December 2013

Dated events

Social Evenings - held on the last Wednesday of every month are now cancelled see further in the bulletin for more information.

Doing anything special these dates? Then why not come and have an evening with us all and enjoy a variety of different events each month. We meet between 7pm-9pm.

Regular events

Drop-In - held at Greens Lane Methodist Church, Greens Lane, Hartburn, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland. TS18 5HP

We meet here 1pm - 4pm every Tuesday, (Thursdays are now cancelled see further in the bulletin for more information).

At the Drop-in there are therapists to administer alternative therapies for those of you who would like to try them. If you're not this adventurous then why not come along and join us for tea, biscuits and conversation instead, we’d love to meet you.

Chat Group - held at Egglescliffe Community Centre, Durham Lane, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland, TS16 0EH

Is suspended until further notice due to the destruction of the local shops by fire.

For more information see our website at http://www.stocktonmsgroup.org.uk
Report from the Treasurer

The Group have not done any major fund-raising since the shop closed five years ago, and funds have declined. As most funding organisations will not consider applications for funding until we had less than 12 months reserves, we did not make any applications till this autumn. We have now applied to several organisations for funding, but we will not know any results till the New Year.

To ensure the continuation of the Group and the Drop-in, the committee have had to make some difficult decisions to cut our costs. We have decided to suspend the monthly Social Night on a Wednesday evening. Due to the lack of numbers attending the Drop-in on a Thursday, where some weeks no one has attended, we are suspending the Drop-in on a Thursday. We have also made the painful decision to make the position of Drop-in Organiser redundant. With the suspension of the Social Night and Thursday’s Drop-in there will be insufficient demand for the minibus. We will put the minibus up for sale in the New Year.

John has been running the Drop-in for over fourteen years, and his excellent and hard work has contributed greatly to the success of the Drop-in. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank John for all his effort and excellent work over these years.

After taking these difficult decisions, the current funds we have in the bank will allow us to run the Drop-in and the Group until at least the end of September 2014. We will continue to make further funding applications in the New Year. If you know of any local organisations, Social Clubs or funding organisations that would consider an application from the Group could you please let me know, by contacting me by telephone (01642-617864) or the Group’s e-mail address on the front page of the bulletin. If anyone has had experience of writing funding applications, and would like to help could you please contact me.

I will keep you informed on how our fund raising efforts progress.

David Henderson
Hon. Treasurer

Make A Wish Campaign

Final wish tokens will appear on Saturday 11th January 2014

Could you please let David Henderson have the tokens by the end of January 2014, by either handing them to any other committee member, or post them to 74 Windermere Rd, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 4LY
TB vaccine 'could help prevent MS'

An anti-tuberculosis vaccine could prevent multiple sclerosis, early research suggests. A small-scale study by researchers at the Sapienza University of Rome has raised hopes that the disease can be warded off when early symptoms appear. More research is needed before the BCG vaccine can be trialled on MS patients. The MS Society said the chance to take a safe and effective preventative treatment after a first MS-like attack would be a huge step forward. MS is a disease affecting nerves in the brain and spinal cord, causing problems with muscle movement, balance and vision. Early signs include numbness, vision difficulties or problems with balance. About half of people with a first episode of symptoms go on to develop MS within two years, while 10% have no more problems. In the study, published in the journal Neurology, Italian researchers gave 33 people who had early signs of MS an injection of BCG vaccine. The other 40 individuals in the study were given a placebo. After five years, 30% of those who received the placebo had not developed MS, compared with 58% of those vaccinated. "These results are promising, but much more research needs to be done to learn more about the safety and long-term effects of this live vaccine," said study leader Dr Giovanni Ristori. "Doctors should not start using this vaccine to treat MS or clinically isolated syndrome." Dr Susan Kohlhaas, head of biomedical research at the MS Society, said it was a small but interesting study. "It's really encouraging to see positive results from this small trial, but they'll need validating in larger and longer-term studies before we know if the BCG vaccination can reduce the risk of someone developing MS. "Ultimately, the chance to take a safe and effective preventative treatment after a first MS-like attack would be a huge step forward." The findings add weight to a theory that exposure to infections early in life might reduce the risk of diseases such as MS by stimulating the body's immune system. Dr Dennis Bourdette, of Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, US, said the research suggested "BCG could prove to be a 'safe, inexpensive, and handy' treatment for MS". He wrote in an accompanying editorial in Neurology: "The theory is that exposure to certain infections early in life might reduce the risk of these diseases by inducing the body to develop a protective immunity."

'I thought I'd be out in week five': Jack Osbourne is proud to come third place in DWTS after battling multiple sclerosis as he embraces tearful mother Sharon

It was an emotional night for Jack Osbourne on the final of Dancing With The Stars. The 28-year-old, who has recently been struggling with painful symptoms related to his battle with multiple sclerosis, placed third in the competition. But Jack was just proud to have made it as far as he did after suffering a relapse of his autoimmune disease in the last few weeks. The former reality star was supported in the audience by his mother Sharon Osbourne, his sister Kelly, and his wife Lisa Stelly.
‘I’ve learned I’m definitely not a better dancer than my sister…we now tie,’ joked Osbourne, while pointing to his Fashion Police sibling Kelly in the front row. Cheerled on by his mother Sharon, the multiple sclerosis sufferer was resigned to his loss: ‘I thought I was going to be out in week five and here I am in third place. I’ll take that.
Later that night he tweeted: ‘Thank you all so much for supporting me on @DancingABC! I might not have won, but I put up one hell of a fight! #DWTS’
But it was his 61-year-old mother who seemed to have been most moved by her son’s performance that night.
Obviously teary eyed, Sharon cheered on Jack from the bleachers.
After it was announced that he had placed third, Jack made sure to embrace his mother and his wife who were waiting on the sidelines.
The final tally for the competition saw Amber Riley in the number one seat, leaving Corbin Bleu and Karina Smirnoff in second place and Jack and Cheryl in third.
The son of Ozzy Osbourne wrote on his Facebook page last week that he was experiencing a relapse of his auto immune disease but would not let ‘MS get in the way of [his] journey’ in the dance competition.
The former reality star wrote to fans: 'I woke up Tuesday morning feeling not so great. I had a thumping migraine and I started noticing some vision problems with my left eye.
'At first I thought it was just another migraine, but as the day progressed, I started feeling those familiar zaps of pain down my legs and arms.'
Adding: 'After several weeks of being relatively symptom free of MS, this week it decided to give me a healthy reminder that it's still there.'
But Jack has maintained a positive and determined outlook: 'This week I made a conscious decision that I was not going to let my MS get in the way of my journey on #DWTS.'
Although, his mother Sharon was quite shaken up when she learned of her son's relapse.
She told The Talk last week: 'I'd been on a plane so I didn't see Facebook, I saw nothing.
'I literally got to the studio at five minutes after the show had started, sat down, Jack's... little video presentation came up and then he said that his eye was bothering him again and I never knew, so I just lost it.
'I completely lost it and well... he got through and I just can't thank everybody enough for supporting him.'
Jack was diagnosed with the debilitating illness last year, clinically referred to as relapsing remitting MS.
Symptoms include recurring blindness in one eye, numbness in both legs, and problems with various internal organs.
While he can currently lead a relatively normal life his condition could rapidly decline at any moment leading to full debilitation or worse.
Regarding his battle, he wrote in the same Facebook note: 'I like to think that 90% of everything in life is mental - every challenge, every hurdle, every bit of happiness, every bit of joy, it all comes down to your perspective.'

Disclosing a diagnosis of MS in the workplace may improve job retention
Unemployment rates for people with MS are disproportionately high in comparison to other chronic diseases.
Australian researchers have now shown that disclosing a diagnosis of MS in the workplace is, on average, associated with greater employment retention. Results will be published shortly in the Multiple Sclerosis Journal.
Drs Pieter Van Dijk and Andrea Kirk-Brown from the Department of Management, Monash University, received an MS Research Australia incubator grant in 2012 to examine psychological issues in the workplace.
They collaborated with Dr Rex Simmons from Canberra Hospital to use the MS Research Australia funded Australian MS Longitudinal Study (AMLS) to examine the role of disclosure of diagnosis in employment retention for people with MS.

A self-report questionnaire on current employment status, demographics and disability level was completed by 2,144 AMLS participants annually over a three-year period commencing in 2010. Participants who were working for an employer were asked if, and when, they had disclosed their diagnosis of MS to their employer. The data was analysed to investigate the factors leading to disclosure. The relationship between disclosure and employment status and duration was also examined.

Contrary to what many people may expect, results showed that disclosure of an MS diagnosis to an employer increased job retention. One factor leading to disclosure of diagnosis was severity of disability. However, employees who disclosed their diagnosis were more likely to be employed, and more likely to be employed for longer periods of time, even after taking level of disability into account.

Results from the study suggest that after disclosure, employees may receive more assistance with workplace accommodations, social support and possibly more effective symptom management than non-disclosing employees. Future research will help determine these aspects. Previous research has shown that symptom management in the workplace is key to maintaining employment for people with MS.

This unique study has uncovered some interesting results. ‘While everyone’s situation is different, these findings provide encouraging information for employees with MS and may lead to people with MS reassessing their workplace situations,’ said Dr Kirk-Brown, ‘it also has important implications for vocational rehabilitation providers working with clients with MS’.

Please note these findings represent a statistical analysis of a large group of people with MS. Individuals should consider their own personal circumstances when considering whether to disclose their diagnosis to an employer. State MS Societies can provide resources to assist with this decision. Please contact your state MS Society for more information.

www.mirror.co.uk 6 December 2013

Multiple sclerosis pill to replace daily injections could soon be available on NHS

A pill to help multiple sclerosis sufferers cope with their condition may soon be available on the NHS.

Current treatment is by regular injections, but the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has approved new drug teriflunomide, which would be taken daily as a tablet. More than 100,000 people in the UK have MS, a chronic neurological condition which affects the brain and spinal cord, causing problems with muscle movement, balance and vision.

Nick Rijke, of the MS Society, said: “This is very good news for people with relapsing forms of MS. Ninety per cent of people with MS want an alternative to treatments by regular injection and now, at last, there is a first-line treatment available.

“Teriflunomide offers a similar treatment effect to the current injectable therapies, but for many people will be much easier to live with because it’s a pill.”
**Vitamin D 'can fight MS' by blocking path of destructive cells to the brain**

Vitamin D may be able to combat multiple sclerosis, researchers said yesterday. They discovered that it can block the migration of destructive cells to the brain, which causes the condition. This could help explain anecdotal reports that the 'sunshine vitamin' prevents or eases symptoms.

MS is most commonly found far from the equator, where there is less sunshine to trigger production of vitamin D in the skin.

The disease is caused by the body's own immune defences damaging myelin, a fatty insulating sheath that surrounds nerve fibres and is vital to the proper transmission of nerve signals. Destruction of myelin leads to symptoms ranging from numbness to blurred vision and paralysis.

Researchers simultaneously gave mice the rodent form of MS and a high dose of vitamin D. They found symptoms of the disease were suppressed.

'Vitamin D might be working not by altering the function of damaging immune cells but by preventing their journey into the brain,' said lead scientist Anne Gocke, of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

In a person with MS, immune system cells called T-cells are primed to travel out from the lymph nodes and seek and destroy myelin in the central nervous system.

While large numbers of T-cells were found in the bloodstreams of the mice, very few were detected in their brains and spinal cords.

'Vitamin D doesn't seem to cause global immunosuppression,' said Dr Gocke.

'What's interesting is that the T-cells are primed, but they are being kept away from the places in the body where they can do the most damage.'

The vitamin may slow production of a sticky substance that allows the T-cells to attach onto blood vessel walls, she added. This may help to keep them in circulation and prevent their migration to the brain.

Once vitamin D was withdrawn from the mice, MS flare-ups occurred very quickly, said the researchers, whose findings appear in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

Peter Calabresi, a professor of neurology at Johns Hopkins and co-author of the study, said: 'Vitamin D may be a very safe therapy, but we still have to be careful with it. It's not just a vitamin. It's actually a hormone.'

---

**Disabled skiers get an assist from volunteers**

John Pelletier believes he’s a better skier now than before falling out of a tree stand while deer hunting in 2004 and suffering a spinal cord injury that left him in a wheelchair.

Now the former attorney from Westport cruises Sunday River’s slopes in a monoski every week through Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation in Newry.

But to ski with his family, he had to travel from a dark place and learn to live again. A skier before the accident, he came upon the adaptive skiing program about six years ago.

"Skiing really saved my life," said Pelletier, 54. “It’s just put me on a whole other level. I don’t consider myself incomplete. I feel I can do anything."

And he does, including hand-cycling, tennis, hunting, and fishing. In doing so, he’s had the assistance of dedicated volunteers.
“They are some of the best friends I’ve ever had in my life, like family,” he said. “They are helping you out for free on their own time.”

Across New England and beyond, skiers and snowboarders with disabilities, from amputees to those living with multiple sclerosis, take to the slopes with an assortment of equipment, from sit-skis to outriggers, arranged through a number of nonprofit disabled sports organizations. With them are volunteers who through instruction, guidance, and caring forge an uncommon bond on the slopes.

Tom Kersey, 60, volunteered at the New England Handicapped Sports Association at Mount Sunapee, N.H., for 14 years before becoming its executive director, and remembers a time when volunteers skied with goggles smeared with Vaseline to simulate vision loss. With more than 300 volunteers providing some 7,000 hours of one-hour sports lessons to more than 400 students last year, Kersey says the program would be impossible to have without them.

He sees three types of volunteers: those passionate about their sport, some with a link to a disability, and others wanting to give back. Kersey has to figure out where each one fits.

In exchange for lift access, volunteers must commit to 24 days, and even pay $45 for a background check. Plus, many drive long distances from Boston or Providence.

“You can’t buy the feeling you get from volunteering and the participant can’t buy the instructor’s care. They are exchanging a feeling that money can’t buy,” Kersey said.

He finds them largely through word of mouth.

“These people go back to work skipping in on Monday after giving 16 hours of their personal time, while their co-workers are dragging in,” he said. “The co-workers want to have that same feeling.”

For more than half of his 37 years, Belmont healthcare administrator Scott Regenstein has been an adaptive skiing volunteer. While at upstate New York’s Greek Peak as a 15-year-old, Regenstein bumped into some three-track skiing — one ski with a pair of hand-held outriggers — instructors. He thought it cool and asked about it. He was encouraged to join the program.

Since then, Regenstein has taught at Vail and Mount Snow, and has become a PSIA Level 3 instructor in Alpine and adaptive skiing. For the past eight years, he’s traveled to central Vermont’s Pico Mountain to teach the volunteer instructors at Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports.

“Being 15, it looked cool, fun,” he said. “There was free training, and I love skiing. At this point being in the working world, I like to think I help people in my day job, but I really learn a lot from the participants. I learn more from them than they do from me.”

Some 500 volunteers help the organization facilitate its mission to provide diverse, yearround sports outings to more than 2,000 people with all types of disabilities. In winter, volunteers must commit to five days.

Mind-set, caring, positive attitude, good judgment, maturity, and patience make good volunteers. With a mantra of safety, fun, learning (keep everyone safe, people won’t come back if it’s not fun and people won’t learn if it isn’t fun), novice volunteers don’t need to be skiing experts. They need to ski safely down a tough beginner trail.

Volunteers are trained on land and snow, getting up to speed on equipment and teaching styles for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning.

They initially assist and shadow lead instructors as an extra set of hands and eyes. On the slopes, they’re a buffer to curious skiers. They are part of a team, the focus being the participant.

“This puts my own bad days in perspective,” said Regenstein. “When these folks have bad days, they are immobile or in a hospital or can’t ski for a year. When I have a bad day it’s because someone says something to me at the office I didn’t like.”

Regenstein, who shares his passion for volunteering with his young son, says the participants are incredible people overcoming barriers.

“They are people who are thrown curveballs in life and they’re not letting it stop them,” he said. “It is hard to complain about anything after you see what these people have overcome in their lives.”
Regenstein has seen fearlessness and confidence. Instead of focusing on what’s wrong, what’s missing, they do the opposite.
“The students focus on what they are able to do and capitalize on their strengths,” he said.
Geoff Krill lost the use of both of his legs in a 1995 snowmobile crash. Now 43, the North Woodstock, N.H., skier has been a student, instructor, and now is sports director of New England Disabled Sports at Loon Mountain in Lincoln, N.H.
He skis competitively, and even monoskied the steeps of Tuckerman Ravine.
The organization has about 200 volunteers for Loon and 60 at Bretton Woods, with combined lessons of about 3,000. Volunteers put in 20 days, with many coming back year after year. According to Krill, many are vested in teaching skiing or snowboarding. About 40 percent of the volunteers are certified instructors and pay for the certification classes themselves.
“They have a sense of pride and want to give more through education,” Krill said last week from Breckenridge, Colo., where he was working with wounded soldiers and Boston Marathon bombing victims at one of the country’s largest winter sports festivals, the Hartford Ski Spectacular.
“At the end of the day, it’s about being around positive energy,” he said. “It’s about a bunch of people getting out because they all want to ski.”

www.publications.nice.org.uk 19 November 2013

Drug treatments for neuropathic pain

NICE clinical guidelines advise the NHS on caring for people with specific conditions or diseases and the treatments they should receive. The information applies to people using the NHS in England and Wales.

This information explains the advice about drug treatments for neuropathic pain that is set out in NICE clinical guideline 173. It only includes drug treatments that can be offered in general practice or a general hospital setting; it does not include treatments in pain clinics or other specialist clinics.

All of the treatment and care that NICE recommends is in line with the NHS Constitution (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england). NICE has also produced advice on improving the experience of care for adults using the NHS. For more information, see 'About care in the NHS' on our website (www.nice.org.uk/nhscare). This is an update of advice on drug treatments for neuropathic pain that NICE produced in 2010.

DISCLAIMER
Articles in this Bulletin are meant for the sole purpose of information only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the committee.
YOUR JOKES

I got invited to a party and was told to dress to kill. Apparently a turban, beard and a backpack wasn't what they had in mind.

After a night of drink, drugs and wild sex Bill woke up to find himself next to a really ugly woman. That's when he realised he had made it home safely.

Paddy says to Mick, "Christmas is on Friday this year". Mick said, "Let's hope it's not the 13th then."

My mate just hired an Eastern European cleaner, took her 5 hours to hoover the house. Turns out she was a Slovak.

Since the snow came all the wife has done is look through the window. If it gets any worse, I'll have to let her in.

Came home one day early in December to find all my doors and windows smashed in and everything gone. What sort of sick person does that to someone's Advent calendar?

I've been charged with murder for killing a man with sandpaper. To be honest I only intended to rough him up a bit.

After years of research, scientists have discovered what makes women happy. Nothing.

A lad comes home from school and excitedly tells his dad that he had a part in the school play and he was playing a man who had been married for 25 years. The dad says, "Never mind son, maybe next year you'll get a speaking part."

Just had my water bill of £175 drop on my mat. That's rather a lot. Apparently Oxfam can supply a whole African village for just £2 a month: time to change supplier I think.

Two women called at my door and asked what bread I ate, and when I said white they gave me a lecture on the benefits of brown bread for 30 minutes. I think they were Hovis Witnesses.

The wife was counting all the 1p's and 2p's out on the kitchen table when she suddenly got very angry and started shouting and crying for no reason. I thought to myself, "She's going through the change."

When I was in the pub I heard a couple of dickheads saying that they wouldn't feel safe on an aircraft if they knew the pilot was a woman. What a pair of sexist pigs. I mean, it's not as if she'd have to reverse the thing!

Local Police hunting the 'knitting needle nutter' who has stabbed six people in the arse in the last 48 hours, believe the attacker could be following some kind of pattern.

Bought some 'rocket salad' yesterday but it went off before I could eat it!

A teddy bear is working on a building site. He goes for a tea break and when he returns he notices his pick has been stolen. The bear is angry and reports the theft to the foreman. The foreman grins at the bear and says "Oh, I forgot to tell you, today's the day the teddy bears have their pick nicked."

Murphy says to Paddy "What ya talkin to an envelope for?" "I'm sending a voicemail ya thick sod!"

Just got back from my mate's funeral. He died after being hit on the head with a tennis ball. It was a lovely service.

19 paddies go to the cinema, the ticket lady asks "Why so many of you?" Mick replies, "The film said 18 or over."
MEMBERS COMPETITION

A £5 prize will be given to the member whose entry has the most correct answers. Even if you do not answer all the questions, send in those you have answered – you could still win!

1/ Dreams was the UK No. 1 hit for which singer?
2/ In the 1991 film Basic Instinct, who played Detective Nick Curran?
3/ What travels by convection and radiation?
4/ Who was ‘Moses’ elder brother?
5/ How many Godfather films have been made?
6/ What does a cartographer make?
7/ What is the usual colour of an aircraft’s black box?
8/ Ariel is the main character in which animated film?
9/ Which French artist was best known for his paintings of ballet dancers?
10/ Ten Danson joined the cast of which TV series in 2011?

Name: 
Send Completed Forms To: 
Mr D Henderson
Address: 
74 Windermere Road
Stockton-on-Tees
Cleveland TS18 4LY

All entries to be received by the next social. The winner will be drawn from entries received with the highest number of correct answers.

Answers to last quiz: