

OUR VOICE

The News Briefing of
The NeuroMuscular Centre
Autumn 2018

INTRODUCTION

The cornucopia of activity at the NeuroMuscular Centre continued throughout this autumn. Activities

included a Christmas card and book folding workshop and a fascinating presentation from Prof Steve Donovan on fossils and how to find them in the most likely places. We were also treated to a book signing and presentation by Joseph Cardwell. 'The Black Cigar' is an intelligent thriller set in the early 1980s packed with real life detail and striking realism. Joseph attends the NMC for physio and as a thank you to the team is generously donating the proceeds of his book to the NMC.

There are more achievements to celebrate and many congratulations to the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award intrepid explorers on the completion of their two-night expedition at the Benndrigg Trust in the Lake District.

Prior to the final challenge Dom explained more about the award:

'To complete the award I have to complete a two-day expedition, three months of volunteering, three months of learning a new skill and six months of doing a physical activity. My favourite part was the outdoor cooking training as I love making exciting new food. The experience has definitely made

me more comfortable working with others and the practice expedition made me feel like I had achieved something I didn't think I could.'

Fundraising events ranged from the literally sublime and extremely glamorous inaugural NMC ball which raised more than a whopping £13448 to the not so ridiculous but Bonkers Halloween Monster Mash! Next up, The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2018, any donations received via

preparing for this years Christmas Fayre. Come along, shop for Christmas gifts, and decorations and enjoy a mince pie between 10am-3pm on 19th - 23rd Nov.

Buy your Christmas cards at the NMC. Designed by our very own Design+Print Team cards are priced at 6 cards for £3 or 12 cards for £4.50

Online shoppers can nominate the NMC to receive a donation each time you buy via amazon by using



<https://secure.thebiggive.org.uk/project/30977>

between 27th Nov – 4th Dec will be doubled by the Garfield Weston Foundation. The aim is to raise £1500 in individual donations and £1500 in matched-funding, raising £3000 - equivalent to the running costs a whole day at the NMC.

If like me your thoughts are now turning to preparations for the festive season, then why not use your purchasing power to benefit the NMC:

The Craft Club has been very busy

smile.amazon.co.uk instead.

'The Black Cigar' by Joe Cardwell is available from NMC or Amazon for £6.

The next edition of Our Voice will be published in January and so I'd like to wish you a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2019.

SARAH LALIEU



NeuroMuscular
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OUR VOICE

CONNECT UP

Make new friends, re-connect with old friends. Connect Up, a two year project funded by Brightlife is aimed at reducing social isolation and loneliness for people affected by neuromuscular conditions over the age of 50 and their families.

We are a friendly bunch that meet regularly. The highlights so far ...

May 2018 – Connect Up Project Launch

Be a Happier you – relaxation event, which was described by a Connect Up member as 'being an oasis of calm' and by another, 'this could replace my medication'.

Our first outing over the border to Llandudno was a huge success. Laughter and fun was had by all although we had to retreat indoors for Fish n chips to avoid the aggressive seagulls on the Pier, particularly the one that did a poo on Pete's jacket!

Photography, painting and card-making workshops where people have had the chance to learn a new skill, all run by NMC's service users.

In August, Matthew, our CEO led a workshop all about work and the group came up with 50 reasons why work was important! We explored the transitions in the workplace when you have MD and encouraged people to think about life after paid employment. At our Demo Day, NMC users shared their tips and demonstrated



their adapted vehicles and Mason from the Helpful Hand brought scooters and powerchairs and offered personal assessments.

We have a Connect Up Drop In on the last Friday of the month where friendship, coffee and lunch are the order of the day! In September we held a workshop and gave tips and advice about staying safe and well especially during the Winter months. In October it was all about Fossils!

It's been a great few months getting people to connect with each other through a wide range of activities. There is nothing more empowering than drawing on, and sharing 'lived experience' and that's what we do at Connect Up. I would like to thank all the volunteers and participants with particular thanks to Chris Wilmur, who has volunteered for 8 weeks and has prepared, organised and delivered The Staying Well in Winter Workshop.

There's lots more planned, keep an eye out on the Connect Up noticeboard and the What's On Guide (back page).

We'd love to see or hear from you. Connect with us and make life better for us all
call 01606 860911 e.mail andrea.duckworth@nmcentre.com

Get connected. Stay connected.

Connect up – by Andrea Duckworth

CLUB CULTURE

**The first rule of Shed Club is...
Tell absolutely everyone about
Shed Club!**

Located in the NMC carpark the Shed Club provides the opportunity to learn new skills, make new friends and unleash your creative flair in a relaxed and friendly environment. Like the Wombles, the NMC Shed Clubbers transform donated and recycled wood into beautiful and useful items for the home and garden. All proceeds go towards the cost of running the NMC. You don't need any prior experience and the club is equipped with adapted equipment to ensure everyone can participate safely. If this sounds like your thing, please get in touch with Denise Boyall.

ASK ME!

'Access to Work' provides grants for those in paid jobs or about to start work. This includes self employment, apprenticeships and internships. Grants are not awarded for voluntary work.

Grants can be used for getting to and from work, and for needs during the working day. For example powered chairs, accessible vehicles, special equipment, adaptations and support workers. The item is yours but you're then responsible for maintenance, insurance etc. Grant amounts are typically based on how many days you work. For



example, if I work 5 days my grant pays 5/7 the cost of the item and I must fund the remaining 2/7 but I think size of the organisation also plays a part.

The process is relatively straight forward and you can apply online or by phone: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>
I am usually at the NMC on Wednesdays between 11am - 2pm but can flex around that if you would like a chat.

by Sanjay Vaja

GROOVY GADGETS.

I Love Alexa!

By Stephen Clough

Many of you will have heard mention of Alexa in the press or on the radio, but what actually is it, how easy is it to set up and what can it do?

Alexa is a system which operates on a range of products you can purchase from Amazon collectively known as 'Echo'. There are different Echo devices, the cheapest being the Echo Dot at £49.99. More expensive models have better sound quality or different functions, but they all operate in the same way. The simplest description is: "Amazon Echo is a hands-free speaker you control with your voice."

To set up your Alexa you will need the following:

An Amazon account to purchase an Echo device

A WI-FI (router) network at your home

A smart phone on to which you download the 'Alexa' app.

What Can It Do?

Once Alexa has been set up using the app on your smart phone and your home WI-FI Network, you use your voice to ask Alexa questions, or perform a task, e.g.

"Alexa, play Radio 4"

"Alexa, what's the weather today?"

..... and Alexa obeys!

There's lots, lots more, and for the basic services it's all free! A great gift for Xmas!



OUR VOICE

WHAT'S ON!

The following events and activities are taking place at the NMC and beyond over the next few months.

MONDAY 19TH NOV TO FRIDAY 23RD NOV Christmas Craft Fayre

10am – 3pm at event space NMC
More info from
Jennifer: **01606 861733** or
jennifer.lea@nmcentre.com

MONDAY 26TH NOVEMBER

Visit to Chester Christmas Markets
11.30am - Meet at Storyhouse in Chester

To book contact Andrea:
01606 860911 or andrea.duckworth@nmcentre.com

FRIDAY 23TH NOVEMBER Spirit of Christmas

7.30pm at Chester Cathedral
Matthew Kelly hosts the annual concert of festive readings and music.

Tickets (varied prices) from fundraising or website:
01606 861733.

TUESDAY 27TH NOV TO TUESDAY 7TH DEC The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2018

See front page for more info
Donate at <https://secure.thebiggive.org.uk/project/30977>

FRIDAY 30TH NOVEMBER Read and Connect

11.30am – event space NMC
Friday 30th November
Connect Up - Monthly Drop In.
Quiz and soup, relax and chat
10.30am – 1pm at NMC
To book contact Andrea:
01606 860911

FRIDAY 17TH DECEMBER Connect Up Monthly Drop In

Mulled Wine 'n' Mince Pies. Bring your ideas for activities in 2019.
11am at NMC

TEAM NEWS!

During the Autumn we doubled our quota of Louises employed in the physio team. Louise Clark will be joined by Louise Henshaw who has chosen to be known as Lou. We also bade 'au revoir' to marvellous Millie!

Lou Henshaw joined the physio team in September after graduating this summer with a BSc in Physiotherapy from the University of Salford. Lou completed her degree whilst working as a support worker and a physio assistant at a hydrotherapy pool in Wilmslow. When not stretching our muscles or loading weights in the NMC gym, Lou enjoys spending time either with her 2 French Bulldogs, Vinny and Frankie, or at gigs.

In October Millie Hawes embarked on an exciting new job at a law firm (Fieldfisher LLP) as their Corporate Responsibility Executive. Millie worked at NMC for a year (6 months as Grants Fundraiser and 6 months as Transition and



Development Officer) but has been coming to NMC for physio for 6 years. We wish Millie every success in her new role.

Well done to Liv, Bryn and Teresa who took part in a Tough Mudder challenge and raised an amazing £1599.40 for the NMC. The 5-mile course included numerous obstacles and (the clue is in the name) a serious amount of lovely mud.

And finally, congratulations to our CEO Matthew and his wife Anne on their 30th wedding anniversary in September. Matthew and Anne celebrated with the Connect Up crew on a day out in Llandudno before a (slightly) more exotic trip to Italy.



CONTACTS AND FEEDBACK

This newsletter is for the whole of the NMC community.

Whether you attend twice a week or once a year for treatment, for work, for training, as a service user, employee, carer, family member, supporter or friend then your views are important to us. For any comments or suggestions please contact Sarah Lalieu at sarah.lalieu@live.co.uk
Thank you to everyone who has helped and contributed to this edition!



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