events on our behalf, we would be very happy to support you by providing merchandise etc. Please let us know if this might be something you would be interested in doing on our behalf.

## **GET TOGETHERS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH MND**

Our monthly get togethers, usually on the first Wednesday of each month, from 2.00 - 4.00pm continue to be extremely well supported.

Jenny Fellas and I are usually there together and I know all the attendees are very happy to have somewhere to come where they feel safe and relaxed. They all have a good chat and sometimes MND isn't even mentioned! We have a really lovely venue,



The Box Moor Trust Centre, London Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 2RE. London Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 2RE. which is comprised of converted barns and is used by many charities as a meeting and educational centre. The venue is specially converted for disabled people and very user friendly.

We usually have about 6+ people attending accompanied by their carers and families and it is a very relaxed and informal affair. Everyone knows each other and can help with useful information and anecdotes. Carers exchange information and are in touch with each other all the time via email & phone as are the people living with MND. New people are welcomed into the fold and made to feel very inclusive.

Occasionally we have a guest - Sarah Thompson from the MNDA research team has been several times and a Neurologist and ex carers. People who have been bereaved also still come now and again. They all muck in and help making tea etc.

Dates for next year's Get Together are: Jan 8th, Feb 2nd, Mar 4th, Apr 1st, May 6th, Jun 3rd, Jul 1st, Aug 5th, Sep 2nd, Oct 7th

If you require help with transport please arrange a taxi for both journeys. Make sure you get a receipt for both journeys with the date, your name and the cost.

For further help with transport or any more information, please contact Jenny Fellas on 01582 621387 or [chris\\_jennyfellas@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_jennyfellas@hotmail.com)

Lesley Ralston - Vice Chair

## Amazon Smile



If you are a regular Amazon shopper, we would encourage you to convert to Amazon smile where a small amount of all purchases is made to a nominated charity. Please select Motor Neurone Disease as your nominated charity. To date Amazon Smile has donated over £4000 to the MND Association.  
Every penny count!

## THANKS TO THE NOKE

We would like to thank the Mercure St Albans Noke Hotel who allow us to use their hotel for our meetings.

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO THE BRANCH -

Please do so in one of the following ways:

Send **cheques** payable to the MNDA South Herts Branch to:

Ms Hetty Smith, 16 Percheron Road, Borehamwood, Herts., WD6 2SR

Or email me at: [mndassoc.southherts@gmail.com](mailto:mndassoc.southherts@gmail.com) and I will provide you with the branch account details.

If you would like to pay by **bank transfer**, please contact me by email

Or donate **online** at: [mndasouthherts.org](http://mndasouthherts.org)

and click on the Donate to the Branch link in the left hand menu

The National Office Helpline is 0808 8026262

Motor Neurone Disease Association – Registered Charity No. 294354