

## The branch bids Bon Voyage to Joyce



Members gathered at the Centre for a farewell lunch with retiring Chairman Joyce Milton, who leaves this month for a new life in Gran Canaria.

Joyce was presented with the proceeds of a cash collection among members, flowers and cards. New Chairman Peter Austin thanked Joyce for her contribution to the work of the branch over many years, and her skilled chairmanship over the past 16 months.

Good luck from us all, Joyce.

How your  
Christmas  
shopping can  
help branch  
funds: p5



**Volunteer visitors wanted: p8**

**SEPTEMBER EVENTS****MONDAY 5th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

NO YOGA CLASS today as instructor is on holiday.

SEAFORD SOCIAL GROUP lunch at The White Lion, 12.30pm

**TUESDAY 6th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 7th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LUNCHEON CLUB, Simply Italian, Sovereign Harbour, 12.30pm for 1.

**THURSDAY 8th** LADIES GROUP 10.30-1.30 Coffee and chat. Everyone welcome.**FRIDAY 9th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.  
Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.**MONDAY 12th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

NO YOGA CLASS today as instructor is on holiday.

**TUESDAY 13th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 14th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
LUNCHEON CLUB. Fish and chips at the Centre.**THURSDAY 15th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
LADIES GROUP -

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

**FRIDAY 16th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.  
Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.**MONDAY 19th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.

**TUESDAY 20th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 21st** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
LUNCHEON CLUB. Ploughman's Lunch at the Centre. Please ring Linda on 438447 to book.**THURSDAY 22nd** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
LADIES GROUP, 10.30-1.30: Bingo.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

**FRIDAY 23rd** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.  
Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.**MONDAY 26th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.**TUESDAY 27th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 28th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
LUNCHEON CLUB. Chapters Lunch at the Centre. Please ring Linda on 438447 to book.**THURSDAY 29th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
LADIES GROUP: Trip to Hilliers Garden Centre.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

**FRIDAY 30th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.  
Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.**OCTOBER EVENTS****MONDAY 3rd** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.

MEET TO SHARE GROUP lunch at the Royal Golf Club. Contact Sue on 736359 to book.

**TUESDAY 4th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 5th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30  
LUNCHEON CLUB. The Rodmill Restaurant, 12.30pm for 1. Please ring Linda on 438447 to book.**THURSDAY 6th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LADIES GROUP 10.30 - 1.30. The Body Shop - come along and pamper yourself.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

**FRIDAY 7th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.  
Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.

MAINSTREAM is edited and published by the Eastbourne and South Wealden branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. The views expressed, unless clearly shown to be those of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, will be those of the author.

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# Enjoy the sunshine, Joyce

**G**reetings from your new Branch Chairman. I have to say that this is not a role I expected to be filling, but as Joyce prepares to head for the sun I am acquainting myself with the chairman's desk at our Day Centre.

The chairman should, of course, be formally elected by members at our annual general meeting, but we are eight months away from that gathering, so I have been co-opted into the post by our committee to hold the fort until next May.

Let me begin by recording our sincere thanks to Joyce for her excellent chairmanship over the past 16 months. After the Bernard and Margaret era, taking over the reins was never going to be easy, but Joyce steered us through a difficult period of transition with great efficiency. We wish her every happiness in Gran Canaria and sincerely hope she maintains contact with all her friends in the Eastbourne and South Wealden branch. In fact I've invited her to send us a regular 'Letter from the Canaries' so that we can keep up with her new life.

## From the Chair

by  
Peter  
Austin



and the branch, and a significant learning curve lays ahead. Happily, we have an excellent supportive committee, and I aim to ensure, with the help of all of you, that the branch will continue to move forwards healthily.

The main task confronting us remains, as ever, the support of those affected by MS in our branch area through practical help, advice and friendship. To achieve this we need to maintain a team of volunteers, and vigorous fund-raising. Both of those challenges are addressed in articles on pages four and eight.

Many of you already give time to help the cause in one way or another, and we are immensely grateful for your support. But the more help we have, the easier the task of running the branch.

## It's your branch

**T**he running of the branch must inevitably be marshalled by the chairman and committee, but I feel very strongly that we should be aware of the views and wishes of our members.

We hope shortly to be carrying out a telephone survey among all branch members to check that we are meeting the needs of people affected by MS in Eastbourne and the surrounding districts.

But ideas and comments should not simply be limited to surveys. If you have thoughts that you would like to share about the way the branch works, give me a call or drop me an e-mail. Contact details are on page 15.

## Congratulations Annifer & Paul

**F**inally, and on behalf of all members, I extend congratulations to Annifer Hatcher, the energetic leader of our Seaford Social Group, and Seaford member Paul Willcox on their engagement. It really is nice that the branch can bring people together in such a happy way, and we wish them every joy for the future.

## An introduction

**I**t occurs to me that while I'm known to a good number of branch members, there are many of you out there who haven't a clue who I am. So here's a few details:

Before retiring (early) two and a half years ago, I was group editor of Eastbourne's local papers. In fact I spent all my working life in the provincial newspaper industry in Sussex, Kent and Hampshire.

My first involvement in the branch was some years back when I was asked to put the weight of the papers behind the appeal to raise money for a new minibus. I joined a fundraising committee with Cllr Colin Belsey, Nigel Waterson (our Patron) and others. The branch and its workings were known to me, however, as my wife Sue had been an active member for a some while.

I joined the branch committee in 2009 to assist with publicity, and after Bernard stepped down last year I took on the job of editing Mainstream.

For the record, I am also a Trustee of the local Citizens Advice Bureau, and of the Queen Alexandra Cottage Homes in Seaside. I also sit on the committee of the Eastbourne Society, our local civic society.

I need to emphasise, however, that I am still a relative novice in the workings of the MS Society

## A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY....

The branch Christmas lunch has been booked for Sunday, December 11, once again at the Langham Hotel.

Menu options and booking details will be included in next month's Mainstream.

# Latest news on the fundraising front

After a quiet July, fundraising is getting back on track, and events are taking shape for the autumn and in the run up to Christmas.

First a mention of some recent contributions. **Eastbourne Borough FC captain Ben Austin** presented the branch with a cheque for £300. Ben cycled from his Eastbourne home to his work in Chailey and back every day for a week, clocking up more than 250 miles. He collected sponsorship for our branch and for the British Heart Foundation. Well done Ben, and many thanks for your efforts. (See picture on the back page)

The branch accepted an invitation from Bupa's East Dean Grange to take a stall at their **charity fete**. Many thanks to members who baked a range of delicious cakes which sold like...hot cakes. Just over £80 was raised which those generous people at Bupa will match, giving us a total of £160.

Christine Kneale and Shirley Novis played hosts to members of the local **Cycle Touring Club** at Shirley's home and raised £254 through the sale of refreshments. (See picture a report on page 10).

As Mainstream prepares for press another branch team is manning a stall at the **Elstree Nursing Home fete**. Hopefully we can look forward to another good result. And Young MS Supporters leader Clare Forshaw and team were heading off to a car boot sale to raise funds (see page 13). Thanks to all who have donated items for sale.

Looking ahead, staff at Barclays in Eastbourne have organised a **charity ball** in aid of our branch, which takes place at the Mansion Hotel in October. Tickets have apparently almost sold out which is very encouraging. More on this in due course.

We have organised another **quiz night** which will take place at the Langney Sports Club in Priory Lane on Monday, October 31st. If you couldn't make the last quiz, do come along. The bar in which the quiz take place is spacious, and there is excellent access and facilities for wheelchair users. Do put a team together and join in the fun. A notice on page five gives full details.

We are also planning to hold a **pre-Christmas**



**Sue Austin on duty at our stall at Bupa's charity fair at East Dean.**

**raffle**, with books of raffle tickets that members can sell to friends, work colleagues and family. This will really depend on us being able to put together some attractive prizes, and any help from well-connected members in acquiring suitable items will be much appreciated. In fact we are always in need of raffle prizes, no matter how modest, for events such as quizzes and fairs.

Talking of which, we are planning a **Christmas fair**, hopefully no later than the first week of December, with a variety of stalls, including, of course, seasonal merchandise. More of this in next month's Mainstream.

Finally, an appeal: We really do need to put together a fund-raising committee to help plan and run events. Such a committee was formed last year but for all sorts of very understandable reasons was unable to continue. I and other members of the branch committee will be happy to be involved, but we need additional help to assist with the detailed work. If you would like to be involved please give me a call on 736359 or e-mail peteroz48@aol.com. Alternatively, talk to Linda at the Centre (439447).

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# News from Linda, our Day Services Manager



How quickly this month has gone and how strange the weather has been to? Is it me or has everyone else noticed that we are drawing the curtains turning the lights on earlier and earlier?

Well earlier this month we experienced Airbourne. The Ladies Group were invited to Chaseley Nursing Home which offered wonderful views, along with a cream tea and raffle. With such a grand offer we didn't need to be asked twice!! So off we travelled and unfortunately so did the weather. By the time we arrived at Chaseley so had the rain and the clouds. We waited in hope that the weather would clear but unfortunately all we saw were two seagulls as Airbourne was officially cancelled. However, over the course of the weekend people flooded to Eastbourne and luckily for them the weather picked up and on the Saturday the sun was out and the show was fabulous.

The Ladies Group also had their summer day out to the Pier! We all gathered at the front of the Pier, had a stroll and cup of tea in the Victorian Tea

Room and a good natter. Then we headed for the long awaited fish and chip lunch, via the promenade, where we spent time looking at the beautiful flowerbeds. After attempting to go to several fish and chip restaurants which were all very busy, we finally found a very helpful café where the waiter arranged all the tables and chairs outside in the sunshine to cater for us all. We all agreed you can't beat good old fish and chips at the seaside in the sunshine!!

Special thanks goes to our driver Bob, escort Roy, volunteers Doreen and Joyce. These events are not possible without your help, humour and patience, I know how difficult days out can be. We also had our new driver John Berry with us on Thursday and I did check after the morning out and he has promised to come back again next week!

If you have any ideas or suggestions for any events for our groups, please do let me know.

**Linda**

## Remember the number

A copy of the MS Society Christmas catalogue is included with your Mainstream.

If, as we hope, you will be placing an order for cards, wrapping paper or some of the many gifts and decorations on offer, you can ensure that a percentage of your spend comes back to branch funds.

When you fill in the order form at the back of the catalogue, make sure the 'Media Number', bottom right, is 361088. Quote the number if ordering by phone.

This ensures that 25% of money spent is credited to the branch, and if you get your order in before September 16, the 'rebate' rises to 40%.



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## Pit your wits at our autumn **QUIZ NIGHT**

**Langney Sports Club,  
Priory Road,  
Eastbourne**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 31st  
7 for 7.30pm**

- £5 per head, teams of up to six
- Good parking and disabled access
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- Refreshments
- Prizes for top teams
- Raffle

All proceeds to Eastbourne and South Wealden MS Society branch funds

Call Linda on 439447 or Peter on 736359 to book your team.

## News from our Branch Groups

### Ladies Support Group

During August we had quite an active programme, and were out and about on several occasions, although the weather was not always perfect.

We went to Chaseley to see Airbourne, but regrettably the weather was far from perfect, though we still enjoyed our picnics, and the cream tea in the afternoon. And those that went to the seafront for a fish and chip lunch in the middle of August, also had a good time, even though they had to shelter from the wind!

The programme up to October remains as published last month, but with an additional coffee morning scheduled for October 13th with Christmas in mind. It will be an ideal opportunity to place your order with Sue for your Christmas cards and goodies from the MS Webb Ivory catalogue.

Since we have a Christmas theme for that morning, there will also be some Christmas decorations and goodies available to buy, so do come prepared, everyone welcome.

Also a quiz with a Christmas theme has been booked with our ever popular quiz master (Steve) for 24th November. But don't worry, I'll remind you next month in plenty of time.

Thursday 8th September: 'Call my Bluff.' (Thank you Margaret-Clare.)

Thursday 22nd September: Bingo. (Thank you Sue)

Thursday 29th September: Trip to Hillier's garden centre.

Thursday 6th October: The Body Shop. Come along to pamper yourself.

Thursday 13th October: Coffee morning with a Christmas theme. Come along to order your Webb Ivory, and for your first taste of Christmas.

We will be looking at forming the rest of the programme up to Christmas very soon, so watch this space!

As always, all ladies welcome, every Thursday 10.30 - 1.30pm, and if there is nothing on the programme, we will, as usual, still be at the centre for an unmissable cuppa and some stimulating conversation.

And here is another poem following last months, that I made up just to amuse myself,(and Joyce.)

All that rain we've had,  
Through the hot summer season,  
was good for the garden  
I'm sure that was the reason!

Now the tomatoes are ripe  
and the apples have grown,  
The fruit's ready to pick  
So enjoy what you've sown.

All those lost Summer outings  
Will fade into the past.  
When rain spoiled the day,  
But it's dry now at last!

Yes, Autumn is coming,  
The hot days behind us.  
BUT we're still getting rain,  
And wind in strong gusts(!)

No, the weather's no joke,  
Living in England where we do.  
Let's all emigrate  
Let's all join Joyce too!

**Janet**

### Seaford Social Group

The Seaford social group enjoyed an evening at one of the local Seaford Indian restaurants.

Chairman Joyce joined us for the evening. There was much laughter and far too much to eat but we all enjoyed ourselves.

As it was the last time Joyce would be joining us we said our goodbyes in style.

We all wish Joyce good luck for her future, and good health.

The next Seaford Group outing is to the White Lion on Monday 5th September at 12.30. See you all then.

**Annifer**

### Meet to Share Group

Our next lunch will be on Monday, October 3rd, again at the Royal Golf Club, Paradise Drive.

The last few weeks were very hectic for me with family over from Australia. Number One grandson broke his arm, Number Two had a tooth knocked out by Number One, and on the last day of their visit Number Three went down with chicken pox, delaying their departure by 10 days..

To say it was a fraught period would be an understatement. But looking back I wish they were still here...but not living with us.

A couple of weekends ago Peter and I went over to the Grange Nursing Home at East Dean where the branch had been invited with other charities to have a stall at their summer fete. I would like to say a big Thank You to all the people who donated cakes, books and some lovely greetings cards. As reported elsewhere, we raised £82 which BUPA will match.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

**Sue**

**Young Supporters report and picture is on Page 13**

# Finance update

from Branch Treasurer, Andrew Dixon



**D**ear All - The summer months are often a quieter time and certainly July has been no exception.

Our income was some £2,400 whilst our outgoings were almost double that. As I have said many times in my previous updates, we have the usual expenditure and we need to carefully budget over the course of the year.

Our income in July was as follows

Donations from various sources £920  
 Memorial Fund for Terry Scott £360  
 Physio contributions £308  
 Yoga classes contributions £236  
 Grant from Department of Transport £157 (fuel duty)

Various fund raising activities £357  
 Collection tins £30  
 Young carers £20

In summary, we are in a healthy financial position and again we are very grateful for all the donations and fundraising support that goes on behind the scenes.

We are still looking for a new sponsor for the Centre as our present arrangement with the Rotherwick Foundation is now at an end, so if you know anyone who would like to help...

Kind Regards

**Andy**

## Downland memorial to pioneering Sue

**A** plaque has been put up on a footpath finger-post on the Downs acknowledging the work of branch member Sue Watson who died last year.

Sue was an energetic campaigner working to improve countryside access for people with disabilities, using her Trumper off-road scooter to search out routes.

Sue set up the Sussex branch of the Disabled Ramblers and was a member of the East Sussex Local Access Forum. In 2006 she began working on the Miles Without Stiles project to create routes in the Eastbourne area accessible for off-road mobility vehicles. Sadly, illness prevented her from completing the project and she passed away in a Bexhill nursing home last year.

She travelled far and wide with her Trumper, seeking out routes around Camber Castle, Arlington Reservoir, Abbott's Wood, and on the 1066 path which runs from Pevensey to Rye.

But perhaps the most impressive evidence of her determination was her 100-mile unassisted sponsored ride along the South Downs Way from Winchester to Eastbourne.

The commemorative plaque is on a post near the Warren Hill car park on the Butts Brow - Birling Gap easy access route that Sue was involved in developing.

It was put up by the East Sussex Local Access Forum and reads "Sue Watson 1956-2010. Her love for these Downs helped to improve access for all."



**Access campaigner Sue Watson.**

Hi Everyone,

Well, here we are in September! Where is this year going, I ask myself, as if I can answer myself. My Granny used to say that, when she met her neighbours over the garden fence, and they would agree and shake their heads in disbelief, as if they had been far away for a very long time, or had just woken up from a long sleep and hadn't realised the time.

I remember thinking it was such a silly thing to say, the year (1973) had dragged by, the only month which had flown by was August and now September, back to school, winter school uniform, grey and drab, and an AGE until Christmas holidays. Now, I find myself saying those same words, 'Where has the year gone?' But it's not just me anymore, young people are saying it too, which is a bit weird.

So, I have been thinking about this, and I have a theory about exactly where the years go and the speed at which they pass me by. I'll run it by you and see what you think.

New Year's Day 2011. The sales are on, all the winter stock marked down, clothes which were bought and given as presents just a week ago, 50% cheaper now, to make way for the Spring Collection. The snow is on the ground, but there are some really 'cool' tee-shirts in Next. I can't wear them for about four months, but they will all be gone if I wait too long.

The first foray into a supermarket after all the turkey has gone and I could buy a Cadbury's Easter egg, if I wasn't on a diet after too much Christmas cake. So I'll wait until Spring arrives, but in April, all the shops are full of barbeques and charcoal. It's raining and quite chilly out of the sun, it still gets dark early in the evening, so sipping a glass of pinot grigio on the patio, with sausages grilling is slightly premature.

## Strictly Sue



In July the sun and long evenings are with me, I am ready for the barbeque, but consumerism is telling me that I have missed that boat, and I should be getting ready for the 'return to school' in September. Now that September is here, guess what, Christmas decorations and cards are in the shops. Everywhere I look, I am being told to 'be prepared early', 'order your cards before the rush'.

Now I know where the year is going. It is being rushed on by Tesco and M&S. I would rather enjoy each day and not plan for tomorrow until it comes. It is not called the present for nothing.

I have some good news from Sue and Keith Metcalf. Earlier this year they celebrated the birth of Oscar, a grandson, and now they have Ruby, a new grand-daughter, born on 20th July to Anne and Roy. Ruby is a sister to Jade, and I hope they will get on all the time and never argue, as sisters sometimes do. 2011 is a good year for Sue and Keith as they are also celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary on the 4th of this month. Congratulations from everyone!

As a footnote, I am looking forward to a wedding next year. Laura, my younger daughter, has announced her engagement to Sean, who is lovely, and both Andy and I are thrilled. Well, Andy not as much, as he might have to work until he drops to pay for it.

Take care, and see you next month.

**Sue**

## Volunteer visitors required

**ONE** of the key roles of the branch is to provide support and friendship for those who are mostly housebound.

**TO** do that, we need volunteer visitors, and currently our numbers are running low.

**IT** may be something that a friend or a member of your family could help with. Knowledge of MS is not essential - our welfare officer Margaret-Clare, and others, will provide training.

**THE** essential qualities required are the ability to listen and a caring nature.

**BY** making regular calls, visitors can provide friendship and interest to people who may not be able to regularly get out and about.

**TO FIND OUT MORE, CONTACT THE CENTRE ON 439447. ANY OFFERS OF HELP WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED.**

More on the Government's proposed changes to the benefits system, from Ian Westgate

# Welfare reform proposals put disabled at greater risk of poverty

The welfare reform statement by the Secretary of State put Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) at the forefront of improving the quality of life for worst off citizens, to ensure work pays, and to hold a Cabinet Committee on Social Justice to which the Disability Alliance has been making approaches.

But overall, the coalition Government's plans have sparked widespread fear amongst many disabled people and their representative organisations. The proposals announced to date could amount to a triple-jeopardy for disabled people of:

\*Forced ineffective tests to prove the impact of health conditions/impairments.

\*A lack of support under a one-size-fits-all 'Work Programme' that may abolish some help for disabled people to find suitable work.

\*Reduced in-work support through cuts to tax credits and potential watering down of obligations on employers to support disabled employees through a proposed employment law review.

**Medical tests** Changes to move people from Incapacity Benefit (IB) to Employment Support Allowance (ESA; the benefit which replaced IB from 2008) will require every current IB recipient to undergo a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). The previous Government only proposed that 1.5 million people would undergo the WCA. The Coalition Government is also proposing to do this faster than the previous plans (which would have meant 10,000 assessments per week to 2014). This will require additional cost – recruiting extra Jobcentre Plus and medical assessment staff to handle the 2.6 million assessments.

The WCA determines who gets what benefits but has been shown to be seriously flawed and unable to effectively ascertain the impact impairments /health conditions have on some disabled people's ability to work. Cases have already come to light of people assessed as being fully fit for work appealing the decision and being put on the ESA support component (which is the modern equivalent of IB).

The number of appeals against WCA decisions is already incredibly high – and 40% of the people who appeal are having initial DWP decisions overruled. This is very expensive for the taxpayer – and will mean considerable additional Tribunals service expenditure.

## Support to find work

Disabled people face additional barriers to work – including the need for appropriate support in work and accessible transport. The previous Government provided tailored support for many disabled people through initiatives like Pathways to Work (which was open to disabled ESA recipients for example). The new Government is scrapping all previous work programmes like Pathways in favour of a single, overarching scheme: the 'Work Programme'.

It is unclear if/how the Work Programme will meet disabled people's additional support needs in the way previous initiatives attempted. Disability Alliance believes that a 'one size fits all' approach does not always work for disabled people and may mean additional barriers to work are generated. This is very worrying at a time of higher unemployment and greater competition for available jobs, as well as ongoing employer discrimination issues (eg unwillingness to employ people with impairments/health conditions).

## In work but worse off

The previous Government proposed a £40 per week better off in work 'guarantee' for many people moving off benefits. This has not been progressed by the present Government, although making work pay has been a consistent theme of previous statements from the Conservatives and broader coalition Government.

Disabled people earn less when in work compared to other citizens. But disabled people have higher living costs (for specialist equipment, transport and prescription bills for example). Current proposals may contribute to higher rates of in-work poverty for disabled people, as they come alongside broader announcements under the coalition Government to cut access to tax credits. The crude threshold of income to be used to cut access to tax credits may not reflect disabled people higher living costs. The coalition Government has also committed to a review of employment law. Disabled people fear this may result in a watering down of employer's obligations to improve working practices through 'reasonable adjustments' which help level the playing field at work for disabled people. This could put disabled people's jobs at risk.

# Support from Shirley and cyclists



Christine and Shirley, and, top right, some of the visiting cyclists



Supporter Shirley Novis kindly opened her home and garden to provide refreshments for members of Eastbourne Cycle Touring Club, and as a result presented us with the splendid sum of £254.

Shirley, who is a friend of branch member Christine Kneale, writes: "It wasn't until I went on a short weekend break with my friend Christine that I realised how difficult it was for the disabled. One doesn't notice things like pavements, steps into shops and cafes. Also, at the hotel we went to, we had to carry our suitcases up the steps into the hotel.

"This was the second time I have had an 'elevenses', which is what it is called by the cycle club! This is the midweek section of the Cycle Touring Club of which my late husband was a member until he died two years ago of cancer.

"You may ask why didn't I do this event for the Hospice or Cancer Research? I simply feel that they may receive more donations than the Eastbourne and South Wealden M.S. Centre.

"Lunch was also on the menu that day and everyone enjoyed themselves.

"I am pleased to make this donation in memory of my late husband, as he would have been very proud of me."

Many thanks Shirley for thinking of the branch and for the wonderful contribution.

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References available

**An 84-year-old great-gran who walked on the wing of a plane and skydives for the MS Society has been named as a finalist for the Multiple Sclerosis Society Fundraiser of the Year award.**

**Isobel Craigie, of Aberdeenshire, has raised more than £40,000. Her daughter Margaret, 58, has MS.**

**Isobel first did a wing-walk in 2007 and skydived 10,000ft last year.**

# Major changes to Blue Car Badge scheme in 2012

Major changes in the way Blue Car Badges are allocated and supplied are to take place next year.

East Sussex County Council says the Government is changing the scheme to make it fairer and more consistent, and the council is seeking the views of Blue Badge users about the proposals.

From January next year the Department of Transport is making the following changes:

- 1) All new Blue Badges will be printed and supplied by one company. This will make them harder to forge and alter.
- 2) Local authorities will have to pay a production fee for each Blue Badge of £4.60 (excluding VAT).
- 3) The Department plans to increase the maximum fee that local authorities can charge users for their Blue Badge from £2 to £10, the first increase since 1983.
- 4) From 2012 local authorities will have to use independent mobility assessments to decide if someone who does not automatically qualify should receive a Blue Badge. Councils will also have more powers to tackle fraudulent use of Blue Badges. (You automatically qualify for a Blue Badge if you are registered blind, receive the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, receive a war pensioner's mobility supplement or have been awarded a benefit under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme).

East Sussex County Council is planning to charge the full £10 for a new or renewed Blue Badge. The fee will cover the three-year period for which the Badge is valid and will cover the production costs and contribute towards administrative costs.

What is a mobility assessment? From April 2012 doctors will no longer carry out Blue Car Badge assessments. Instead, all mobility assessments for people who do not automatically qualify will be carried out by the County Council's therapy staff who



will decide whether someone should receive a Blue Badge.

Mobility clinics will be run across East Sussex in places like Day Centres, libraries, doctors' surgeries and in council buildings. In a few cases staff will be able to offer a home visit.

The assessment will take around 45 minutes, it will include observation of the applicant's mobility and questions on the individual's disability so that staff can decide if the Department of Transport's national eligibility criteria is met.

Those who automatically qualify for a Blue Badge will not be required to attend, and the Council says a screening system may mean that some other badge holders will not need to be seen.

**The County Council is consulting on the changes and wants to hear the views of current Blue Badge holders and carers who are being invited to complete a questionnaire.**

**Copies are available at the Day Centre, or you can complete the survey online by visiting [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay)**

## NEWLY DIAGNOSED WITH MS?

If you are newly diagnosed with MS and feeling a bit low and would like someone to talk to, please pick up the phone and give me a call.

**Sue on 01323 736359, or [SueAustin50@aol.com](mailto:SueAustin50@aol.com)**

Calls are treated in strict confidence

# NICE says more research is needed into CCSVI treatment

**N**ICE (National Institute for Healthcare and Clinical Excellence) has issued draft guidance on chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI).

The guidance, published on August 25 and now open for public comment, states that more research into CCSVI is needed.

The guidance also recommends that treatment for CCSVI should not take place outside of a properly controlled clinical trial.

The treatment is based on the idea that there is a link between blocked veins in the neck and/or trunk and the progression of MS. The procedure aims to open blocked veins by inserting and inflating a small balloon allowing for better blood flow and a reduction in the symptoms of MS.

Professor Bruce Campbell, Chair of the independent committee that develops NICE's Interventional Procedures guidance said:

"....it is really important to find out whether percutaneous venoplasty is clinically effective and safe for use in the NHS. Based on the existing evidence, we believe that clinicians should only consider offering percutaneous venoplasty as a treatment op-

tion for people with MS who fit the diagnostic criteria for CCSVI, as part of structured clinical trials. "In particular, we would welcome controlled research comparing percutaneous venoplasty against "sham venoplasty", in the same way that drug treatments are compared to a placebo. This is so that we can learn more about whether venoplasty works and for how long. Further research could also improve the understanding of the relationship between MS and CCSVI, as this is very unclear at present".

A consultation will now open until 21 September and people with MS have been invited by NICE to offer feedback.

Dr Doug Brown, Head of Biomedical Research at the MS Society, said: "We welcome the call for further research into the link between MS and CCSVI. The MS Society is part of an international effort to speed up research into this area and there are currently a number of studies and clinical trials ongoing world-wide – the outcomes of which will be pivotal in determining what direction future research should take."

# Study shows 57 genes linked to MS

**I**n a new study published in the journal Nature today, research suggests that the underlying reason for MS damage is because of an overactive immune system – that is, the immune system attacking myelin - rather than other causes that have been suggested in recent years.

In the largest MS genetics study ever undertaken, 250 researchers from around the world studied the genes of more than 9000 people with MS and more than 17,000 people without MS.

The researchers identified 57 genes linked with MS, many of which play a role in influencing the immune system. The genes identified included those that influence specific cells of the immune system – like T-cell and the role of 'interleukins' (chemicals which help immune cells to communicate).

Interestingly, two genes associated with the production of vitamin D were also linked with MS - giving researchers further important clues about the role vitamin D deficiency may play in causing MS. Environmental and genetic factors

We still don't know for certain why people get MS, but researchers believe that genes and environmental factors, like vitamin D, play a role in determining a person's risk of developing the condition. This lat-

est study furthers our understanding of what genes are involved too.

It opens up many new avenues to explore, which include:

- Continuing to identify and confirm new genes associated with MS

- Finding out more about the genes identified in this study and how they might influence a person's risk of developing MS

- Researching and developing treatments that take into account the likely causes of MS looking more closely at how genes and environment interact to influence an individual's risk of developing MS

The study was led by researchers at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and was part funded by the MS Society, as well as many other international funders.

Simon Gillespie, Chief Executive of the MS Society said: "By identifying which genes may trigger the development of MS, we can identify potential 'risk factors' and look at new ways of treating, or even preventing, the condition in the future."

## Crumbles tram found a new home in Devon

So what does the Seaton Tramway have to do with Eastbourne and South Wealden or am I mistaking Seaton for Seaford??? No mistake, and the Seaton Tramway really is linked to Eastbourne as you will see.

Seaton Tramway was originally at Lancaster Electric Company in Barnet which built battery electric vehicles. The owner Claude Lane had a passion for trams. The factory built a 15 inch gauge model tram which was run at fetes and the like.. A summer season was run at St Leonards in 1951 and

**Paul Willcox tells us where you can see a former Eastbourne tram running**

at Rhyl from 1952.. These persuaded Lane to negotiate a lease on a site in Eastbourne from 1953 and so Modern Electric Tramways was born. The tramway ran for two thirds of a mile from Princess Park to the Crumbles.

When the Eastbourne site had proved itself, Rhyl closed in 1957.

By the 1960s the growth of

Eastbourne and its roads began to threaten the tramway, so Lane began to look for a new site where the tramway could flourish unfettered. Along the South Coast, British Rail was closing various branch lines as part of the Beeching rationalisations. The Seaton branch in Devon closed in March 1966 and in due course Lane realised this would provide a better site for the tramway and so the Seaton Tramway was born and remains in operation today.

## MS Young Supporters take £133 at boot fair

I write to you having just got home from our boot fair at Cophall Farm. We arrived at 5:30AM on August Bank Holiday Sunday, and set up our two tables. We very quickly ran out of space, and had enough things to keep topping up the table as we went through the morning. The rain held off until we decided to pack up at 1pm when we all went home and back to bed!!

Having said to myself I would be happy if we made £50, I was happily surprised, upon counting our takings, to find we had made £133.62!

I would like to say a huge thank you to all those who donated items to sell, and those who came down to help. By the time you read this, we will have had our visit to Howlett's Zoo, on the 30th, but I'll tell you all about that next time!

**Clare Forshaw**



**No missing our stall at the boot fair.**

### **YOGA FOR PEOPLE WITH MS...**

..classes now take place in Seaford and Eastbourne - every Monday at the Community Resource Centre in St Leonards Road from 11am-12, and on Thursdays at St Peter's Church Hall, Blatchington, Seaford. The cost is £4 per session.

**Call 01323 439447 to book a place in the Eastbourne class, and call Annifer on 01323 651364 for more information about the Seaford classes.**

### **glams**

For lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people affected by MS  
A group supported by the MS Society  
c/o London Friend  
86 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DN  
020 8509 8581 (answerphone)  
glams\_ukgroup@hotmail.com

# Report from the last committee meeting

A summary of the branch committee meeting held on 6th August.

## Present

Joyce Milton, Caroline Holdcroft, Peter Austin, Sue Austin, Annifer Hatcher, Margaret Clare Fuhrmann, Janet Forshaw, Linda Warner, Ian Westgate, Barbara Day and Allan Matthews - guest.

## Chairman's Welcome

Joyce welcomed everyone to her last Committee meeting as Chairman.

## Apologies

Andy Dixon, Nigel Waterson – Patron

## Matters Arising

Nothing further yet from Rotherwick (who have helped fund the Day Centre for the past six year) – this will be kept in diary.

Waitrose – The cheque for £500 has now been received and is featured in this month's edition of Mainstream.

Men's group – work continues on this. Interested party names to be handed on to Ian in near future (looking to start with 6–8 people). A date for the first meeting will be circulated to see who is interested. No feedback has been received from the recent article.

John Berry has accepted the role of driver on 4th August. Linda will arrange for him to cover as an escort until his CRB checks have been completed.

There is someone possibly interested from Seaford. Clare White's husband hoped to put the information up at the local police station also to try to generate further enquiries.

## Financial Update

Andy was not present to present the latest financial information, so the following details were picked out. The Bank balance at the end of June is £49,615.29.

Month's expenditure totalled £6,063.31

Month's income totalled £3,426.76

Everyone has a full set of the financial paperwork that Andy has prepared.

## Vicky's Fatigue Management Course

Begins 16th September 2011 and will run every Friday between 10.30am – 12.30pm in the church hall of St Saviour and St Peter's Church, South Street Eastbourne.

The costs for this event were to be shared between us and Bernard's charity. It had been agreed as equal cost sharing between both charities, with us providing the tea coffee and biscuits in addition. (Vicky is also trying to obtain independent funding towards the event).

It was discussed whether a representative re DLA could be arranged to attend.

## Fundraising

Clare Forshaw wants to do a car boot sale – 28th August to raise funds for the Young Supporter's. All

donations towards this need to be at the Centre in good time.

The Young Supporters have a day trip to Howletts Zoo arranged and will need about £240 towards this. There has already been a donation of £100 made and £20 raised from a toy sale. It was agreed that we would fund the balance required after the boot fayre.

A Christmas Sale at Our Lady of Ransom church hall – 3rd December if possible between 12.00pm and 3.00pm. Caroline will contact them to book. Official MS merchandise such as Christmas cards can be sold at this event – Allan advised that if we order in packs of more than 10 per design at a time – before 16th September 2011 and quote our code of 361088 - we will receive a discount of 40% off of the list price.

The donated painting – possibly to be auctioned – further discussions to take place.

Raffle prizes will be required for the Quiz night.

A gentle reminder about the Car raffle in the Arndale will be sent by Caroline.

Likewise for the Bluebell walk next year.

## Chairman's Role / Replacement

Allan confirmed we can co-opt a member onto the Committee part way through the year. He also confirmed that we can run without a Chairman for an indefinite period of time as long as the Committee continued to function.

Peter confirmed that he is happy to cover the role. Peter and Joyce will liaise for a handover.

## Telephone Survey

Before this can be done we need to have home visiting volunteers. Therefore an article needs to go in Mainstream, the Herald and the Eastbourne Gazette asking for any volunteers in this respect. Anyone interested, Annifer and Margaret Clare will meet them in the Centre to discuss the role further.

## Welfare Report

Margaret Clare has taken on this role and all notes have been passed to her from Gladys. The National Centre need to be made aware of this – Caroline will email Allan to confirm.

## Correspondence and A O B

Christmas lunch has been booked for 11th December 2011.

General Meeting will be booked for 5th or 12th May 2012.

The Eastbourne Borough Council Disability Road show on Mobility at Devonshire Halls is on 15th September 2011.

The main door locks have been changed and Linda has replacement keys for all who usually hold one. This is the last Committee meeting for Joyce and she has the very best wishes of the Committee for her new life in the sun.

**Date of Next Committee Meeting:** 10th September

**EASTBOURNE & SOUTH WEALDEN MS SOCIETY DIRECTORY**

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- ACTING CHAIRMAN** Peter Austin 01323 736359 Peteroz48@aol.com
- SECRETARY** Caroline Holdcroft 07866 66 14 39 caroline.holdcroft@btopenworld.com
- TREASURER** Andrew Dixon 01323 441172 andrew.dixon1@homecall.co.uk
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER** Please phone the Centre, 439447
- YOGA** Anita Keall 01323 648303
- NEWLY DIAGNOSED SUPPORT** Sue Austin 01323 736359 SueAustin50@aol.com
- LADIES SUPPORT GROUP** Janet Forshaw 01323 487950
- LADIES SOCIAL GROUP** 'Meet to Share' Sue Austin 01323 736359 SueAustin50@aol.com
- SEAFORD SOCIAL GROUP** Annifer Hatcher 01323 651364 anniferhatcher@googlemail.com
- MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY** Barbara Day 01323 727892 barbara36@talktalk.net
- HEALTH & SAFETY** Contact the Day Services Manager or Chairman
- FUNDRAISING OFFICER** Tanja Woodgate 0798 3029018 tanjawoodgate@hotmail.com
- MS NATIONAL HELPLINE** 0808 800 8000
- ADULT CARERS** Contact the Day Services Manager or Chairman
- YOUNG SUPPORTERS** Clare Forshaw 01323 487950 forshaw685@hotmail.com
- MS INFORMATION** Ian Westgate 01323 763226 ian.westgate@uwclub.net
- TRANSPORT** Contact the Chairman
- PRESS & PUBLIC RELATIONS** Peter Austin 01323 736359 Peteroz48@aol.com
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- MS COLLECTION TINS** Ted Scott 01323 500351
- PATRON** Nigel Waterson 07850 377274 nigel@nigelwaterson.com
- MS MINISTER** Rev. Dr Gerald Munro BA MA Dphil 01323 892538 (All religions and none)
- MS AMBULANCE MOBILE** 0752 805 3365 (Mercedes)



**DAY SERVICES MANAGER** Linda Warner 01323 439447 info@mssesw.org.uk

**MS NURSE SPECIALIST** Vicky Lester 01323 514809 Mobile: 077 66 99 80 37

Victoria.Lester@nhs.net



**Our MS Centre** is independently funded and was established in February 2004 and officially opened in June 2005 by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester.

Financially supported by: The Rotherwick Foundation



## Send Mainstream your pictures of interest



### Ben swapped his boots for a bike

Borough FC captain Ben Austin called in at the Wednesday Lunch Club to present Chairman Joyce with a cheque for £300, following his week-long sponsored bike ride to work and back. (See page four)

### Artist gives one of his paintings to branch

A local artist has donated one of his paintings to the branch to be used to raise funds.

Clifford Fisher, who has a studio in Hartington Place, presented a framed watercolour of Monet's Garden to Joyce Milton.

Mr Fisher is a prolific artist who has exhibited widely and whose work is in collections worldwide.

After a military career Mr Fisher became a headmaster of schools in South East Asia and England. He is a Past President of the London Sketch Club and is a member of the Chelsea Arts Club.

We are very grateful to Mr Fisher for his gift, and we shall ensure that its value is realised to the benefit of the branch.



**ABOVE:** Joyce visits Mr Fisher in his studio.

**LEFT:** The watercolour donated to the branch.