

IN TOUCH

The Kent MS Therapy Centre's Quarterly Newsletter



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DAY**

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DAVID KERNAN**

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REQUEST**

Pastures new!



I wanted to say my goodbyes to you all and offer thanks for being amazingly supportive during my 18 months as the CEO of this fantastic charity. The journey has seen some ups and downs but in the main I can look back on this chapter with pride. I am leaving, not because of staff, volunteers, or members, but because I need to find a new challenge away from the charity sector.

We have had some brilliant events recently and the Afternoon Tea truly encapsulated the feeling of the Centre; social, fun, togetherness and above all a community. The Golf Day was the best one yet and the local business support was evident to see first-hand. Being at Canterbury Golf Club, sponsored by Canterbury Rugby Club, and supported by 80 local players was truly humbling.

With reference to the Rugby Club, it must also be noted that we are their Charity of the Year for next season. This demonstrates the good networking carried out between our neighbours and Kent MS Therapy Centre.

Finally, the Centre remains in good hands with Heidi taking on responsibility for the charity and she continues to be supported by a wonderful group of people that includes both staff and volunteers. I wish you all the success and will keep an eye on the future of the charity.

As you have seen I like quotes and would like to finish with this one...

"Good friends never say goodbye, they simply say see you soon".

Thank you, take care, and I am now off to pastures new!

Spencer





Our best ever Golf Day!

The Kent MS Therapy Centre held our annual golf day at Canterbury Golf Club on Friday 16 June. With 20 teams playing, we were so pleased that we were able to raise **£7,050** which is the highest total for our golf days to date. The event was kindly sponsored by our neighbours on Merton Lane North, **Canterbury Rugby Club** who also entered a team.

As the 80 players teed off in the morning in beautiful sunshine, there were prizes on offer for Nearest the Pin, Longest Drive as well as fifth to first place. The winners were **the LGT Wealth Management** team with their bold pink shirts.

After the day's golf, the teams were welcomed into the clubhouse for a two-course meal which started with an entertaining game of heads and tails. After the main course, Roger Hyder, General Manager of Canterbury Golf Club, led the auction proceedings which included fourballs at Royal Cinque Ports and London Golf Club. The **auction alone raised £3,285** for KMSTC.

Other fundraising activities that took place on the day included Mulligans as well as a raffle with local prize donations from The Chocolate Pig, Ellie's Gym in Chilham and Ferry House Inn.

Alongside Canterbury Rugby Club, Quinn Estates were the event's Marketing Sponsor. The Centre would also like to thank the hole sponsors LGT Wealth Management, N. T. Rix Group, Leisure Homes Direct, Pocock's Solicitors and PSR Legal.

We would like to thank all of the teams who came along to support us, our sponsors as well as Canterbury Golf Club. The donations raised will go towards providing services for those living with MS and other long term health conditions in Kent.

South East DriveAbility



South East DriveAbility is a specialist service hosted by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust and provides assessment and advice on driving, car adaptation and car choice for disabled drivers and passengers. The service works in partnership with the Department for Transport and is supported by Driving Mobility who accredit and advise Mobility centres across the UK.

Based in Aylesford, Kent, this service also reaches out to those residing in East Sussex, South East London and southern areas of Essex.

Assisting service users to achieve safe independent community mobility is our ultimate aim and indirectly supports the improvement of health and wellbeing by helping to provide independence and community mobility.

Our service led by Dr Anuraj Varshney, comprises highly qualified driving assessors and occupational therapists who are passionate about providing a first-class service for younger and older drivers/passengers with complex needs and varying medical conditions, who require specialist advice and information in order to continue driving, to maintain or regain independence.

The following services are offered:

- ✓ Car driving assessment
- ✓ High Tech driving adaptations (including drive from wheelchair)
- ✓ Driver/passenger access/seating assessment
- ✓ Wheelchair/scooter loading assessment (including WAV)
- ✓ Driving tuition
- ✓ Older driver improvement



Kent Community Health **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

In addition to the above, as an NHS provider, we are keen to provide knowledge and assistance regarding mobility information and local community activities that can help overcome loneliness and isolation. We are pleased to announce the recent opening of the South East Hubs Mobility Advice Service, which operates alongside the assessment service.

This is a free, bespoke service for those drivers who can no longer drive or are unable to learn. The service aims to support older people and those with disabilities residing in Kent and East Sussex for the enablement of continued independence, the using of alternative public and community transport services and advice on alternative accessible transport options within the localities.

South East DriveAbility can be contacted on Tel. 0300 0134 886 or via email on kcht.sedriveability@nhs.net

South East Hubs Mobility Advice Service can be contacted on Tel. 0300 790 6838 or via email on kentchft.hubsmobilityservice@nhs.net

Both services run during **weekdays only between 08:30-16:30** excluding bank holidays.

In memory of David Tompkins 28.04.1941 - 03.05.2023

by Jill Tompkins

David loved the Centre and everything about it. He also loved gardening and anything to do with plants and wildlife. When his wife, Jill, joined KMSTC in 2007 David created a little garden of pots in front of the old Centre to bring a splash of colour and cheer as people arrived. When we moved to the new Centre in 2015 he set about buying plants and trees to create the garden we have here today.



He was always touched if people gave him plants or money to buy plants. It wasn't easy work, it was a lot of builders rubble and not a lot of soil but everything he planted took root, unless the rabbits ate them. His garden at home is small so to have the KMSTC garden to work in, whatever the weather, brought him so much pleasure. In 2018 he had to give up tending the garden as he was diagnosed with Lymphoma. Although he recovered he wasn't well enough to resume tending the garden. In June 2022 he was diagnosed with Vascular Dementia. The condition was complicated by an acquired brain injury he received in 1988 while serving as a police officer with the Kent County Constabulary. After 30 years with the police David had more time for gardening, reading, music and watching cricket. He and Jill enjoyed many holidays, in the UK and abroad. He has five grandchildren, two great grand daughters, five nieces and nephews and seven great nieces and nephews. He led a full and happy life. The bird bath in the garden is dedicated to David's memory.

The Kent MS Therapy Centre is delighted to have received the highest rating from the Food Standards Agency that we are able to achieve. A rating of 3 out of 5 is fantastic for us as we are not a commercial caterer. The replacement of our work surfaces recently by Wickes has helped us to achieve this standard. As a team we can keep our standards around food hygiene high by making sure we all keep the kitchen clean and tidy. Fundraising supported by Centre Admin Vicky will soon be displaying food allergen signs and ingredient check sheets for everyone who kindly bakes cakes for us. KMSTC is proud to uphold excellent food and allergen standards.



Food hygiene rating

If you wish to learn more about our rating, please come and speak to Vicky at Reception.



Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

 Kent
ms
Therapy Centre
Registered charity no. 801382

YORKSHIRE



3 PEAKS CHALLENGE

Visit our
website for
more
information

Saturday 30 September

- Climb Pen-y-Ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough (around 24 miles)
- Includes mountain leader and full support on route
- Medal and certificate included

£50
to register

Contact
mbernthal@kentmstc.org

New mental health support programme to start in September

Many of you will remember the open mornings we held with **FCS Talking Therapies** (a Kent-based mental health charity) held towards the end of 2022 to get your feedback on the type of support you think the Centre should offer its members. One-to-one therapy sessions with Delyse Hammett from FCS Talking Therapies have been available since January and the early results of those sessions are showing that they are already helping our members to improve their mental health and wellbeing.



From September 2023 we will also be trialing **group therapy sessions** in partnership with FCS Talking Therapies. An eight-week programme for **carers** of people with MS and other long-term health conditions will start on **12 September at 1pm** and will run for one hour each **Tuesday**. There is a suggested donation/charge of £40 for the eight week course.



The sessions will help carers to develop coping techniques and strategies by sharing their own unique experiences, insights and difficulties. The sessions will use what is known as an 'integrative' approach – which means that different therapeutic techniques will be used to suit the needs of the group. Additional support will also be available to group members if issues arise which could be better addressed one-to-one. A second eight-week group support programme will also start later this year for **people with MS and other long-term health conditions**.

Each group will be limited to ten people. If you would like to sign up, please **contact Jemma Pask at jpask@kentmstc.org or 01227 470876**.

The mental health programme is a pilot project which means that we want to evaluate its effects and make any necessary changes to improve its impact before continuing the programme in the longer term. Postgraduate researchers from the University of Kent School of Psychology will be carrying out the evaluation and we hope that you will want to get involved in this study.



We'd like to say a very special thank you to the Yeoman Warders of the Tower of London who have kindly donated £500 to our charity. Thank you to the lovely Andy Merry (on the right in the image) from Kent, for supporting us - he is one of the Beefeaters and lives with MS himself!

Evaluating our impact - update

In our spring newsletter we brought you news about recent work that has been carried out to demonstrate the impact our therapies and other activities have on members' health and wellbeing.

Lucy Cumberland's excellent study on the impact of 8-week tailored programmes of hydrotherapy and gym exercise showed that these activities led to significant improvements in physical and psychological functioning of the 16 people with MS who took part in the research. The KMSTC impact survey carried out in January/February 2023 gave some valuable insights into the benefits our members attribute to a range of different therapies offered here at the Centre.

Together with Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), a group of our members

and therapists have been meeting to design a framework (a set of principles) for evaluating our therapies. This work is funded by the university's Participatory Research Challenge 2022-23.

Through discussion and an online survey we have identified some priorities for the framework – for example, assessing the impact and effectiveness of services, the importance of both member self-evaluation and therapist feedback, and the regularity of reviews. We have also looked at a number of measures / scales which we could use to do this. We will look next at how we put the framework into practice.

We look forward to sharing more of this work with you in due course.



London Landmarks 2024

We have 5 places in the London Landmarks Half Marathon on **Sunday 7 April 2024**.

This popular half marathon takes in some of London's best attractions. Registration for the race is £40 and the minimum fundraising target is £350.

If you are interested, please email mbernthal@kentmstc.org



Wacher Suite Renovations

Many of you will be aware that the Wacher Suite renovations are now well underway. Having received financial support from the Kent Social Enterprise Loan Fund (KSELF) in the form of part loan and part grant, we are now in the position to be able to convert the first floor space of the Centre. This is being converted into four offices and a smaller function room, with the aim of strengthening commercial income opportunities for the Centre. We are also lucky enough to be able to install air conditioning throughout the first floor, which will also include the Anthony Meire Boardroom. For those of you who have used the upstairs space you will appreciate how necessary the air conditioning installation is!

**Kent Social
Enterprise
Loan Fund**

The works are being managed by a local building contractor, G.W.Gardner, and are on track to be completed by 1st September. Whilst we are hoping that the disruption continues to be minimal we are thankful for you bearing with us until the works are complete. Please be reminded that the upstairs space is out of bounds until we are ready to reopen the first floor. If you have any questions concerning the works, please contact Heidi hcoleman@kentmstc.org

Embodiment and the vagus nerve: seated dance workshops for people living with MS

The **Kent MS Therapy Centre** and **The University of Creative Arts** are looking for participants living with Multiple Sclerosis, of any age and gender, to be involved in a **pilot study to investigate the relationship between seated dance and neurosensory exercises and its effect on the nervous system.**

The pilot study will take place at The Kent MS Therapy Centre over the course of **12 hourly sessions once a week** and participants will be required to wear a fitted ring to monitor the nervous system's responses through measuring heart rate variability over time.

Participants will also be required to fill out a body perception questionnaire before and after the study.

This pilot study will be relaxed in nature and aim to be enjoyable and to work at each individual's own capacity so no prior dance experience is necessary and any ability is welcome.

For further information and to meet with us on 31st August please contact Clare Triggs: claretriggs@yahoo.co.uk

In praise of yoga and oxygen therapy

Katie was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in October 2016 when she was 36 years old. However, she is sure that she had been living with MS for some time - at least 20 years - before her actual diagnosis.

"I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes when I was three or four years old, which left me open to infection. As a result, I spent a lot of time in and out of hospital. I finally got the MS diagnosis when I became paralyzed down my left side and I had to be flown to A&E. It was very frightening as I thought I had had a stroke, but they carried out a lumbar puncture and did the **MRI scans which showed that I had MS – 'relapsing remitting, rapidly evolving, highly active'**. I was absolutely determined to walk again and I started on DMTs immediately which have helped to slow the progress of my condition."

Multiple sclerosis has affected Katie's family life and career. Katie is married with a daughter and was a nurse, a profession which she has had to give up. The combination of having Type 1 diabetes and MS has had an impact on her health, and it has taken around five years for the treatments for both to accept each other and settle down.

Katie started to come to the Centre a year after her diagnosis – regularly having oxygen therapy, massage therapy, hydrotherapy and gym sessions. She also volunteered as an ambassador – talking to different audiences about MS and what we offer here at the Centre. Unfortunately, her driving license was taken away from her following a seizure and she has only started to come back to the Centre over recent weeks now that she is able to drive again.



"I have been having reflexology, massage therapy and attending the singing group on Fridays. I have also started **Pilates and yoga** with Caroline and a course of oxygen therapy. I had never done yoga before and was worried about how I would cope. The results have been amazing. **After my first session of yoga with Caroline I slept through the whole night for the first time in years.** It has really helped to reduce tight and tense muscles and it has increased flexibility and movement in my toes, arm and leg on my left side."

Katie would also highly recommend **oxygen therapy**.

"I'm about to start my fourth week of the intensive oxygen therapy course. **It is really helping my diabetes as well as MS.** My blood sugar levels have come right down and are now stable. **Oxygen therapy is helping to improve the quality of my sleep. It also lifts my mood and I feel so much more relaxed.** I've found that 24ft pressure gives me the greatest benefit and I fully intend to carry on with oxygen therapy twice a week and do the intensive course once a year to maintain the benefits."

Last but not least, Katie is an enthusiastic advocate of Friday **singing**. "Singing is just fantastic – the benefits are really holistic. **I find that singing lifts my mood and improves my breathing technique.** I come out of the room and I have the biggest smile on my face!"

Did you know that we are now offering yoga on a Wednesday (3-4pm) and Friday (10-11am) for gentle exercise? These sessions are open to all members and are £8 a session. Classes are led by the lovely Caroline.

You can book via Reception on 01227 470876.

Big Give 2023 - Pledges

This year's Big Give Christmas Challenge will focus on raising funds for **Physio and hydrotherapy for people living with MS.**

Activities include physiotherapy and hydrotherapy treatment, gym, core stability, Pilates, yoga, swimming and aqua yoga sessions. This year we are aiming to raise **£7,500!**



There are 2 stages to the Big Give:

Stage 1: Pledges

This stage is **now open** and people are encouraged to 'pledge' a donation towards the campaign (to be paid after the campaign closes in December). The minimum pledge is £100. Pledges need to amount to a total of **£1,875.**

Stage 2: Donations

This stage runs for the 1st week in December (28th November – 5th December) and where donors are asked donate to the campaign. Half of the target needs to be raised during this time - **£3,750**

If you would like to sign up to pledge to the Big Give Christmas Challenge 2023 please register at the following link:

<https://www.thebiggive.org.uk/s/pledge?campaignId=a056900002NhJoeAAF>



Thanks to our Trusts and Foundations

We say a warm thank you to the wonderful trusts and foundations who are supporting our work.

Unrestricted funding - which we can spend on the day to day running of the Centre - is really important, and we extend our thanks to **The Loveday Charitable Trust, The Thomas J. Horne Memorial Trust** and **Meads Trust** whose generous grants received in the second quarter of 2023 have helped us to cover these types of costs.

We also would like to thank **The Beerling Foundation, Cantiacorum Foundation, Souter Charitable Trust** and **The Sir James Roll Charitable Trust** whose gifts will support our new mental health programme will commencing in September this year, and to **The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust** for their grant towards our physio and hydro services.



Fun in the sun at our Summer Fayre!

Thank you so much to everyone who came along to our Summer Fayre on Saturday 8 July! We raised a fantastic **£2,470!** It was a lovely sunny day, if a bit hot, but thankfully the storms held off for us. As always, our refreshment volunteers worked so hard to keep everyone supplied with cakes and bacon rolls on the day. Both inside and outside were a great range of stallholders selling things from locally made cordials, soaps to wooden crafts and books.

There were plenty of fun activities for families to have a go at such as hook-a-duck, the beanbag game and golf putting. For adults, we had a wine and water stall which is always so popular and this year we included a wheelbarrow of alcohol which made just shy of £200. Congratulations to the lucky winner Katie Scott who also ran our White Elephant stall on the day!

We'd like to thank our Refreshment Sponsors **Chartway Partnerships Group**. Also Sam, the community champion at Tesco Whitstable, Supreme Bakery in Canterbury, Morrisons Canterbury, our amazing team of volunteers and cake bakers, our stallholders and of course the UK Paper Band Sittingbourne who provided us with some great musical entertainment during the day.



See you all again at our Christmas Market which will be held on Saturday 18 November this year!



Member Feature

David Kernan grew up in Lympne near Hythe. A small village at the time, and where I grew up getting to know lots of the villagers. Being in the countryside was lovely with so many areas of countryside to play in and explore. I have a younger sister Sue, and we were lucky to grow up meeting with other relations regularly. I'm still in touch with my cousins and we love meeting up. To me, family and friends are so important.

My first job was working for Sainsbury's. To this day I'll never forget the day I started (Tuesday 4th July 1978). I worked there until 1994 when I was unfortunately made redundant. My last role within the company was assistant night manager at the Canterbury store. During my time at the company I made lots of lifelong friends. But also that's where I met Christine (my lovely wife). I've been in a few different jobs since but mainly factory or warehouse roles. My last job being at Church & Dwight where I was lucky enough to bring along my daughter and meet Pixie Lott. She was doing promotional work for the company and visited the factory in Folkestone where she sang a couple of her songs and posed for pictures. **We have two children and four adorable grand daughters whose company we enjoy.**

Outside work, I enjoy going to different sports. I've been to many live football matches supporting Chelsea. Also cricket, following Kent & England. Plus I've been to the Derby at Epsom and Rugby at Twickenham.



I've loved travelling around the British Isles throughout my life, but unfortunately I haven't been outside of the UK that much. Although going over to Ireland to see Christine's family was always great fun. Back in the early 1980s I went with a mate of mine down to Italy in his HGV which was a great experience. Also, living on the Kent coast, regular trips on the ferry to France or Belgium were fun.



My very first holiday in 1979 after starting work the previous year was buying a two-week Railover ticket for unlimited travel around the U.K. In fact in that two weeks I travelled on my own nearly 4,500 miles! Although perhaps I'm a little annoyed at not travelling more. **I really think there is so much to see and do in the British Isles.** Possibly my favourite place to visit is the West Country and in particular Cornwall. I recently wrote a 4000 word mini-guide for my cousin Linda on Cornwall because although she's travelled more than anyone I know around the world, going to Cornwall was a new venture for her!

I was diagnosed with Primary Progressive MS in the autumn of 2015. Back in mid 2014 I started to notice my right foot dragging occasionally (which obviously I now know as FOOT DROP). Initially I went to my GP thinking I had something wrong with my leg. Then I started all the tests and scans ruling out different things. At this time I was working in a factory for Church & Dwight. Whilst this was happening my colleagues and friends were saying 'what's wrong with your leg?' Obviously at the time I was none the wiser. After about nine months and my struggles I had to give up work (spring 2015) not knowing what was wrong. Eventually after possibly a total of eighteen months of more tests and scans and finally a lumbar puncture, I then saw my neurologist Dr Redmond and he sat me down to say I had PPMS. **The strange thing was that I was happy! And that after all this time I knew what was actually wrong!** Since I was diagnosed I've always had this saying 'THERE ARE PEOPLE WORSE OFF THAN ME, SO GET ON WITH IT!'



I cannot actually remember how I first found out about the Kent MSTC. But I remember coming up to meet Karen Middlemiss in late 2015 and being shown around. My first therapy was Oxygen starting at 12 feet and then going up to 24 feet. Also I think the Gym is brilliant as I must try to push myself and keep reasonably fit! Plus I do Reflexology with the therapists a couple of times a month.

Somehow the Centre seems to attract so many wonderful staff, therapists & volunteers who

between them make the Centre so welcoming.

One of the most important therapies for me is the social side and meeting so many wonderful people and sharing tips on our MS etc. I don't think I could come to the Centre without stopping for a cuppa and a chat with all the lovely members and friends. Apart from lock-down I don't think I've missed coming to this lovely Centre of ours apart from sickness, other appointments or holidays.

At the moment I'm taking part in a drugs trial for MS at the Royal London Hospital (Whitechapel) under Professor Gavin Giovannini. It's called the O'Hand trial and hopefully it's looking at helping people keep their upper body strength for longer. It is a two year trial and I have to go up to London for infusions every six months. This could be a Placebo or the actual drug (Ocrelizumab) Also I have MRI scans and other assessments and I'll finish the trial early in 2024. I am very keen to help with this because **you have to look at the bigger picture and think of the future and where we'll be with MS for the next generations.**

I may not have had a fancy jet-setting lifestyle, but I've had an enjoyable life. However I've been supported along my MS journey by a loving wife and family and so many other really good and helpful friends. Of course the Kent MSTC has played a massive part in this and I thank everyone for your help, support and guidance!



Jackie's Jumpers have raised an incredible £7,330.72 for their skydive which took place on 9 July! Amazing!

Staff Changes

It is with great sadness that I inform you that both Lucy Cumberland and Clare Triggs will be leaving KMSTC.



Lucy has worked at the Centre for 11 years and has made a significant contribution to the care and support that we provide our members. I know that during this time Lucy has been passionate about ensuring we provide the best possible care and outcomes for our members. More recently Lucy has studied for her MSc at Canterbury Christ Church University where she focused many of her assignments and her dissertation on those living with MS. Certainly, her dissertation research has provided some excellent data demonstrating the positive impact and outcomes that hydrotherapy and gym-based work at the Centre can have for those living with MS. I am sure you will all take the time to personally wish Lucy well. Her official last day is the 4th August. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lucy for the contribution that she has made to the Centre over the years and her commitment to those living with MS. We wish her well with her next chapter. Lucy, you will be missed by staff and members alike. Caroline Lyons, who has recently joined us will be taking on some of Lucy's work. She will be working closely with Chris and Clare in the pool and the gym and will continue to deliver Pilates and Yoga as well as reflexology.



Clare (Triggs) will also be leaving us over the coming months. Clare and KMSTC have had a long and happy relationship, one that has benefitted the Centre and our members enormously. Clare feels that the time has now come for her to further develop her career as well as her learning, skills and experience through a lens of Trauma and Polyvagal Theory. In order to do this, she needs to allow herself to step away from the day-to-day needs of the Centre. However, Clare will be maintaining her links with the Centre, offering workshops and other services when and where required. Clare will also be working on a KMSTC assisted research project. So whilst it is goodbye for now, we shall be seeing Clare! We will be actively recruiting for the physio team at KMSTC, but in the meantime Clare will be working with us until a suitable time for both us and her for which we are very grateful. I will of course keep you informed of Clare's plan as and when we know them. I am sure you will all agree that Clare will be missed at the Centre by staff and members. I would like to wish her well with her future development. However, it is lovely to know that Clare very much wants to remain part of the Centre and we look forward to working with her.

Please do not hesitate to contact Heidi should you have any questions.



**KMSTC is a registered charity. Registered charity number 801382.
Registered company number 2339750.**

Chair of Trustees: James Limmer

Trustees: Jill Tompkins, Adam Cleur, Bali Padda, Lee Ellis, Ingrid Neitsch, Patrick Connolly, David Bailey

Chief Executive Officer: Spencer Goddard

Patron: Rob Key

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GET IN TOUCH

Call us: 01227 470876

Email us: info@kentmstc.org

OPENING HOURS

Monday - Friday: 8.30am - 5pm

Open Tuesday and Thursday until 7pm

Saturday: 8.30am - 1pm

Sunday: Closed

www.kentmstc.org.uk



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