

## A Note from the Editor

Welcome to the summer edition of the NMC news which rounds up what's been going on at the Neuromuscular Centre, Winsford. As I hope you will discover as you read through the newsletter it's been an exciting few months with lots of developments for our service users and of course the usual range of fun activities taking place in the fundraising department.

The NMC's first Family Fun and Sports Day was a huge success despite the ever present rain clouds. It was wonderful to see so many local people come to the school campus where we are based and enjoy the activities and stalls. The event was supported by Cheshire Building Society who furnished us with lots of goodies including their famous blue balloons with the black cat - by the end of the day it was easy to spot who hadn't attended the NMC Family Day - how? They simply didn't have a balloon! Just a few days later we threw open the doors of the centre for our annual Open Day which saw nearly 200 people visit the NMC and learn more about what we do. The evening saw the NMC's first Volunteer Awards Ceremony. We decided that the best way of recognising the support that our volunteers give to the centre was to officially thank them, without their support we wouldn't be able to do many of the activities we currently do.

You will also see that I'm asking you, our supporters, if we are serving you well. With increasing postal costs and us all being more environmentally aware I'm asking whether we could improve how we communicate with you. Please fill out the attached form, and if you wish to send it back - however email is cheaper. If you would rather print out your own newsletter or simply read it online then tell me, similarly if you are about to move house don't forget to let us know your new address.

Someone recently asked me what makes the NMC a special place for me, the only way I could sum it up was to say that it gets under your skin. I know that I'm not the only one who feels this and that's what drives so many of you to get involved and lend your support to the centre. I can only applaud you for doing this and ask you to continue.

Sending huge thanks and best wishes for the summer.

**Lyndsey**



## Fun for all the family!

The NeuroMuscular Centre defied the weather with its first Family Fun Day in what was a very wet June!

The event had been planned for months but the horrid weather forecast before the event seriously made us panic and consider whether it should go ahead or not.

We were determined to make the most of the day and have some fun no matter what. So in the end 25 NMC staff and volunteers gathered bright and early on Saturday 16th June on rather soaked grounds. By 12 noon all the gazebos were set up and stall holders ready to welcome and entertain hundreds of families whilst raising awareness of the NMC by engaging the local community.



The traditional bouncy castle faced fierce competition from the circus skills workshop and wheelchair slalom. As a way of integrating the general public we encouraged them to take part in a variety of activities including wheelchair football to experience and learn how difficult having limited mobility actually is. Both adults and children took up the challenge and participants spontaneously formed teams to beat the clock in the slalom.

Local radio station, Cheshire FM brought a sensational atmosphere to the day with a live broadcast. Other attractions included a coconut shy, treasure hunt, pin the tail on the donkey, water pistol can shooting, bbq food, ice cream and candy floss, face painting, balloon modelling and a lot more.

Hundreds of families from the local community enjoyed the afternoon, and we are already anticipating of organising another Fun Day for next year and exceed the £940 raised at this year's event.

A big thank you to all the people who took part whether there are supporters, NMC staff, Cheshire Building Society, volunteers, or physio patients!





## Spotlight on Training

### A day in the life of a Graphic Design Trainee at the NMC

We have asked one of our students, Richard Morgan, to tell us a little bit about his experiences as a trainee here at the centre. Richard has been coming to the centre to receive training in graphic design since September 2006. He has successfully completed the Level 1 Photoshop and Illustrator courses and is currently working towards Level 1 Quarkxpress.

Richard told me that he enjoys the training at the centre as he has learned loads of new software skills since coming to the NMC. He knew a little bit about Photoshop but has now been able to expand his knowledge on image manipulation. He's also acquired skills in drawing illustrations from scratch with various tools and techniques in Illustrator. During the courses, Richard completed several projects, such as designing a flyer, a logo, branded stationery, a poster and various illustrations.

Richard finds the training important as it will improve job prospects for him. He's eager to gain a Level 2 qualification in Art and Design. After completing the courses he would like to work from home for the NMC. He explains that this is a great opportunity for him as he lives in a small town in Dogethieu, Wales and there are few employment opportunities available for people in wheelchairs. Working from home will also save him a lot of travelling time. Richard is also hoping to do some freelance work for local businesses in his home town.

Richard's dream ambition is designing album covers for bands or working as a graphic designer for music or film magazines as music and film are his main interests.

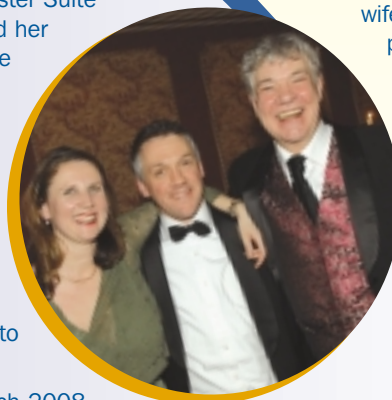
## Gorgeous Grub at the Grosvenor

We were thrilled to welcome Angela Hartnett as this year's celebrity chef at our Gorgeous Grub at the Grosvenor event. Hosted by NMC President, Matthew Kelly and NMC Ambassador Peter Wheeler, 150 guests were treated to a sumptuous feast created especially for the evening by Angela.

After a Bucks Fizz Reception guests moved through to the Westminster Suite where Angela introduced each course explaining the reasons behind her choices and also let us in to the exciting world of being an Executive Chef at the Connaught Hotel.

When Alastair Brown our auctioneer took to the floor NMC supporters showed their wonderful support by generously bidding on a range of fabulous lots including; a designer suit for Royal Ascot, a day with Cheshire artist Julia Midgley, afternoon tea on the Terrace at Westminster and a weeks holiday in a beautiful house in Tuscany. Through the combined talents of Alastair and our supporters generosity the auction raised a staggering £15,000 which is a great contribution towards the cost of providing services to people with muscular dystrophy.

Next years Gorgeous Grub at the Grosvenor is on Saturday 1st March 2008.



## Recent Developments at NMC

### Work from Home

Over the last few years NMC has offered hundreds of people with muscular dystrophy opportunities to learn new skills, gain qualifications or get a job. Now NMC is reaching out further still to try to help even more people with md.

We are regularly contacted by people who live too far from the Centre to get here on a regular basis, but would really like to have access to what's on offer. These include people from all over the UK or still in our region, but for whom even quite short journeys are too tiring or difficult. So we've been trying to think of ways we could extend what we offer. We've come up with what seems, on the face of it, to be a very simple yet innovative solution; "Home Working"

The NMC has gained substantial funding to embark on a "Home Working and Home Training" project. The scheme is all about providing new positive options for people marooned without access to training or employment because of their neuromuscular condition.

#### How will it work?

- We will recruit students or established graphic designers.
- They will be set up with computer equipment and a webcam at home.
- Firstly they will be trained to a recognised standard.
- Those who are successful will have some great new options and, hopefully, bigger horizons.

#### We hope that those who successfully complete the Home Training element will go on to either.....

- Work freelance at home.
- Get a job with a local Graphic Design company near to them.
- Work for NMC Design+Print from home.

## New Support Service

Following some brand new funding a much needed new service has been introduced at the NMC, Sue Walker is our new part time Support Worker. Sue is not a new face; she has worked at the NMC as a Business Care Assistant for the past four years. This new role aims to develop a good resource base and network for clients and their families. Sue will be able to advise on benefits, equipment, care, wheelchairs, adaptations and other areas.

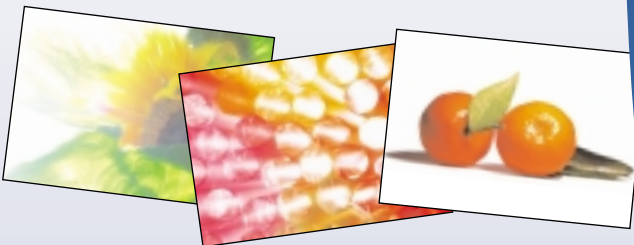
The first Information Meeting in July focused on the subject 'Benefits'. Our first speaker, Edwina Perkins - regional care advisor for Muscular Dystrophy Campaign spoke on the Disabled Living Allowance, Disabled Facilities Grants and touched on Independent Living Funds and Access to Work. The second speaker, Helen Clark an advocate on direct payments for the Cheshire Disability Federation, talked about direct payments and how her role was to support applicants. An NMC physiotherapy client Cera Radcliffe, a wife and mother, who uses direct payments, shared her experiences of working with the direct payments self-managed care scheme.

The feedback from those who attended was very positive and there will be many more similar events in the future.

## A Greener NMC

The great thing about the NMC is that there are always new ideas being thought up and one recent idea is proving a real hit. Anne Derricutt a graphic design student has brought the reusable bag concept to the NMC. The NMC has swapped its traditional orange and blue brand for a far greener one, the NMC Eco bag is priced at £3.50 and available now – just think, by buying one you will be supporting two good causes at once!

To order your bag contact Dee Valkering on [dee@nmcentre.com](mailto:dee@nmcentre.com) or 01606 863464 (a small charge will be made for postage)



**On Sale Now!** NMC note cards (a selection above) are available and are ideal for dropping someone a quick hand written note, it is far nicer than an email plus the designs have all been generated by the designers at NMC Design+Print. There are 8 cards in a pack and with a choice of retro or traditional all you have to do is choose! Cards are £3.50 for 8 cards and envelopes. To order some note cards contact Katia on 01606 861733 or [katia@nmcentre.com](mailto:katia@nmcentre.com) (a charge of 50p will be made for postage)

## Open Day

Some of you might have attended one of our Open Days at some point in the past getting to see us see us in action while enjoying the usual light refreshments in a particularly relaxed atmosphere.

Well, this year's Open Day was slightly different from the previous ones. Not only did we have approximately 200 visitors coming through our doors during the event, but we also organised a Volunteer Awards Evening.

The NMC receives the help of about 50 volunteers and friends and we felt this was the perfect occasion to thank them for their support and commitment. Each of them was presented with a personal volunteer award certificate. Various types of voluntary experiences were represented including gardening and DIY, marathon running, helping at fundraising events and collections, and physiotherapy assistance.

We had some excellent feedback about the ceremony and we are ever so glad that everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.

For some of them it was only a short break though before returning into the kitchen to help with the catering. Yes, the Open Day is another example of how much we rely on our volunteers. Without their support and reliability the NMC would not be what it is today. Thank you to all of you!



Pictured above: Matthew Lanham, Bob Carter, Ron, Debbie Leather, Sue Haynes, Joan & Ann Carter.

## Diary Dates

### Great North Run – Sunday 30th September 2007

*Are you up to the challenge? Take part in the Great North Run to raise money for people with muscular dystrophy.*

### Liverpool 10k – Sunday 7th October 2007

*A little closer to home this brilliant race takes you past the spectacular waterfront in Liverpool.*

### Ladies Lunch – October 2007

*Our autumn ladies lunch will take place at another top Cheshire venue; again details are to be confirmed but will comprise a fantastic lunch combined with a superb speaker!*

### NMC Christmas Fair – Wednesday 14th November 2007

*Wander through the festive stalls for Christmas gifts, cards and yummy festive treats. Mulled wine and mince pies will be available so hunger won't stop you from shopping till you drop!*

### Spirit of Christmas – Thursday 29th November 2007

*Chester Cathedral will once again play host to Matthew Kelly and his friends as they begin the festive season with our annual carol concert. Tickets are priced at £10, £17.50 and £50, on sale now and early booking is recommended.*

### Gorgeous Grub at the Grosvenor

– Saturday 1st March 2008

*Held at the prestigious Grosvenor Hotel, Chester this event is a must for food lovers everywhere. A celebrity chef will create a culinary delight and be on hand to talk to the menu and explain to guests what it's really like to cook in the spotlight. Tickets include a Bucks Fizz Reception, four course meal and half a bottle of wine per guest.*

### Flora London Marathon

– Sunday 13th April 2008

*The NMC has places available in the 2008 London Marathon. If you would like to take part in this internationally renowned event and run for NMC please get in touch.*

*For further information on all of the above please contact the NMC fundraising department on 01606 861733. Email [lyndsey.cannon@nmcentre.com](mailto:lyndsey.cannon@nmcentre.com)*

## Let's get Physical

The physio team has had a really busy year, with an increasing number of new referrals, treating more patients and continuing to emphasise the benefits of regular exercise. Recent findings have shown that it actually helps people with neuromuscular conditions, provided that they do not "over exercise", i.e. causing no pain during or after exercises. Many people in the past have been told to avoid exercise to prevent muscle damage, but this is no longer the advice given. Consequently, exercises are routinely taught at assessment and used during treatments at the NMC.

The exercises can be adapted for home use to encourage more clients to participate actively in their physiotherapy programme. The Gym Ball is very popular with clients, and several have bought their own. Otherwise, light resisted exercises can be taught using "Theraband", which can be given to individuals to use at home. It can be very difficult to remember instructions, so a computer generated software programme was purchased recently to produce exercise leaflets for the patients. That way they are more likely to practice their exercises and to repeat them correctly!

One form of exercise that many enjoy is hydrotherapy, but we have spaces for more people to come and join us in the pool at Hebden Green School.

The team has continued to work with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) by taking undergraduate physiotherapy students on clinical placement and recently, we have learnt that funding has been agreed for a research project at the NMC. The physio team will be liaising with a researcher from the MMU, who will be looking into the benefits for patients who attend the centre. For the first time, we should obtain real evidence that we provide an effective service at the NMC. Hopefully this will be the start of further research opportunities to explore the most effective care for our clients.

## A Big Push for Muscle Disease

The NMC is organising a very special event in September to mark national Muscle Week which runs from 15th September. On Friday 21st September primary school children from Winsford will be participating in sports activities under the theme of 'pushing' to celebrate the 'Big Push'.

Events are planned at the NMC for staff and clients to take part in during the week. The physiotherapy department will big encouraging clients to push a gym ball or push the pedals of an adapted bicycle or even push through the water in the hydro-therapy pool.

For more information contact [katia@nmccentre.com](mailto:katia@nmccentre.com)

Well done to the Wirral Coastal walkers, pictured below, who completed the walk in aid on the NMC.

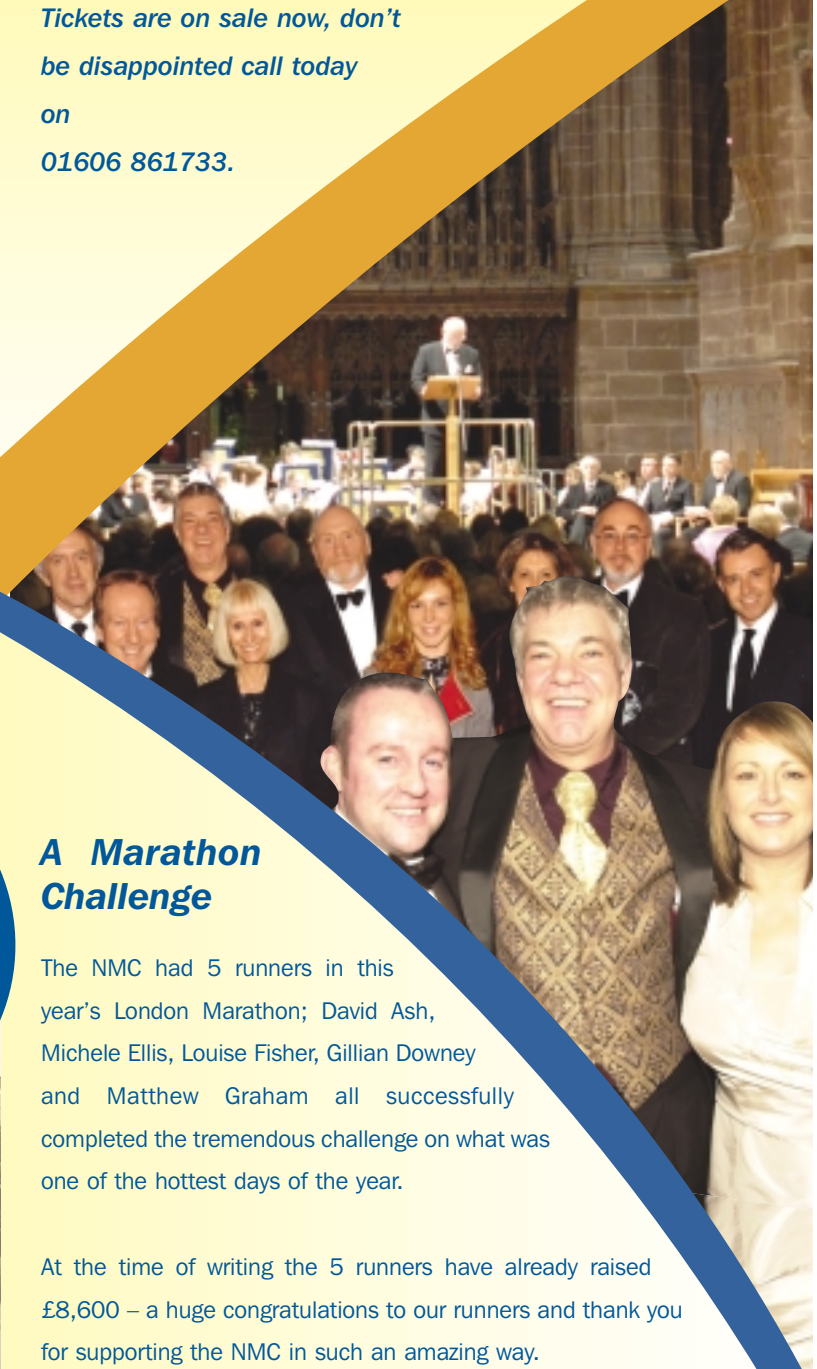


## Spirit of Christmas

**It might be the middle of summer but Christmas is never far from the minds of the fundraising team, especially as tickets are already on sale for this years Spirit of Christmas!**

**Last December Matthew Kelly and nine of his celebrity colleagues brought Christmas to Chester Cathedral by holding the eleventh Spirit of Christmas carol concert. A huge thank you is sent to sponsors, advertisers, restaurants who donated meals for two, people who attended the concert, all of the volunteers who make the event happen and of course Matthew and all of the performers. Collectively you all helped raise vital funds for the NMC and our services for people with muscular dystrophy.**

*Tickets are on sale now, don't be disappointed call today on 01606 861733.*



## A Marathon Challenge

The NMC had 5 runners in this year's London Marathon; David Ash, Michele Ellis, Louise Fisher, Gillian Downey and Matthew Graham all successfully completed the tremendous challenge on what was one of the hottest days of the year.

At the time of writing the 5 runners have already raised £8,600 – a huge congratulations to our runners and thank you for supporting the NMC in such an amazing way.