

*Award for Neuro-Nurse*

Thatcham Nurse, Carol Allen, who is the only nurse of her kind in England, was honoured with a Leadership for Improvement Award at the South Central Strategic Health Authority Health and Social Care Awards ceremony at the Kassam Stadium in Oxford on 23rd April.

Carol was honoured alongside Professor Christine Collin, Neuro-Rehabilitation Consultant at the Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust along with West Berkshire Neurological Alliance, which helped conceive and fund Carol's highly innovative post for two years.

The award recognised the leadership approach and positive, sustained impact on patients, service users and staff. It follows publication of an independent study by Reading University on Carol's work which led to the unusual situation that both the Royal Berkshire Trust and Berkshire West Primary Care Trust both offered to pick up the permanent funding for Carol's post. The impact Carol has made has also so impressed the Department of Health that one of their current publications cites her post as an example of a 'top ten quick win recommendation' that should be considered for every health area in England.

Carol provides specialist nursing services to people with rare, rapidly progressing or unusual conditions of the nervous system, such as Motor Neurone Disease, Huntington's Disease, Myasthenia Gravis, Ataxia, Late Effects of Polio, Multiple System Atrophy and others. Her role is out in the community, supporting patients with information, specialist advice, use of complex equipment and helping keep patients out of hospital and in control of their own treatment at home.

As a regional award winner Carol, Professor Collin and West Berkshire Neurological Alliance are in with a strong chance of becoming national award winners, when they attend the national Health and Social Care Awards event, to be held on 1st July at Wembley Stadium. This is a keynote event to be hosted by the Secretary of State for Health, at which the 60th anniversary of the NHS will be celebrated.

Alliance spokesman John Holt said 'The project received major financial backing from local branches of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, British Polio Fellowship, Huntington's Disease Association and many other sources, as well as from our own funds. Professor Collin's clinical leadership, coupled with Carol's dedication, skill and care make a winning combination. The outcome is a model for others to follow. We are delighted to have shared in the success and thank Carol, Christine and everyone else involved. Most important we are all delighted to have made a real difference to patients in need.'

*HydroPool and Gym*

Progress continues to be made to make a Hydrotherapy Pool and Power-Assisted Gym for Newbury/Thatcham a reality. The Board of the emerging Social Enterprise has issued a prospectus inviting key member groups to sign up their support in principle, and the early response has been very positive. The board is busy writing a business plan and is also setting up the necessary charitable business structure needed for its legal constitution. Critical meetings to secure land for the project are in the pipeline but there still remains much to do before any deals can be struck. Anyone who is interested in supporting this worthwhile project should contact John Holt on 01635 33582 or [johnmholtbsc@aol.com](mailto:johnmholtbsc@aol.com).

## Future of the NHS

On 19th May South Central Strategic Health Authority launched its new ten year vision 'Towards a healthier future'. This is part of the review of the NHS led by Lord Darzi, covers a multitude of subjects of concern to all patients and can be found on [www.southcentral.nhs.uk](http://www.southcentral.nhs.uk)

## Carers Week

This year the national Neurological Alliance is a sponsor for Carers Week, June 9 – 15. The theme is 'Carers can't afford to be ill' and aims to bring attention to the essential role carers play. The Alliance would like to highlight the important role of carers in supporting those living with a long-term neurological condition. WBNA is supporting local events. On Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm there will be a Cheese and Wine Evening at St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury and John Holt will give a short talk 'Gym and Swim' about the Hydrotherapy Pool and Power-Assisted Gym Project. On 14<sup>th</sup> June, 10 am to 4 pm there will be a 'Therapy For All' day at Deanwood Conference and Therapy Centre with the opportunity for 2-3 half hour 'taster' sessions of complementary therapies of your choice. Stands, stalls, demonstrations and workshops will also be going on throughout the day and refreshments and lunch will be provided. WBNA would like to encourage as many carers as possible to join in the planned celebrations, have some fun and relaxation, as well as pick up lots of useful information. Places are still available, so why not register with Christine Eeley at the Princess Royal Trust for Carers: 01635 49109 or email: [christine@prtcарers.plus.com](mailto:christine@prtcарers.plus.com) for details.

## Racecourse Collection

Once again we are grateful for the immense generosity of the race-goers at Newbury Racecourse. On May 17<sup>th</sup> eleven volunteers from WBNA armed with buckets collected at the gates at the end of racing and received donations amounting to £1840.64. Thanks to

the management and staff of Newbury Racecourse for allowing us to collect and collection team for all their efforts. The money will be put to good use supporting our projects

## Gardening for the Brain

*Gardening for the Brain* builds on the back of the highly successful *Singing for the Brain* project and provides a chance for people with memory problems and their carers to enjoy a stimulating, rewarding and healthy activity in a peaceful and supportive environment. West Berks Alzheimer's Society and Thrive, a local gardening charity, are holding social and therapeutic gardening sessions in a private garden in Burghfield Common. For more information please contact Chreanne Montgomery-Smith on 01635 500869 or email [alz.support@pop3.hiway.co.uk](mailto:alz.support@pop3.hiway.co.uk).

## Diary dates to note

Our next Open Meeting is on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July when Dr Stephen Allen, a consultant pain specialist, will give a talk on "Neuropathic pain - What is it and what can we do about it?" Our last Open Meeting for 2008 will be held on November 13<sup>th</sup> when the speaker will be Duncan Goodes, Head of Long Term Conditions, South Central SHA. Open meetings are held at St Joseph's Church Hall, Newbury, 1.45 for 2.00 pm. Free admission includes tea and biscuits.

The 2008 AGM will be on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30 pm in The Parish Room at St John's Church Hall, Newbury. Our Guest Speaker will be Beverley Searle, Head of Community Care and Well-Being, West Berks Council and Berkshire West PCT.

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