

Warrington

MiScellany

August 2011

Firstly, I'd like to apologise for not writing the editorial for the previous edition, I had planned to but I was bogged down with a horrendous amount of revision for my first year exams at university.

This was possibly the most stressful and horrible week of my life, despite revising for the previous nine weeks! Thankfully, I recently found out that I'd passed them all, and so I'll be going back to university next year!

I've just got back from Italy, where I went with my girlfriend (Katie) to visit friends in Rome, and then to Puglia in south Italy to visit the coast. I basically spent the time getting fat on pizza, pasta and seafood. However, when Katie discovered that the lobsters, which were live in tanks

and pools in the restaurants, are chosen and then killed by being boiled alive, she decided she should set up a lobster foundation, and maybe even start stealing lobsters to throw back into the sea!

Italy was great though, the weather was really good, and I got to see some of the sights in Rome too; the coliseum, pantheon, Spanish steps, and the Trevi fountain.

Now that I've got back to the UK, I'm getting stuck into my training for my bike ride, which, if you didn't already know, is going to be a 7 day,

Sam King, 45 Denbury Avenue, Stockton Heath. WA4 2BW Tel 860630

850 mile trip from Land's End in Cornwall to John O'Groats in Scotland, covering the length of the UK, and going through England, Wales, and Scotland. This will be in aid of Teenage Cancer trust, and will take place in a month. It would be great if some of you would sponsor me, either contact me on me email address, by phone, or email. Or hopefully, if I get my Just Giving site set up in time, I'll get Chris to insert the link *here* before the newsletter goes out for print. Any amount would be greatly appreciated, and will be going to a worthy cause

After paying a deposit for a house I'll be renting next year at university, I now have no money at all, and have been scrimping and saving. However, when i was in Liverpool the other day, I was asked by the manager in Hollister's (a fashion clothes

shop) to go for a group interview for a part-time job, so hopefully I'll be able to earn some money before my student overdraft completely runs out..!

Having written this editorial for a couple of years now, I'm interested to see what people think I should be writing in it. this time, it's been completely about myself and my plans for the summer. But I want to know, do you read this (assuming anyone does read it!), and wish that I'd written about something different, a topic you want me to discuss, or just a general comment on what you think of it. I'd love to hear any input at all, because in the last two years I think I've had three emails from readers, so it would be nice to know that I'm actually talking to someone!

Contact me via the usual means.

Sam King

Activity & Social

Date	Event	Contact
Aug 10th	Candle works/ice cream factory Cancelled	Helen 723564
Sept 6th	Boat Trip Stockport to Adlington	Mandy 726758
Sept 22nd	Steam train trip Bury to Rawtenstall	Mandy 726758



Combined walk aid and seat looking for a new home contact Dorothy Lewis, Tel. 268820 for details



Our congratulations to:-

Pamela LILFORD	03.Aug
Wendy HARMER	07.Aug
Judith WALSH	08.Aug
Charles E DOOLEY	14.Aug
Lorna FLAHERTY	30.Aug
Valerie GRIFFITHS	17.Sep
Rita DALY	24.Sep
Glenis ENRIGHT	25.Sep
Les BAYLISS	29.Sep
Jane AVERY	01.Oct
Stephen ROBINSON	16.Oct

Activity & Social

Dan the manager of the Jolly Falstaff, Padgate has been in touch about a fun day on August 29 the bank holiday to raise funds for our branch His dad was Nick Holly, a branch member who died twelve years ago. It's nice of Dan to undertake this event on our behalf.

After the success of the last trip, there will be another canal trip from Marple to Adlington on the Macclesfield Canal on Tuesday 6th September. There are quite a few places left on the trip (the boat can take up to 12 people, 4 of which can be people using wheelchairs). We will be stopping for lunch in Adlington. If anyone is interested, please contact Mandy Wilton on 01925 726758.

Listening Ear - Margret Hughes - 01925 723917

100+Club



There are 107 members if you're not one of them please consider joining contact Chris Janovitz on 723564. Remember the more people join the higher the prizes go don't delay.

14th June 2011
Members 107

Prize	Num	Name
1st	048	Pat Ordish
2nd	053	Marnie Hampson
3rd	092	John Tipping
4th	086	Olive Curley
	075	Audrey Donaldson
	014	John McQuillan
	056	G Atkinson
	087	John Curley

The amounts were £106.00, £56.00, £31.00 and 5 at £10 respectively

12th July 2011
Members 107

Prize	Num	Name
1st	071	E Martin
2nd	061	Doris Burgess
3rd	070	C T Hull
4th	021	Kenneth Harrison
	073	Angela McEwan
	069	Sylvia Rowls
	060	Linda Atkinson
	010	John Tate

The amounts were £106.00, £56.00, £31.00 and 5 at £10 respectively



MS Nurse Clinic

From Walton Centre

Helen Leggett

0781 331 6314

Woolston Clinic

2nd Monday of the month
2 PM

Outings & Events

Support Your Branch

Monthly Socials



<http://warringtonms.org.uk>

Ampyra to Aid Walking

Reversing an earlier decision, European regulators have recommended approving Acorda Therapeutics Inc's drug Fampyra, which is designed to improve the walking ability of patients with multiple sclerosis.

U.S. biotechnology company Biogen Idec Inc acquired European rights to the drug, also known as Ampyra, in 2009 and is in charge of commercialization and marketing it in Europe.

Conditional approval means Biogen can start selling the product once it is formally approved -- expected within 67 days -- but the company will have to provide additional information once it is on the market. If and when all the conditions are met, it will receive full approval.

The drug was approved in the United States in January, 2010, but in January this year, European advisors rejected the drug, saying they were not convinced it conferred a clinically meaningful benefit.

Analysts currently see Fampyra/Ampyra reaching sales of around \$600 million by 2015, according to Thomson Reuters Pharma consensus forecasts.

Acorda's shares had fallen nearly 30 percent from their year high last June. Some investors have grown concerned sales of its key medicine have flattened.

Cohen said the flattening of prescriptions reflected the fact that when the drug was first approved, a large number of patients -- some 40,000 -- rushed to try it. Inevitably, the product did not work for everyone and a proportion of people stopped taking it.

Now the company is optimistic it can increase sales by marketing the drug for a wider group of patients -- those whose walking ability has not deteriorated as much as those who initially took the drug.

"Data show that the most mildly affected patients did at least as well as the more severely affected," Cohen said. "Even if you are just beginning to have impairment in your walking abilities you can benefit."

Source: © Thomson Reuters

Employment Support Allowance

New claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) must undergo tests to see if they are capable of some sort of employment. Of 1.3 million tests between October 2008 and November 2010, some 88,700 were considered unfit for any work.

The TUC said the tests were a money-saving exercise, adding that disabled people were not "trying it on".

The Department for Work and Pensions figures come on the day a report warned tests caused anxiety among claimants.

ESA is the successor to Incapacity Benefit and claimants are required to go through a series of tests to judge their fitness for work.

The department has released the results from 1.3 million tests over a period of more than two years which showed:

- 7% were incapable of any work
- 17% were able to do some sort of work given the correct support
- 39% were deemed to be fit for work and were moved onto jobseeker's allowance
- 36% dropped out of the application process
- 1% of applications were still in progress

Those who cannot work will always receive our unconditional support but for those who can work it is right that they get the help they need to get into employment.

"We are continuously improving the medical test to ensure that it is as fair and effective as possible."

But there has been some criticism of the tests. "The new incapacity benefit assessment is a much tougher test than previously and is designed to save the government

money by excluding more people," said TUC general secretary Brendan Barber.

"It is therefore unsurprising that more disabled people have been declared fit for work. These figures certainly do not suggest that thousands of disabled people are suddenly trying it on.

"The TUC has heard from disabled people all around the UK who feel the tests have been unfair and ineffective. The government needs to do much more to help

disabled people back into jobs, rather than cracking down on the benefits they get when they are unable to work."

The figures came as a report by the Work and Pensions Committee concluded that some vulnerable benefit claimants had payments stopped because of administrative errors in work assessments.

This affected some of the 1.5 million existing incapacity benefit claimants who are being reassessed with work capability assessments to encourage them back into jobs.

Overbooking of slots led to some people being marked as failing to attend, leading to suspended payments.

"The government's aim of helping benefit claimants back into work is laudable, but the scale of the challenge should not be underestimated and nor should the level of anxiety which surrounds the process," said Dame Anne Begg, who chairs the committee.

"People are suspicious that the government's only objective is to save money."

The reassessment process, which began nationwide in April, determines whether applicants are entitled to ESA, or are considered "fit for work", in which case they are

put on jobseeker's allowance instead.

The assessments are carried out by Atos Healthcare. It was criticised in the committee's report, although the committee accepted that some improvements had been made.

"[The service] has often fallen below the standard claimants rightly expect. This has contributed significantly to the widely felt mistrust of the whole process," the report said.

It added that it was unacceptable that some people had found their benefits were stopped as a sanction for failing to attend the assessment when it was no fault of their own.

Cases had been the result of overbooking, administrative errors, or benefits claimants being too ill to attend the test.

Atos declined to comment on the report when contacted by the BBC.

The report called on the government to be more active in explaining the support available to people, irrespective of the outcome of the assessment.

It was also critical of the "irresponsible and inaccurate" media coverage of the issue which labelled some benefit claimants as "work-shy".

MS Society response page 8

MS Society Response

We are calling for serious reforms to the assessment process for ESA to make it fairer and more effective, including in particular

- ÿ The recommendations of the Harrington independent review to be implemented in full.
- ÿ The development of a better set of descriptors to assess fluctuating and unpredictable conditions like MS, and better training of ATOS assessors in complex conditions like MS.
- ÿ Better recognition in the assessment of symptoms like pain, fatigue and cognitive problems and their impact on a person's ability to work
- ÿ More weight to be given to information provided by healthcare professionals nominated by applicants, such as an MS nurse, occupational therapist or physiotherapist.
- ÿ Building more empathy, flexibility and transparency into the system: all claimants should be given plain English reasons for the decision, and the opportunity to correct inaccuracies in ATOS reports.
- ÿ The introduction of a 'real world' test to take into account the reality of a claimant's situation, including the broader barriers that may impact on their ability to work.

Forthcoming Events	
8th August	Social St Josephs Club Penketh 7:30 pm
29th August	Fun Day, Jolly Falstaff, Padgate
6th September	Canal boat trip Marple to Adlington
13th September	Social St Josephs Club Penketh 7:30 pm
9th November	Pirate night social St Josephs Club 7:30 pm
Requests for transport - Jeff Richards 07738609018	

Membership News

Since the last newsletter we have 4 new members welcome to the branch to you all. Unfortunately there has also been one death Edna Stroud died 3rd of July her funeral took place on Friday, 15 July but we were only informed of this the following week.

On a much happier note our support member Jim O'Connor has been to Buckingham Palace to receive an MBE for his dedicated service charity involving Warrington Lions, St John Ambulance and our branch. A well-deserved award. Unfortunately we can't reproduce the photographs at the Palace because of copyright but shown here is Jim at a celebration party on Saturday 25th of June at St Joseph's club and the cake made for the occasion. Congratulations Jim from all of us.



The MS support group that Mandy Wilton had started at Beaufort Street has finished because of lack of support. If this is something that you want then please get in touch with her at anwilton@hotmail.com.

MS Helpline Freephone
0808 800 8000

Dave Hinde Travel Services
D.H.T.S.
Disabled Travel Service
14 Seater Mini buses
Tel. 01744 615851
Mobile 07887 615040
Parcel delivery service. Accounts

Research into Cinnamon

Kalipada Pahan, PhD., who is the Floyd A. Davis professor of neurology at Rush medical centre, Chicago and principal investigator of the study has received a \$750,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue studies into sodium benzoate which is a metabolite of cinnamon, blocks molecules that promote inflammation and activation of glial cells that destroy myelin sheath in multiple sclerosis. Glial cells activation is also implicated in other neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

Pahan explains, "These autoimmune reactions in the brain ultimately kill oligodendrocytes, which are a certain type of brain cell that protects the nerve cells and myelin sheath," said Pahan. "However, cinnamon has an anti-inflammatory property to counteract and inhibit the glial activation that causes brain cell death."

In mouse studies, researchers gave different doses of sodium benzoate, added to the animal's drinking water. The studies showed a 70 percent reduction in clinical MS score that were published in the Journal of Immunology.

Medications to treat MS are costly and injections are painful. Pahan says, "If our study is successful, there may be a day when just a teaspoonful of ground cinnamon per day with milk, tea or honey, may help MS patients manage the disease."

EmaxHealth

Unwanted Clothes and Shoes

Curtains Blankets Bags and Belts

As a branch we are now recycling and can turn your unwanted items into branch funds

Must be clean and dry

Contact Peter Travers tel. 492970

Future Treatments

Scientists at The University of Nottingham have discovered a molecular mechanism which could bring about the development of new treatments for Multiple Sclerosis. Dr Bruno Gran, a Clinical Associate Professor in the Division of Clinical Neurology in the School of Clinical Sciences, working in collaboration with Professor Paul Moynagh from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, has discovered a synthetic chemical compound which inhibits the pro-inflammatory signals produced by the immune system in MS. What makes this chemical unique is that at the same time, it stimulates the body to produce interferon-beta, an anti-inflammatory molecule, that is commonly given to patients as an injected drug to treat MS.

Together, these effects cause significant reduction in the severity of an animal model of MS. The researchers have also discovered that cells of the immune system obtained from the blood of people with MS are more sensitive to the effects of this drug than those obtained from people who do not have MS.

With no available cure MS is the focus of intense study for the hundreds of scientists across the world who are working on new treatments for this disabling disease. MS is more common in temperate climates. With around 100,000 people suffering from MS in the UK the country has one of the highest rates of the disease in the world.

Until 20 years ago there was little progress in the search for treatments.

Dr Gran's research, published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry, continues a line of investigation which his laboratory has carried out for a number of years on the role of endogenous type I interferons in regulating multiple sclerosis inflammation in the central nervous system.

The cause of MS is still something of a mystery. Numerous factors are thought to contribute, including genetic susceptibility and environmental factors. The latter are thought to include certain viral infections and low levels of **vitamin D**, linked to poor sun exposure.

These latest findings highlight a new selective mechanism that may be open to exploitation in the development of new therapeutics for the treatment of MS.

Sources: Nottingham University, AlphaGalileo Foundation.

Executive Committee April 2011

Branch Officers

Chair	Mr Paul Harrison.....	01606 892151
Secretary	Mrs Elaine Magill.....	637120
Treasurer	Mr John Burke	824041
Support Officer	Mrs Dorothy Lewis.....	268820

Committee Members

Fundraising	Mrs Julie Richards.....	573980
Joint Equipment/ Transport	Mr Jim O'Connor.....	451472
Web/DTP	Mr Jeff Richards.....	07738609018
Social	Mr Chris Janovitz.....	723564
Everybody's Help Activities	Mrs Rita Harrison.....	01606 892151
Editor	Mrs Suzan Rainford.....	602719
Subscriptions	Mrs Margaret Wilmot.....	755017
Everybody's Help	Mr Sam King.....	860630
Everybody's Help	Mr Peter Travers.....	492970
Activities	Mrs Mary Burke.....	824041
Activities/fundraising	Charles Dooley.....	860112
	Amanda Wilton.....	726758
	Julia Wilton	726758

This newsletter is published by The Warrington and District branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. We give regular updates about MS and what is happening locally in the MS community.

Editor: Sam King
Layout Chris Janovitz

All views expressed in the publication are individual and not necessarily the view or policy of the charity and its supporters.

Charity number 1139257