



MS Society Bailiwick of Guernsey Newsletter

November 2021

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A message from the Chair

I honestly don't know where this year has gone! I understand we have not sent out a newsletter since January, for which I apologise, but as we are forever saying, it has been a strange year.

We started out with all our New Year plans and almost immediately the second lockdown put pay to the Rowathon and Jigsaw competition. On emerging from "Purdah", we immediately launched into MS Awareness Week – this meant flag days and WOW (Wear Orange Wednesday). The Flag days were immensely successful, but WOW suffered from lack of forward publicity (see separate report).

We held our AGM in May and had a pleasing crowd, possibly spurred on by Dr Basil Ridha's attendance and Rosalyn's homemade bakes! Dr Ridha's talk was titled "How can we best work together?" and generated some interesting discussion.

We had planned a relaxed summer social in the middle of June, but this failed to attract enough interest (?Covid issues) and was cancelled. However, later that month MS had a stall at the Lieutenant Governors Fayre and the ducks in the pond were very popular (see separate report).

We had planned to hold the cancelled Jigsaw competition in the autumn, but bearing in mind the continued concerns around COVID, this has been postponed again till the spring. We have, however, purchased the jigsaws in preparation.

November, however, was suddenly very busy. We had the event at La Perla (see Rosalyn's report) on 8th November. Our Christmas Fayre was on Saturday 13th November. Footfall was a bit disappointing but nevertheless raised a good sum. Thank you to all those who came and helped on the day and those who baked, painted, constructed, sewed and stitched to bring items to sell. The following day the postponed Rowathon took place at the Indoor Fitness Centre at Hougue du Pommier. 17 teams participated and two of the ladies teams beat the previous ladies team record for the event. Thank you to all the teams who

puffed, panted and sweated on our behalf – you will have raised a lot of money for us. We also were privileged to see Simon Johns break the 24h solo rowing world record which he was finishing during our event.

The Round Table Charities Christmas Fayre has now sadly, but rightly, been cancelled, and so has our Children's Christmas party on 4th December – the latter however, will be rescheduled as an event in the New Year.

That's it for events this year, but we are already working on 2022.

In the meantime, there is some news regarding a neurologist. Dr Basil Ridha (locum neurologist for the last year) finished his contract at the beginning of October and returned to England. However, just as he was leaving he was approached by HR and has another 3 month contract to come over one week in four and maintain virtual contact in between to support MS advice on island. I understand that this has been organised while interviews take place in December for a permanent replacement.

Finally, I am stepping down as the Group Co-ordinator at the end of this year. The arrangements for my successor are just being finalised and that will be a surprise for 2022. Thank you for allowing me to work with you all over the last few years. I have some very happy memories.

So keep well, keep safe and enjoy the remainder of 2021.

Linda Fermont

A message from the Secretary

Well what a strange year 2021 has been. It started out quite hopeful that the worst of the pandemic was over and life would begin to get back to normal – how wrong we were.

Luckily apart from the delayed jigsaw competition we will have nearly managed to hold our main fundraising events, which has been really good. Reports follow in this newsletter about some of our fundraising events, but I would like to say a huge thank you to Dinarte and Mirra and all the staff at La Perla Restaurant who very generously donated the takings from Monday 8th November to MS Society Guernsey. They opened early offering teas, coffees and cakes and didn't finish until nearly midnight, also donating prizes for a raffle. We really appreciate their efforts and all the money raised will be well used.



This winter feels a little safer now with a big uptake of vaccinations against Covid on the island, but with cases rising at the moment we want to remind you that you can contact the committee at info@mssociety.org.uk or on our helpline 07781 109095 if you require any support at any time and we will do our best to help.

We are again putting up a tree in the Town Church this Christmas and it always a beautiful sight with so many decorated trees. The Festival runs from Monday 6th December until Monday 3rd January 2022.

If you don't know where the picture on the cover is, it was taken during a recent wet and windy visit to Sark at Sark Henge, which was built in 2015 to commemorate the 450 year anniversary of Queen Elizabeth 1 granting the Fief of Sark to Helier De Carteret, Seigneur of St Ouen on 6th August 1565. Stones of Jersey granite form a ring around a stone disc which represents the Seigneur greeting and thanking their settler ancestors in St Ouen.

Keep safe everyone and enjoy the remainder of 2021.

Rosalyn Priaulx

WOW 2021

This event occurred about a month after we emerged from the second lockdown and because of this and COVID uncertainties we had not had the opportunity to contact Corporate institutions and schools. Equally whilst we had time to buy 'orange goods' for sale, we didn't get the boxes out to retail outlets more than a few days before the event. Despite all these glitches we managed to raise just over £1,800. At this point I must credit the daughter of one of our committee members who took the initiative to contact her teacher during the school holiday, resulting in her school participating at very short notice and raising a significant proportion of the total takings.

We are indebted to Lince Salisbury, who generously sponsored us for a third year and have confirmed sponsorship for a final year for 2022.

Saffery Rotary Walk

I was asked to participate in the Saffery Rotary Walk with the primary purpose being to help raise awareness and funds as part of the Guernsey Disability Alliance (GDA) team representing our local branch of the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society.

I wasn't sure of the distance, had no idea what the weather would be like and didn't know about the bright orange T-shirts but knowing how important it is to raise awareness and funds I said yes. Luckily, I decided to enter for the GDA section only which meant that unknowingly, I had circumvented the 39 miles all island tour that many bravely had signed up for.

Family and friends were equally in awe that I had signed up as they had assumed I was doing the whole coastal walk. Saffery Rotary have recognised that for many, myself included, the time and dedication for training, the fitness level and sheer energy required meant that without relay teams, family walk initiatives and varying start points for those of us with physical and mental challenges it could not be accessible to all and as such, there would be less participation. Perhaps less sponsorship raised and perhaps less awareness. It is good to know that most members of our community could have the opportunity to consider participating. Including this year those in wheelchairs and those on crutches, the youngest participant was 11, the oldest 74 years old.

The 2021 Saffery Rotary Walk took place on Saturday 5th June starting at 4.30 am and not ending until 10 pm for some of those who circumvented the entire

distance. There were more than a thousand walkers which included 33 relay teams and 60 family groups making it a record breaking year for one of our island's largest charity fundraising events.

The MS team joined the GDA at Bordeaux and were warmly welcomed. Getting to the finish line took a little longer than expected but the atmosphere, encouragement and the weather were all amazing. We were highly distinguishable in our orange t-shirts and caps. Many thanks to everyone who took part and to all of those who supported the event.

The Guernsey Voluntary Service (GVS) made the most amazing sweet cup of tea that I was very grateful for as I tended to my blisters and contemplated the ride home.

Thank you all.

Jennifer Merrett.



Government House Charities Fete – 26th June 2021

Our MS Stall at the Government House Charities Fayre was a great success in spite of the bad weather that set in during the afternoon.

In the morning, Jacquie Vining very kindly assisted with setting up our staff and during the afternoon the stall was manned by our other very kind volunteers Jo Grimshaw, Jo Warry, Cathy Stott together with their respective husbands. A special thank you also to Audrie Dickens for her help on the day. Many thanks to our volunteers and also to Joni and Rachel from the Guernsey Community Foundation who kindly helped with setting up the gazebo!

As this event was primarily to raise awareness of MS, this year we introduced a new game aimed at attracting young families and this proved to be a great hit with children. We were kept very busy with children queueing up to fish for ducks out of the paddling pools and every child was very happy to have won a prize and given an MS balloon.

Altogether the event went very well indeed!

Heather Lucas

