



**Multiple Sclerosis Society**

Newsletter - May 2017



A very warm welcome to the second Newsletter of the year. This is my favourite time of year so I felt it deserved 2 pictures of the season. I hope you are keeping well and enjoying the better weather.

## **This Newsletter's Top Stories**

<b>Page 2, 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>Our new Chairwoman</b>
<b>Pages 5 &amp; 6</b>	<b>Message from the Secretary</b>
<b>Page 7, 8, 9</b>	<b>Awareness Week</b>
<b>Page 9</b>	<b>AGM</b>
<b>Page 10, 11 &amp; 12</b>	<b>Member's Page</b>
<b>Page 13</b>	<b>Events</b>

## Linda Fermont

Hello! My name is Linda Fermont and I will shortly be taking over from Steve Le Page as your new chairman. Gill Ford therefore suggested I might introduce myself by way of this short commentary.

I moved to Guernsey with my husband David, seven and a half years ago. We came here because David had lectured here over 30 years ago and rather liked the island. However, he didn't suggest we come back till 2006 when we came over for a long weekend. The first night he announced that he had arranged for us to meet an estate agent the following morning; I was amazed – we had a lovely house in a quiet village in Hertfordshire and couldn't think why we should want to move. However, having fallen in love with the island it then took us two and a half years to sell our house because the recession hit. By this time though, both of us had retired so it was a good challenge to 'up sticks' and move to somewhere where we didn't know anyone!

We bought a house in St Sampson with a big garden. I have always enjoyed gardening, but never had much time for it when I was working full-time: Similarly David never had much time for gardening but now does all 'the boy jobs' (to use a Mrs. May expression) and enjoys the fresh air and the exercise. Shortly after our arrival an ex-colleague of mine told Raymond Evison (Guernsey Clematis) that we had moved over here. Raymond kindly got in touch and encouraged us to join Plant Heritage. I have been on the committee for about 6

years, and for the last five years have organised the Giant Plant Sale which takes place on the late May bank holiday Monday (as I write this, that is four days away!). More recently David has also joined the committee and this year took over as chairman.

I also enjoy singing and am a practicing Catholic. As a result of going to the church at Delancey, I not only sing in the Delancey music group but also got involved in 'Guernsey Sings' to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Liberation. By this time I had met Roy Sarre and have sung in his Festival choir for the last seven years. More recently I have won cups at the Eisteddfod and this year took my first singing exam!

We both enjoy our food and have loved visiting and getting to know many of the restaurants on the island. We joined the Guernsey Gastronomique Club which is a great way to meet people whilst enjoying some excellent meals, particularly with all the wonderful fish and shellfish you have over here.

So, returning to why I agreed to become the MS chair. Professionally, both David and I are doctors. My specialty was Rehabilitation Medicine and I ran the Prosthetic Centre and a Specialised Wheelchair Centre at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore, North West London. When we arrived in Guernsey I discovered that the person who had originally managed the Stanmore Centre was the visiting prosthetist at PEH. I arranged to go up and see his clinic one day and Dr Gillian Turner somehow heard I was coming and asked to see me. She was hoping I might take on some of her Rehab sessions but hadn't realised I had retired! However,

the result of this was an introduction to Peter Woodward, one of your previous chairmen, and together we did some work around Debbie Robilliard's post to see if we could get the States to fund more specialist nursing for chronic neurological disease.

More recently I have been involved with a UK wheelchair charity, the Posture and Mobility group (PMG) and have been their Trustee Advisor, including working with NHS England to configure different ways of delivering more personalised wheelchair services. This work is still ongoing, but I am now withdrawing in order to concentrate on matters important to our Society.

It will take me a little bit of time to get 'up to speed' with the issues which are most important to all of you. Please bear with me during this steep learning curve, but I will strive to get things moving. Please don't hesitate to contact me about issues that concern you, as we can't deal with things we don't know about. I look forward to meeting many of you over the forthcoming weeks.

Linda Fermont

## Message from your secretary

Well it has been a very busy time, with flag day, Rowathon, Wear Orange Wednesday and the AGM, but more about these later. I still continue along with David, my husband, to monitor the collection pots around the island. I am sure I have asked before, but in case you missed my plea, can I ask you to keep a lookout for these pots. Please check if they are more than half full and if so let me know. I will then pop in and exchange it for a new pot. I say half full because sadly there are those on the island who feel they are entitled to help themselves to charity collection pots. A full pot seems to be very tempting to these people, so I prefer to change pots over before they get full. I don't know if any of you read my rant on this subject in the Guernsey Press a while back.

I expect that you already know that Waitrose do not hold collection pots on their tills, but run a green token system instead. Recently I requested that the Admiral Park store have MS as their charity for one month. I was delighted with the result and I can tell you we raised £663.00 for MS. I was told that as the money is shared between 3 charities each month, worked out on a percentage of total tokens collected, then in earning £663.00 we were awarded the largest amount so far!! So a big thank you to all those who put their tokens in the MS container.

Below is a photo of me receiving the cheque from Waitrose.



I am pleased to have been selected for another year as your secretary. If you have any problems please don't hesitate to contact me at [secretary@guernseymms.com](mailto:secretary@guernseymms.com)

## MS Awareness Week.

The week started on Saturday with Flag Day which was very successful, a big thank you to all of you who helped out on the day.

Then there was a great atmosphere on the Sunday April 28 when the fourth Guernsey MS Rowathon took place. 48 rowers, with almost as many people supporting, took part in this 30k indoor challenge at Beau Sejour Concourse. Their aim was to raise money for Guernsey MS while having some hard-earned fun in the process – either racing to be the first team home or simply looking for the satisfaction that comes with completing such a challenge for the first time.

It's a simple enough formula. Teams of 6 row the 30 k in relay on concept rowing machines, rowing 1k at a time, so that each person rows 5k in all. Not too arduous you might think but as each session is done at a sprint it can be quite demanding.

There was great camaraderie among the teams as each rower was egged on by his or her team mates and surrounding supporters. The race was started by MC, and race commentator, Paul Montague, who was also part of a team – so good going from Paul

The Finance community was well represented with men's teams from PwC and KPMG, a women's team from Ernst & Young. Also represented were a men's team from the Guernsey Press, a team from Gas Energy, a Guernsey Rowing Club mixed team, and finally a team of teachers cobbled together with the addition of two 'guests'.

There was also a guest team who were raising money for 18-month-old Shay Williams-Savident who has been diagnosed with the devastating genetic condition Niemann-Pick.

At the time of going to press not all the sponsorship had been collected but organisers believe £1,800 to £2,000 was raised. The organisers were members of the Guernsey Rowing Club who have a longstanding relationship with the society, raising money for it in many challenges over the years.

Special thanks go to all the participants, to Beau Sejour staff for their support, to King's Life Club, Margi Jorgenson who oversaw the score board and to all the other helpers.

Men's Winners: PwC. Women's EY. Mixed Guernsey Rowing Club

By: Mark Windsor.

The next event was on the Wednesday when we organised a dress down day called Wear Orange Wednesday, or WOW for short. Many businesses, shops, and some schools took part in this and we had hoped to beat last year's inaugural target of £2400. The idea was to get as many people as possible to wear something orange and donate to our charity. Alex Jenner sourced some orange scarves and ties to sell which we hoped would pull in businesses. We also bought WOW wrist bands which were sold mainly in schools. I think I can safely say last year's target was smashed! As of today, the amount raised topped £5000!! A big thankyou goes out to all

of you who participated in this. If you missed it this year we are sure to be running it during the MS awareness week of 2018. I participated along with my Westie, Millie, and our



scarecrow called Scatty.

### **AGM**

The AGM was held on Wednesday 17th May, but I think we were beaten by the horrible weather as people chose to stay in the warm and dry. Our MS nurse, Debbie Robilliard, was unable to give her talk on Fatigue as the awful weather delayed her flight back to the Island from Jersey.

Alex Jenner gave us a rundown on disease modifying therapies (DMT). She explained the development of drugs available on Guernsey, in comparison to those available in Jersey and on the mainland. Guernsey has improved with a couple more drugs being available than a couple of years ago, but I think it is safe to say this is an ongoing project for the committee during the next year.

## Member's Page

Dom Ogier

Busy ,busy, busy is a woman's life, which I'm sure all you ladies can relate to (and some of you men also -so as not to be classed as sexist!!). Well I bumped into Gill at Pleinmont the other day whilst out with my 3 gang members....dogs that is, and she asked me if I could drop a line or two about what I've been doing with my life in the last year or so!!

Well as some of you will be aware I used to attend the physio/keep fit sessions at Beau Sejour, before I became totally obsessed with the world of dog agility. In case you are not familiar with the sport, it is an active interaction with your dog in which the two of you train to tackle a course of obstacles including jumps, tunnels, weaves, dog walk/A frame and seesaw, all of which are set out in a structured pattern by the judge. It is designed to be physically and mentally challenging to the dog and handler, but is also incredibly exciting and fun for both parties.

I have now been competing locally and nationally and was fortunate enough to represent the Channel Islands at Crufts this year with my border collie, Digger, in the international invitational class. It wasn't a total train-smash but as I was

competing at the World's most prestigious dog show and against some of the World's top handlers, to say I was nervous was an understatement!! To have stepped on the "green carpet" was something of a lifetime dream come true and, what's more, I could never have imagined that I'd have achieved selection with my first agility dog.



I could compete at specifically designated para-agility competitions which take place throughout Europe and the UK, but as I am able to manage my MS, I refuse to let this so called "disability" stop me from competing against fully able-bodied folk and am sure if any of you have a passion for a hobby/sport you too would want to get the best you can from life. Interestingly I've come across fellow competitors in

the UK who are at varying stages of MS and who also compete on the main circuit - it's really inspiring to see the incredible vocal handling skills of those who have limited mobility.

I am now the proud owner of a second collie, Lenny, as well as a very "typical" jack russell, Jinx. Jinx also competes in agility and Lenny will be entering training in the next 6 months (only very basic handling up to 12-18 months).

So when the weather isn't too hot or too wet, I just take the best of what I have and tell myself that I am SO very fortunate to have 3 fantastic furry family members ( plus a wonderful hubby!!) to make me get up and get out no matter what !!!!!

I hope this gives you all a reason to AVOID walking at Pleinmont, in case you meet a "mad dog Lady" who lives in her " funny little World of happiness and tennis balls".

Stay well all you lovely MS folk.

Dom X

## Events, so far, for the rest of 2017

15th June - Liz Hendry's Tea/Coffee afternoon (The Cotils)

20th July - Liz Hendry's Tea/Coffee afternoon (The Cotils)

September - Event planned. Watch this space!

21st September - Liz Hendry's afternoon. Details to follow. 19th

October - Liz Hendry's Tea/Coffee afternoon (The Cotils) 16th

Nov - Liz Hendry's Tea/Coffee afternoon(The Cotils) 2nd

December - Christmas Fayre, Cobo Community Centre 21st

December - Liz Hendry's Christmas Party

For further details about Liz Hendry's coffee afternoons, please contact her directly at [lizhendry@cwgsy.net](mailto:lizhendry@cwgsy.net)