

North and East Herts Branch May Newsletter



An original Watercolour by Maureen Bonfield from Letchworth

The MND association website is: www.mndassociation.org

The National Office helpline is: 08457 626262

Motor Neurone Disease Association – Registered charity No. 294354

Branch Patron: Dr Viv Lucas

Message from the Chair

The AGM was well attended this year and before the business part of the meeting started, we remembered Geoff our treasurer, who died suddenly a few weeks ago. He was a lovely courteous man who will be greatly missed, not only as a friend, but for all the good work he did for MND and other charities. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

I am pleased to report that one of our members, Heather Hurley, has agreed to become treasurer of the Branch. She has a financial background and was treasurer of her children's PTA for a number of years. She will be receiving support from the national association once the formalities of the appointment have been completed. The rest of the previous committee, Annette, Christine, Marilyn, Maria and I, agreed to stand again and were re-elected and we are pleased to welcome Jane Cave onto the committee.

Geoff left our finances in good order and we have a healthy balance of £11,000 to start the new financial year. This is after making two donations to national office in January, £1,000 to a special project for training more association visitors and £6,000 as our end of the year donation to research and other national initiatives. During the past year, the Branch has received several large donations from local clubs, as well as monies raised by individuals through sponsored events, raffles, sales of goods 'in memoriam' and street collections and I should like to thank all those involved for their efforts. Your support is vital for the success of the branch to enable it to continue to support those with MND, in the local area, and their carers.

Finally I must thank the committee for their support and work through the year, the association visitors, the street collectors, the individual fund-raisers, and the members who regularly attend our meetings and other events during the year. Without you there would be no Branch.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 27th May when Annette has organised a visit to HAD. More details in the newsletter.

Gloria

Past Events

Our March meeting was a social evening with a Bring and Buy Sale. This was our first event of this kind and it was a great success. We raised £130.30. Many thanks to all those who attended, bearing lots of gifts and digging deep into their pockets to support the branch. Items for sale varied from books, knitted items, china to water colours.

The water colours were kindly donated by the local artist Maureen Bonfield. A couple of which are pictured on the next page.

We have several available if anyone is interested in making a donation. Please contact Chris on 01438 717169.

Maureen is a self-taught local artist of considerable repute, Maureen has had little formal art training. Her painting style has been perfected over many years of constantly painting, drawing from observation and closely observing the world around her.



Her success has seen her work reproduced worldwide on various products. These products range from greetings cards to canvas prints and every form of tableware imaginable. These images will be familiar in homes across the U.K. Europe, U.S.A. and Canada, but only the Art Nest Gallery in Hitchin can give you the opportunity to view and purchase the originals.

A.G.M

Our A.G.M this year was an informal meeting due to the sad news of our Treasurer. It was well attended and we welcomed some new faces. We are very pleased to welcome on to the committee, Heather Hurley, who will take on the role of Treasurer and Jane Cave.

Our Speaker was Sarah Wright - Coordinator for Rare and Rapidly Progressing Neurological conditions. Sarah is based at Jacketts Field Neurological Centre, Abbots Langley dividing her time between here and Danesbury Neurological Centre, Welwyn. Sarah took over from Liz Garrod in June last year when the position was on a year by year contract, we are very pleased that it is now a permanent position.

Sarah trained as an O T while working as a rehab assistant and worked at the Isabel Hospice for 3 years. On referral Sarah will visit to make an assessment and make sure all the services are in place. Her position covers not only MND but Huntingtons Disease as well as Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, with between 150 – 200 patients, 50% of which are MNDA patients. Many thanks to Sarah for giving us an insight into her very demanding role.

Fundraising

On Friday 27th March I was present at the Ware Centre of Dental Excellence for the draw of the Laser Zoom Teeth Whitening Raffle. Nikki Davey who works at the practice, did a wonderful job selling an amazing number of tickets. The amount raised was £2547 which will be shared between National office and the branch.



Johnny Robinson a 2011 X Factor contestant very kindly appeared to make the draw.



Nikki pictured here with husband Alan and daughter Helena.

I would like to say a very big thank you to her and Alan and their family and friends for all their hard work.

Chris.

Helena is also taking part in the MNDA Jump Fest 2015, a tandem sky dive, on 21st June. If you would like to support Helena to raise money for MND, her Just Giving page is <http://www.justgiving.com/Helena-Davey> or contact her on helena.davey@ntlworld.com

I would like to say a big thank you to Colin Smith for raising over £50 at the Baldock Bowls club open day on Monday 4th May as part of the Baldock Festival. Colin is the clubs president this year, he arranged an MNDA stall for the open day with branch

information, literature to raise awareness and a raffle kindly organised by a club member, Colin is a very valued member of the branch. Chris.

Poster campaign

Last year our theme for Awareness Month was 'voice' – reflecting the fact that more than 80% of people with MND experience some communication difficulties during the course of the disease. We subsequently launched our General Election campaign, 'Don't let me die without a voice', which aims to improve access to communication equipment for people living with MND.

This year we will build on the awareness gained through the Ice Bucket Challenge. The awareness campaign will be shared on our social media channels as well as posters appearing on the national rail network and London Underground.



We are excited to share with you our brand new fundraiser for Awareness Month – *Silence Speaks* – where those who take part will be encouraged to find other ways to communicate throughout their sponsored silence challenge.

Many of you, as well as staff, people living with MND and their families and carers, helped us come up with this new fundraising and awareness raising activity. As you know, one of the things people with MND worry about is losing their voice, that's why 'losing your voice' is at the heart of our new fundraising activity.

We are currently developing fundraising packs, flyers and our [website page](#). You will hear more about *Silence Speaks* in the coming weeks, including how you can take part and help us promote it.

Sign up for power cut support

Free extra support is available to people who may be vulnerable during a power cut. Those who depend on medical equipment are chronically sick or disabled, who have babies or are elderly, are among those who can receive priority support from UK Power Networks

It does not necessarily mean that a person's power will be restored more quickly but they will be given a priority phone number that they can call 24 hours a day if there is a power cut as well as an information pack to help deal with one.

They will also receive regular text messages or phone updates when without power and even extra support from the British Red Cross to visit their home if they wish. For more information on the scheme visit www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority or email psr@ukpowernetworks.co.uk

Visit to Herts Action on Disability (H.A.D.)

I have arranged for the Branch to visit HAD in Welwyn Garden City on **Wednesday 27th May at 7pm.**



Herts Action on Disability is a charity who advise, provide services and sell equipment to people with disabilities and their Carers and help them to remain as independent as possible.

They have an Equipment Centre on site, which sells a large range of equipment and products. This includes a variety of wheelchairs, walking aids, eating utensils, bathing and toileting equipment, dressing equipment, continence products and shoes.

They also have a Seating Clinic, Driving Centre and Transport Service. There are also two Occupational Therapists who are based at the Centre who can advise on housing adaptations to the home, e.g. stair-lifts, walk in showers and other queries regarding disability equipment.

On the evening, we will be able to look around the Centre and talk to a member of staff as well.

Refreshments and cake will be provided too!

Do hope to see you there for this interesting visit.

Herts Action on Disability

**Woodside Centre, The Commons, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL7 4DD
(Very near to the QE2 Hospital, off of Howlands).**

Please contact Annette Ward on 01462-436928 for further information.

Afternoon Tea at Pearces Wednesday 24 June at 3.30

Our June meeting will be another visit to Pearces Farm Shop in Puckeridge for afternoon tea. This event has been well supported over the last two years so if you haven't been before do come if you can. They serve a traditional afternoon tea consisting of finger sandwiches, warm scone and cakes. There is a slight price increase this year to £11.50 and the time will be 3.30pm. I will need to confirm numbers at least a week before so I would be grateful if you could contact me as soon as possible.

email: maria.watson11@ntlworld.com

Phone: 01920 422980 or 07800978281

Thank you and look forward to seeing you.

Maria

FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

May Wednesday 27 th	Meeting at Herts Action on Disability Welwyn Garden City – 7pm
June Saturday 13 th	Street collection in Letchworth
June Wednesday 24 th	Cream Tea Pearces Farm Shop – Puckeridge – 3.30pm
July Wednesday 29 th	Meeting at Bedwell Annette Ward will be testing our memory!
August Saturday 1 st	Street collection in Hitchin If anyone is available to help please contact a committee member
August	No meeting

Bedwell Community Centre
Bedwell Crescent
Stevenage
SG1 1NA

Bedwell meetings are the last Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm

BRANCH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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BRANCH CONTACT

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ASSOCIATION VISITORS

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REGIONAL CARE DEVELOPMENT ADVISER (RCDA)

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THE MND NORTH HERTS WEBSITE

www.mnd.n-herts.freeuk.com

THE MND HELPLINE

Tel: 08457 626262

All calls are charged at local rates. The hours of opening are:-
Monday - Friday 9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. - 10.30 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays: 10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.