

GOSPORT AND FAREHAM GROUP OF THE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

From the Secretary – Juliette Hewitt, 11 Beech Grove, Gosport,
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As I figuratively turn the page on yet another month of the calendar I'm amazed at how fast time is speeding past. Warmer longer days ahead to look forward to and I feel so blessed to live in such a beautiful part of the country with the ever-changing landscape of the sea. I do hope you all managed to cope with the recent snow and stayed wrapped up, warm and safe at home. I have such wonderful friends and neighbours who checked up on me to make sure I didn't need anything, such kind caring souls.

Let me introduce myself, I'm Jenny and can usually be found with my gorgeous Canine Partner, Eliza, at one or other of our activities and events. I'm giving the fabulous Juliette a break from writing the newsletter while she carers for the ailing Graham. He's making great progress but like we all know too well, these things take time. I'm sure like me you wish him great speed in his recovery and look forward to the pleasure of his company when he rejoins us for one of our events.

Talking of events, Steve has organised a Fish and Chip Quiz Social on Saturday 14 April at Lee on Solent Community Centre from 7pm. It looks to be a cracking evening, I urge you to fill out the forms and join us. The details are included on the enclosed form. Parking at the back and to the front across the road, a disabled toilet, level access and a bar. Bring a team or come as ones or two's and make a team from the friends you meet before we begin. Any items you could donate to the raffle would be greatly appreciated. Give them to myself, Mave or Juliette at one of our activities.

We have a new activity for you to try from 18 April. Pilates at Lee on Solent Tennis, Squash and Fitness Club, 41-47 Manor Way, Lee on Solent, PO13 9JQ. Every Wednesday during term time between 10:00 and 12:00. We will be in the function room on the ground floor at the front. Small bit of parking at the front and yet more down the side of the building and a car park at the back. You can access the room via the main entrance or the level access fire escape to the front on the lefthand side as you look at the club. There is a bar area to purchase teas and coffees afterwards and a disabled toilet. Our Pilates instructor will be adapting the

exercises so they can be performed in a chair, but we will also be offering the opportunity for people to exercise from the floor, all we ask is that you can get up afterwards! At present we do not have any mats so would kindly ask that you bring your own and perhaps a small pillow for your head while on the floor and something to drink while exercising. We will be asking for a donation of £5 per person per class. Carers are most welcome to come and take part as well. We are taking up the MS challenge this year, let's get active! Who's going to join me?

Have you heard about a disabled persons railcard? Just £20 a year entitles you to 1/3 off rail fares for yourself and 1 adult travelling with you. Check out the other benefits, how to get passenger assistance and apply online at disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk or for further information phone 0345 605 0525 or email disability@raildeliverygroup.com.

On the theme of travel, we have received a letter from an enthusiastic traveller who also happens to have MS and be a full-time wheelchair user. They have set up a website to share reviews, resources and service providers for the UK and countries around the world. The website is www.wheelchairworld.org and a copy of the letter is included. I hope it inspires you to visit somewhere new during the year.

If you shop in the Co-op and buy own branded products or purchase other Co-op products you could raise money for the Gosport and Fareham MS Group by selecting us as your chosen charity with a Co-op membership card. Find out more from www.coop.co.uk and look for Local Community Fund under membership. It's a great way to raise funds and it doesn't cost you a penny, well apart from what you were going to purchase anyway.

Amy Harbour, MS Nurse, sent me some information about MS-UK Counselling as some people are waiting months for iTalk appointments. The counselling service focuses on helping you understand yourself in light of your MS and explores its emotional impact on your life. It is available to anyone living with MS age 18 and over and is completely confidential. Get in touch:

Website www.ms-uk.org/counselling

Email counselling@ms-uk.org

Phone 01206 226500

Are you a star baker or an expert faker? Do you fancy taking on a Cake Break and bake a real difference to the lives of people affected by MS. Visit www.cakebreak.org.uk for recipes, hints and tips, email cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk if you have any questions. Let us know if you decide to take up the challenge. Good Luck!

Remap is a charity that design and custom-make equipment to help disabled people live more independent lives. This includes mobility, help in the home, managing personal care, enjoying sports and hobbies and much more. If an item is available in the shops you will be encouraged to purchase this in the first instance, this charity comes up with solutions to problems where a solution hasn't been found yet. Check out their website, www.remap.org.uk, central office phone number is 01732 760209 or email data@remap.org.uk.

Can you lend a hand with our upcoming store collections? An hour of your time would be greatly appreciated, if you can manage longer, that would be fantastic. Sitting, smiling and talking all take our energy but you do meet such lovely members of the public who are so interested in MS and are also interested in all that we do. Contact our Fundraising Volunteer Steve Irving on 07976 054003 or email him irvingfam@btinternet.com. If you see the team while shopping, do pop over and say hello.

Friday 6 April at ASDA Gosport

Friday 25 May at Tesco Whiteley

Our Group Co-ordinator, George McAleese, is running a stall in Gosport Market on 24 April, during MS week. Come and check out his wares or get in contact if you can lend a hand. Phone him on 07825 410680 or email him at George.mcaleese@btopenworld.com.

Data protection is being updated. In simple terms we need your permission to hold your address and email address on a database and to then use that information to send you the newsletter, diary and other relevant information. I've enclosed a form and would be much obliged if you could complete it and return it to Juliette at the address given above. By post, scan it and email it back to me or hand it to me or Juliette at one of our group activities or events. If we don't get the completed form returned we won't be able to send the newsletters or update you on what is happening within the Group from the end of May. If you haven't got a printer just ask and we can send out a form by post.

Jenny

You can find out about all our activities, events and ways to access help online at www.gosportandfarehamms.org.uk or like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/GosportFarehamMS/>