

*We still need more but it's now under
£13,000 to go.*

We're delighted that the Reading branch of the Huntingdon's Disease Association has pledged £200 towards our appeal for the Neuro nurse fund. Despite the edge forwards in achieving our ultimate aim we are still seeking an additional £13,000.

This is, therefore a near final call for additional funds as the deadline is creeping closer.

Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority

Dr. Sherriff, Director of Public Health and Health Policy at the Thames Valley SHA, kindly took time out of his busy schedule to attend and speak at our Open meeting on the 11th October. His talk, as well as answering many of our questions, enlightened us on a wide range of issues in the NHS today. Most notably these included national standards, the National Service Framework, Strategic Development (Thames Valley) and NHS system reform.

Annual General Meeting.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on 30th September at the Mencap Centre in Newbury. Changes are clearly afoot however. We are sad to announce that Hilary Hinchcliffe, our founding force, has decided to step down from the Executive Committee and John Holt has stepped down as Secretary. Hilary will remain involved and John will remain a member of the committee.

A warm welcome is given to Fred Davison, Molly Davison, Mick Hutchins and Simon Darnton as new members of the Executive Committee.

A "brain-storm" session was conducted during the meeting that raised many important issues, including those of gaining further funding and a larger, wider membership base throughout our region. It is planned that we will be carefully considering and implementing some of these activities in the near future.

Healthcare Commission

You may recall in a previous newsletter, that after a thorough review, we awarded CHI with a 0 star rating. Perhaps our review spurred further thought surrounding the current review methodology as there has been announced a further round of consultation regarding the strategy for the Healthcare Monitoring System.

We still have concerns regarding the implications of not setting standards for and providing the right incentives for good general performance. However, we hope the latest consultation will allow these concerns to be further considered.

Call for Volunteers

As raised during our AGM, we are in desperate need of further volunteers to assist in the wide number of projects we are involved in. Please spread the word.

"Action in Neuro-rehab" Conference - plans well advanced

The programme is now confirmed and all speakers have now accepted their invitations. Registration forms will be distributed during January.

The conference programme has three themes: **Emerging technologies, Therapies, Intermediate Care.**

Subjects covered will include: **drugs, stem cells, cybernetics as well as exercise, increasing participation in activities, the National Service Framework for long term conditions, and Intermediate Care Forum.**

Thanks to Dr Christine Collin and Penny Lilley for their hard work in attracting our eminent speakers.

Professor Ray Tallis - Profile

Professor Tallis is a leading figure in Britain in the Health Care of Older People. Since 1987 he has been Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Manchester and a consultant physician in Health Care of the Elderly in Salford. He has published over 200 scientific articles in his field of expertise and two major textbooks. Professor Tallis is a member of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). Over the last 15 years, he has also published fiction, several volumes of poetry, and over a dozen books on the philosophy of mind, philosophical anthropology, literary theory, the nature of art and cultural criticism. For this work, he has been awarded two honorary degrees: DLitt (Hon Causa) from the University of Hull in 1997; and LittD (Hon Causa) at the University of Manchester 2002. Apart from this he has written many articles for the Times Literary Supplement, London Review of Books, PN Review, Prospect, Philosophical

Investigations and Monist. He is also well-known as a broadcaster.

We are saddened by the passing away of Dr Monnica Stewart

Monnica was active in so many things, it needs several pages to do her achievements proper justice. She passed away in October, active to the very last. When she arrived at the heavenly gates her question to St Peter would surely be something on the lines 'Has the man in charge here made sure that all the public loos are open and in good order?' Readers will know that if it wasn't sorted out before, it will be by now! We all miss Monnica greatly. She was a founder member of the Alliance, and we are delighted that the local Motor Neurone Disease Association have launched the Monnica Stewart Specialist Nurse Appeal Fund in her memory. Can't you just hear Monnica saying 'Oh well done!'

Diary dates to note:

Thursday 9th December. Open meeting. 1.45 for 2 p.m. at St Joseph's, Newbury. Sarah Cox. Chronic Disease Collaborative

Wednesday 9th February. Open meeting. 1.45 for 2 p.m. at St Joseph's, Newbury.

Thursday 21st April 2005. Conference. 'Action in Neuro-rehabilitation', Newbury Racecourse. (Pre-booking essential.)

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