

CHAIRMAN'S AUTUMN MESSAGE 2009

With summer a fading memory and the relentless march of the changing season, it is always instructive to review what you said previously. Last year at this time I referred to the "fractious" nature of the 2008 Scottish AGM and the dissatisfaction this Branch had with the Edinburgh hierarchy. Little did we know how deep rooted the problems were. The UK Board subsequently suspended the Scottish Council and the erstwhile Scottish chairman and director have left us. From the ordinary member and the public's view, the resignation of JK Rowling as our patron was the biggest blow. With this Branch at the forefront, steps are now underway to set up a formal all-Scotland meeting to get us back on an even keel. We have already met the new Scottish Director, David McNiven and are committed to working with him. However, with other branches we have demanded a full report including audited accounts for 2008 before moving forward on the Scottish Society's future. Astonishingly, NO Scottish AGM was going to be held this year. It will now take place in October with a date yet to be settled. Your Committee has seen talk of setting up an independent Scottish Society. Your Branch Committee is determined that this will not be supported without a thorough examination of the all the pros and cons in such a drastic move. Meanwhile rest assured our local work in supporting people with MS goes on.

As a good example of sterling local work, our support officers under Ann Barnes' leadership continue their good work. This Branch is very fortunate that previous excellent fund-raising and good stewardship has left us well placed to meet the requirement of the new national policy on individual support grants. With its new focus on local decision making within a framework of UK rules we are confident we can help speedily and sympathetically. If I recall correctly our last Branch AGM asked us to ensure that this happened. If you have MS and think we can help you please contact us.

I was delighted to hear that recruitment is underway for an Area Development Officer for the West of Scotland. This is not a new post but a replacement for Esther Threlfall who left the Society last year. We recognise that some branches need more paid officer support than others, with Ayrshire and Arran here being in very good heart. The Branch was actively involved in agreeing the duties of this revised post and we look forward to working with whoever is appointed. One aspect where help will be welcomed but not an absolute priority for this branch is on membership and recruitment. Thanks to the good efforts of Carolyn MacIsaac we now have almost 400 members, the largest branch certainly in Scotland and possibly the UK.

Our links with NHS Ayrshire and Arran continues to allow us to press for improved MS services. The appointment of additional consultant staff in neurological medicine has seen a reduction in waiting times which can lead to an earlier diagnosis and importantly a speedy start to treatment and rehabilitation. Our work with supporting people newly diagnosed with MS at the Douglas Grant Unit at Ayrshire Central Hospital goes on apace. We note that a contract for the total redevelopment to create a Community Hospital is now underway but are assured the DGU will remain and prosper

In closing an important date for your new 2010 diary:
New Year Lunch - Saturday 9 January – Gailles Lodge Hotel, Irvine
Time fairly flies by !!! Best wishes and stay warm,

Donald McNeill
Chairman

HENDERSON GROUP

Since the last newsletter Jean T celebrated her 80th birthday with her family and friends. The group did not miss out though as we had a lovely cake and goodies... best wishes go to her.

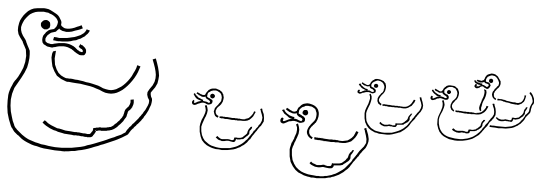
Brian Tipple has moved permanently to Torrance Lodge where he is settled and looking much better.

McChristie's is a favourite eating place for the group and yet again the meal was lovely and enjoyed by all who attended. Catherine has her 'thinking cap' on deciding when and where we go next time.

Although not able to go to Wimbeldon, strawberries and cream went down nicely at the Henderson Centre as does Gail's home baking.

As I write this the rain is lashing down. I have a natural pond at the bottom of my garden and all I need is ducks! Lets hope the warm sunshine returns soon.

Moureen Jones



SOCIAL SECTION

The Social Section will be starting back up on Thursday 3rd September 2009 at the Menzies Hotel in Irvine (note this is a change of venue).

We are still looking for a chairperson to replace Jim Fitt who chaired the social nights for the past 17 years... but we wouldn't be looking for anyone to do it for as long as that...ten years would be great!!! – just joking – if you think you might be interested in being the Chairperson of the social nights call the branch office on: 01294 558866.

Betty Harvie
Social Secretary

NEW CUMNOCK GROUP

The New Cumnock MS Group which meets at the Lochside Hotel in New Cumnock will start up again in August.

They will be holding a fund raising Dinner and Dance event, to be held at the Lochside Hotel on 10th October. For further details please contact Caroline Duncan on 01290 333846.

CALLING GIRVAN & MAYBOLE

A small group is now up and running to promote friendship and fellowship. The group meets in the Royal Hotel in Girvan and a warm welcome is assured to all affected by MS.

Contact Margaret Armour for details - 01465 710302.

This of course now means we have groups running in Ayr, Cunninghame, Girvan/Maybole, Kilmarnock and New Cumnock. Well done to all the local organisers.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP

It may interest you to know that we now have 393 members in the Ayrshire & Arran Branch.

We are the largest of the branches in Scotland with a steadily increasing membership. Membership costs only £5 per year and has many benefits.

If anyone has any queries about their membership / renewal please contact Carolyn on 01292 471476. You can also print off a membership application form from our website, by logging on to: www.msayrshire.com

CUNNINGHAME MS DROP-IN CENTRE

The group closed for the summer break with a successful lunch on the 25th June.

We were joined by the Branch Chairman Donald McNeill and some of our friends from the past, with Aline Hogg, one of our best-known great support workers being amongst them. It was nice to see her looking so well.

Derek Barber and his wife Kath and also Boris from Arran were there. Others were invited but unfortunately could not attend.

We will be resuming normal service on the 27th August when hopefully we can persuade more of our members to make use of the 'Wii' machine although ten-pin bowling is quite popular.

We look forward to the members input as to what they would like to do during the next session and it would also be helpful if someone would volunteer to be our Secretary, as at present we do not have one. The group is for the members and without their guidance we don't know what to try and organise.

I hope that all the members are looking forward to the start up date so, from your Treasurer, enjoy the rest of the summer.

Margaret Shuttleworth

KYLE COFFEE CLUB

Members of the Kyle Coffee Club have had a good summer so far, and hopefully more good weather is to come.

Margaret and John spent a week in the area in which they used to live, Dorset. They flew from Glasgow to Southampton, with Flybe and found the staff very helpful.

Denise and Jim had a lovely holiday in Sorrento. They thoroughly enjoyed the food but regret the extra pounds. I think a return to Italy might be on the cards.

Susan's husband Jim jumped out of a perfectly good aircraft! There was a reason, to raise funds for MS by taking part in a parachute jump at Strathallan.

On 18th June, watched by Susan and their two girls he has raised over £700 for MS. Well done Jim.

We meet at Dobbies Gardenworld, on the last Wednesday of the month at 10.30am. Come along and join us. For more details contact Irene on 01292 478962.

Irene MacLean & Carolyn MacIsaac

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Mauchline girls, Laura James and Laura Robertson, have made a great start to their fundraising for the branch as 'The 2 Lauras' prepare to run in the New York Marathon. A recent pub quiz night at the Black Bull in Mauchline raised £370 and boosted their total so far to £6,500 towards their target of £7,000.

A group of friends from the Cosy Corner pub in Kilwinning walked the West Highland Way, raising £1,465 for the branch in the process.

The weather hit attendances at the Kilwinning Carnival this year and despite our stall only raising £119 over the weekend, it gave us an opportunity to promote the branch's services... plus the entertainment was good!

July 25th saw a team of members head 'overseas' for the Arran Collection Day. The island was busy as blue skies and sunshine were the order of the day. The collection raised almost £629.

THANKS TO ALL OUR FUNDRAISERS AND SUPPORTERS

What's On Where

Cunninghame Drop-In Group
Every Thursday 12 noon—3pm in St John's Church Hall,
Stevenston. Contact Iris on 01294 471066

Henderson Centre Group
Meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from
1 – 4pm in the Scout Hall behind Henderson Church,
Kilmarnock. Contact Catherine on 01563 539537

Kyle Coffee Club
Meet on the last Wednesday of each month at 10.30am
Dobbies Garden Centre, near Ayr. Contact Irene
McLean on 01292 478962

New Cumnock Group
Last Tuesday of each month from 6.30 pm onwards at
the Lochside House Hotel in New Cumnock.

Girvan/Maybole Group
Royal Hotel, Girvan. Call Margaret Armour 01465
710302 for details.

Yoga Class
Each Monday at 7.15pm at the Biggart Hospital,
Prestwick. Call Jean Howie on 01292 268434

Branch Social Evening
Next Social Evening is on Thursday 3rd September at
6.30pm for 7pm prompt at the Menzies Hotel, Irvine.
Call us on 01294 558866 for details.

Branch Committee
Meets on the second Thursday of the month at
7.30 pm at Biggart Hospital, Prestwick. All MEMBERS
are welcome to attend. Contact Harry Travers on
01294 558866.

BRANCH VACANCIES

There are currently two senior positions vacant within
the branch.

We are seeking a Vice-Chairperson for our full branch
committee and also a Chairperson to run a committee
of dedicated fundraisers (this is a new post). These
are both voluntary positions.

If you would like further details or would like to be
considered for either post, please contact our office on
01294 558866 or email msayrshirebranch@tiscali.co.uk

VENUE CHANGE

Please note that from September, the venue for the
Branch Social Night will be the Menzies Hotel in Irvine
(formerly the Thistle Hotel) and not the Gailles Hotel as
previously advertised.

BRANCH CONTACT LIST

<u>Patron</u>	<u>President</u>
H R M Vernon DL	Mrs Kathryn Gray
<u>Chairperson</u>	
Mr. D. McNeill O.B.E.	01292 280814
<u>Vice-Chairperson</u>	
Vacant—if interested call...	01294 558866
<u>Secretary</u>	
Mr. H. Travers	01294 553850
<u>Treasurer</u>	
Mr. C. Thomson	01292 282225
<u>Fundraising Officer</u>	
Vacant—if interested call...	01294 558866
<u>Membership Secretary</u>	
Mrs. C. MacIsaac	01292 471476
<u>Minutes Secretary:</u>	
Ms E.J. Hannah	01292 470502
<u>Support (Welfare) Team</u>	
<u>Senior Officer</u>	
Mrs. A Barnes	01290 550720
<u>Support Officers</u>	
Mrs. M. Jones	07821 777026
Mrs. I. MacLean	01292 478962
Miss M. Patrick	01290 420676
<u>Social Section Chairman</u>	
Vacant—if interested call...	01294 558866
<u>Social Secretary</u>	
Mrs S. Fitt	01292 282377
<u>Social Section Secretary</u>	
Mrs. E. Harvie	01294 554962
<u>Publicity, Website & Newsletter</u>	
Mr. N. Smalley	01294 550018
<u>Honorary Roles</u>	
<u>Health & Safety Advisor</u>	
Mr. J. Hambrook	01475 674498
<u>First Aider</u>	
Mrs. R. Fraser	01563 532558

MS Ayrshire and Arran Branch Office is
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11am—3pm. Website www.msayrshire.com

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