



Farnborough to Meudon by Bike

Photo by Owen Durrett

By Owen Durrett, Trustee

On September 3rd the planning of an ambitious fund raising event for Parity came to an end as 7 cyclists were waved off by the Mayor of Rushmoor on their 200+ mile journey to Farnborough's twin town, Meudon, just outside Paris, France.

Several months of planning by Helene Abbiss (logistics) and Donald Ashton (the cycling aspects) of the Farnborough & Camberley Cycling Club came to fruition as the cyclists toured the three Parity shops as a warm up before heading off for Portsmouth and the overnight ferry to Le Havre. Throughout the journey they were supported by two vehicles carrying food, drink and spare parts and a motorbike outrider showing them the way.

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Whetstone Road performs Jack & The Beanstalk

By Helene Abbiss,
Fundraising & Communications Mgr

Eleven weeks of preparation and rehearsals on the part of the Whetstone Road day centre staff and students, under the guidance of Drama Therapist

Sam Olliff, resulted in a very successful performance of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in December. Guests watched Sunil Krishnamurthy as Jack take on both Kath Hardie as the ogre, as well as his mother, played by Sam. Jack's was also an action role involving escaping the ogre, and 'climbing' the beanstalk which miraculously



Photo by Owen Durrett

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Photo by Helen Morris

Parity Enjoys a Cooking Day with the Army

By Helen Morris
Camberley Day Centre Manager

Last October we had a fantastic day, enjoyed by all, when Sergeant Sarah Cox

and her colleague Graham, chefs from the Royal Logistics Corps Training Centre at St Omer Barracks visited the Parity day centre at St Martins, Camberley. Some students from Whetstone Road day centre also came over to join in. The army supplied matching hats, scarves and aprons for the students and staff to wear which set the scene for the day.

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Photo by By Eva Roettgers of Gahanga, a home for disabled orphans

Music Therapy in Rwanda

By Helen Leith, Parity Music Therapist

I spent 3 ½ weeks in Rwanda this summer. Independently of my work for Parity, together with my colleague Judith Nockolds, I prepared and implemented a short, intensive residential course in interactive music-making for staff working in centres for disabled children and young adults. A total of 31 participants from 24 centres from all over the country took part.

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Farnborough to Meudon by Bike continued...



Photo by Owen Durrett

Day 1 – 45 miles to Portsmouth passed off without problems even though the riders had to cope with a number of significant hills on the way to the coast. A short stop in BAE Systems in Portsmouth to let the riders refresh and it was onto the cross channel ferry, a quick meal and the chance to get some sleep. Just before reaching Portsmouth we suffered our first (and only) puncture.

Day 2 – 100 miles to St Marcel. An early start and it was soon proved that the satellite navigation system in France is as gullible as in the UK as we discovered a brick wall barring our path! Determined, as we were, to reach the destination we re-routed and carried on with frequent stops for energy drinks, bananas and jam sandwiches. The intrepid bikers rode through the day and tired (*and saddle sore*) reached the overnight stop – a Formula 1 hotel – but not before we managed to lose one of the riders. A quick tour of the town and he was found and re-united with the group in time to visit a local restaurant to drink and eat. An early night as we aimed for an 8.00am start.

Day 3 – 60 miles to Meudon. On the bikes by 8.15 and we got lost in the town before 2 kilometres had been covered. A bit of map reading and we got back on course arriving at a rendezvous point some 25 kilometres outside Meudon to meet with members of the Meudon Cycling Club who were to show us the way. All went well until we hit the outskirts of Paris and they used the cycle paths – the support vehicles were left stranded! Initiative was seized and the support vehicles used various motorways to reach the end just before the cyclists. They were escorted for the last kilometre by the local police and arrived at the Observatoire (at the top of a hill) to applause from the Meudon Deputy Mayor and Town Twinning Committee. That night we all attended a Civic Reception where the cyclists were awarded medals!

Before returning the following day by Eurostar (the cyclists) and ferry (the vehicles) we were given a tour of Meudon's museum – an interesting experience.

A successful event – well organised, completed by all 7 determined cyclists, good level of fund raising (£3,000) and one which the cyclists said they would be happy to repeat!

Parity Enjoys a Cooking Day with the Army continued...

A buffet lunch was created with a selection of sandwiches with all different fillings. The students made sausage rolls, and Victoria sponge cakes were filled with cream and jam and then decorated. The students piped their own mousse dessert and also decorated these with an array of chocolate sprinkles and hundreds and thousands.

Those that were not able to take part in making the lunch were able to experience different textures and colours using bread dough, which they were able to play with and mould. We also saw photos of fat and sugar sculptures that had been created by the students at the army college.



Photo by Helen Morris

This was definitely a successful and enjoyable day with all the students being able to enjoy and take part. The day ended with a photo session as many students were keen to have their photo taken with Sarah and Graham. We would like to say a big thank you to them for visiting Parity and giving us all such a splendid day.

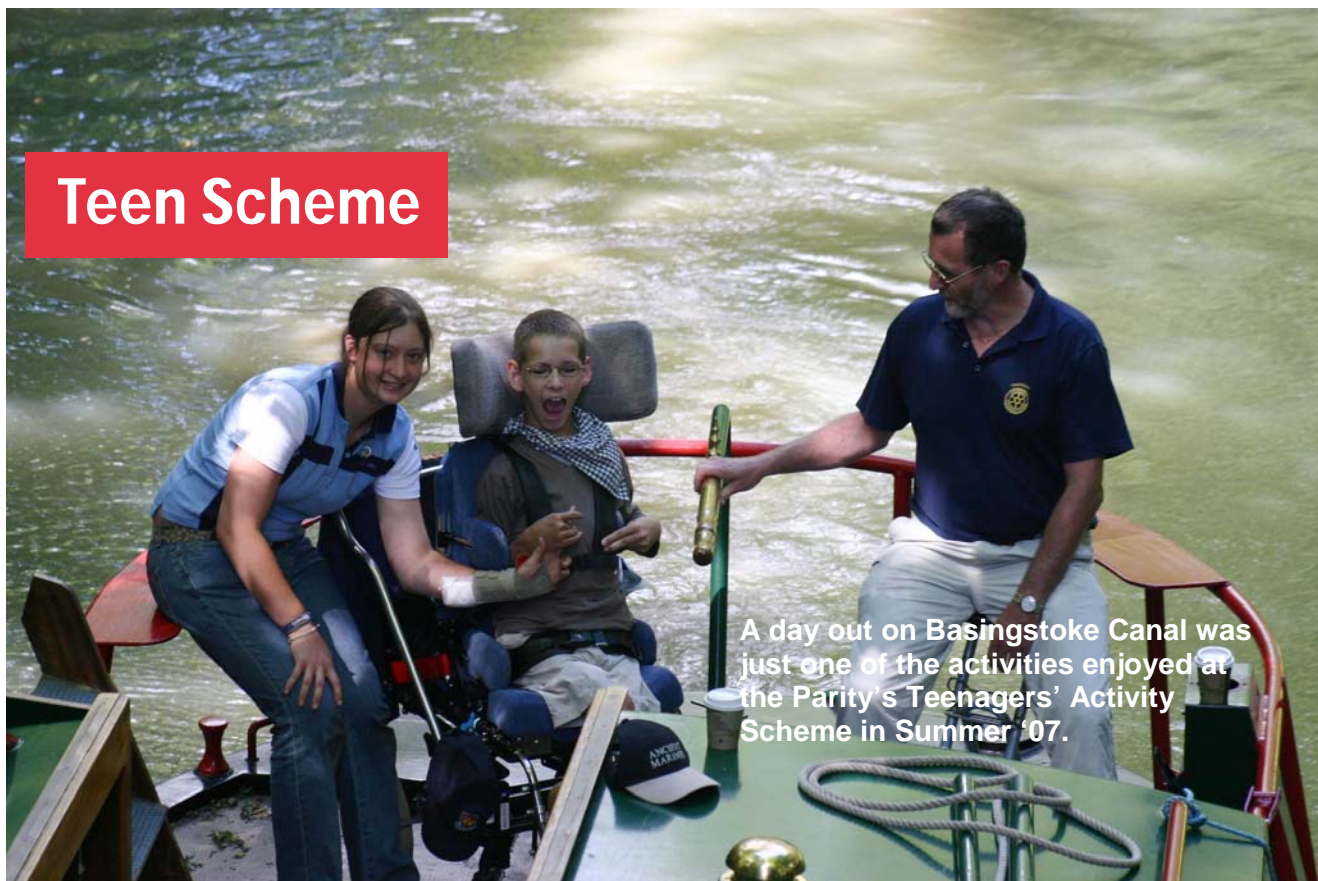
Music Therapy in Rwanda continued...

It was very moving to see how hard they worked on the course. They were thirsty for knowledge and skills. We were able to appreciate the degree of commitment when we went to visit some participating centres. Often one participant represented one third of a centre's entire team!

We met some amazing people, especially women, who had often started by taking one or two disabled children into their home and two or three years later were running homes for 25-30 children. One woman started with three disabled children and now runs a residential school for 198 children – an extraordinary feat when you consider that there is no governmental funding and poverty is rife.

We look forward to returning next year to continue helping staff use music with their disabled students.

Teen Scheme



A day out on Basingstoke Canal was just one of the activities enjoyed at the Parity's Teenagers' Activity Scheme in Summer '07.

By Alison Cooper, Executive Director

We had another fun-packed summer which really flew by! There were new staff and teenagers and those already used to the routine who came prepared with some good ideas about what they wanted to do. Popular choices included cinema, bowling and ice skating, as usual. Good use was made of our ever helpful and enthusiastic volunteer drivers. Train travel also featured highly; the train station in Fleet is a 15

minute walk away giving good access to Woking, Basingstoke and London. The station staff were in general very helpful and had mastered the art of wielding the ramp very well by the end of the holidays! The teens also got very inventive in the kitchen this year, producing sweet and savoury delights like a reproduction of the Harry Potter night bus in cake, chocolate pizza and spaghetti

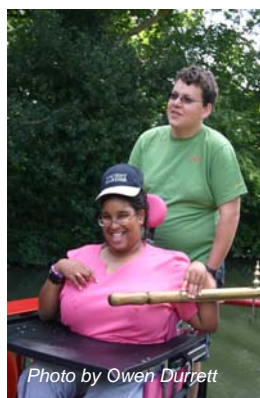


Photo by Owen Durrett

carbonara. Imagination shone through in plays and stories dictated and typed on the computer and a range of arty items were created. A dreamy day was also spent on the Basingstoke canal thanks to the Farnborough Rotary. All in all a fantastic time was had by teens and staff alike who can't wait until the next time we meet up.

New Youth Club

An exciting new project is underway. Several organisations have been working together to develop a youth club for Rushmoor and the surrounding area where young people with disabilities aged 14+ can meet up. The Rushmoor Disability Forum (of which Parity is a founding member), the Hampshire Youth Service and Connexions met with young disabled people in the area to address the lack of leisure opportunities for them. The teens chose the name Teen Scene for the new club and put together the first bid to the Youth Opportunities Fund which resulted in a grant of £4,999 for a year's staffing. Toshiba have also donated £750 towards equipment. An opening date will be announced shortly and the club will be meeting on a Wednesday evening at the new youth facility in Farnborough.

Graffiti Attack

The side of Parity's Portacabin behind the Whetstone Road day centre was found covered in pink graffiti one morning in December. Many thanks to volunteer Jim Dunaway who immediately got to work removing it and painting over the graphic imagery. The artist must just have been passing through as the Portacabin has since stayed clean.

Whetstone Road performs Jack & The Beanstalk continued...

From Front Page

grew from small seed to giant plant with the help of a long piece of string pulled from behind a door. Students and staff members' supporting roles included Rob Hensley as the ogre's wife and Barbara Touati-Evans as the cow Jack sells in return for the beans.

Sam explained that although group drama-making is an artistic rather than therapeutic process, the effect of drama work has clear therapeutic outcomes. All people, regardless of ability, thrive and grow in the process. Parity staff members have observed what they interpret as increased confidence in the students.



Photos by Owen Durrett



Garden Opening

Photo by Owen Durrett

Parity officially opened its beautiful new raised garden at the back of the Farnborough day centre in November. Student Sheena Bowsher cut the green ribbon pronouncing the feature open.

Volunteers from SC Johnson Wax worked with garden designer Linda Andrew to create the area, and also built a smaller version outside the Camberley day centre at St Martin's Church.

The bike riders from the recent Farnborough – Meudon Sponsored Challenge were also present for a tour of the day centre and were thanked again for their achievement.

The garden kept its looks through the winter and we're looking forward to seeing it bloom again this spring.

Staff Changes

Welcome to new students Bobby Cowell at the Whetstone Road, Farnborough day centre and Sarah Early at the St Martin's Day Centre in Camberley.

Also newly welcomed to St Martin's are keyworkers Emily Harris, Katie Hoyle and Erzabet Varga. Also Sarah Pe-ad who started as a bank worker and has been made permanent.

Keyworker Shane Martin has returned to Whetstone Road and we also welcome new keyworker Douglas Gordon-Lloyd.

AGM

Parity's 2007 AGM took place on 5th November – bonfire night - but as it was also a Monday nobody had to put aside plans involving fireworks. Around 80 people attended as Chairman Paul Roper and Treasurer John Dickie summarised the 2006-2007 year. The annual report is available for download on the Parity web site.

Music Therapist Helen Leith gave a very interesting talk on her work in Rwanda (see p.1 & 2).



News from the Shops

By Christine Stevens, Senior Shops Manager

2007 can be counted among the good years for Parity shops, managers, staff and volunteers all pulled together to achieve targets set for them, WELL DONE! And a big THANK YOU!

Church Crookham Shop

Our focus has been to smarten up the shops, and what better for them than a lovely new wood-look floor, easy to clean and appreciated very much by the ladies themselves at the Church Crookham shop. Managers Sandra, Marilyn, Sue and team would only be too happy for you to visit, enabling them to show it off. I extend my gratitude, not only for the staff and volunteers who work so diligently, but also the behind-the-scene jobs that husbands do for us, which in turn saves Parity much expense.

Frimley Shop

Thanks to the team from Frimley Baptist Church who rolled their sleeves up to refurbish the back room of the shop, and to Colin McKenzie for his superhuman support effort. Manager Pauline, Janet and the team of volunteers have found great pleasure in this newly decorated space. I also extend our gratitude to Birch Carpets for the donation of carpet tiles and the generous payment for the fitting, donated by Helen Allen (volunteer). I must also highlight, that lots of imperative work done for Parity is done by those back room husbands! Thank you! I have only been too aware of the unselfish, and beyond the call of duty Pauline who through commitment, endeavour and gritty hard work, has managed not only to continue to maintain a very high standard at the shop in Frimley itself, but also involved herself in various fundraising events with her husband Colin during the whole year of 2007. I really appreciate the team at Frimley, thank you for all your efforts.

North Camp

As one of the newest shops, we have spent some time settling into village life, and getting to know our neighbouring shops generally, building up a rapport with our customers who have now become regulars rather than visitors. We have, by invitation, been asked to enter various window competitions by the North Camp Matters Association. Last Christmas

(2006) we won the cup (Best Dressed Window). This Christmas 2007 we were Runners Up. This begs thanks to Helen Simmons for the loan of a lovely period Pine Fireplace which centralised the window display, and also thanks for the professional contribution by Millie (pictured left) and Myrtle. The said fireplace has been sold since and Helen Simmons kindly donated the proceeds to Parity. I can now boast at this shop some newly fitted spotlights (donated) to show off the excellent window displays. Thanks to another behind-the-scenes husband, and checked by an authorised electrician. To my own team at North Camp, Myrtle, Pam, Margaret and all my volunteers, Millie, Sylvia, Sharon, Pat, Janet, Margaret: thanks for putting up with my additional responsibilities and supporting me in my new role.

Generous Donations!

Thank you to everybody who has continued to support our shops throughout the year with generous donations. We are always happy to receive good quality clothing and bric-a-brac, etc. For larger items, please contact the manager of the shop to ensure availability of space, to spare any disappointment. Under the heading of BEST GENEROUS EFFORTS, thank you Kelvin for your contributions towards all the shops.

AWARENESS & CAMPAIGNING

Parity's new-look web site



Parity have launched their new web site which is aimed at easier navigating and providing more information. To celebrate its launch we are holding a web competition... on the new site there are two links to hidden pages. When you find both pages you will have a phrase which you should send to us at info@parityfordisability.org.uk to win a bottle of champagne.

The competition closes at the end of March and all correct answers will be entered into a draw to find the winner.

Our thanks to volunteer Jim Brunton for the hours of work he has put into creating the pages of the new site - and for offering to be the one to maintain it. Thank you also to volunteer designer Trissy Norris who came up with the new look for Parity's site.



Another Stunt for Parity

Photo by Colin McKenzie

On September 15th & 16th 2007, 40 volunteers took on Parity's zip wire challenge at Three Peaks Outdoor Pursuits, Runfold Farnham. They raised £5,000 for Parity. Parity Trustee Kelvin Smith, who previously raised over £3,000 abseiling 100 feet off Aldershot's St Omer Barracks, was one of them.

"I want to thank everyone who supported me in my recent sponsored zip wire challenge in which I raised £1,585 for Parity for Disability.

I was hoisted 70 feet to a platform and then zipped along 650 feet of thin wire at 25mph!

I enjoyed the day but enjoyed it more because of everyone's generosity. I want to thank the Aldershot News for their coverage as well as my family, friends, local pubs and organisations, and the public for supporting me.

There are far too many people to mention personally, but I would like to say a BIG 'thank you' to everyone."

Fleet 5K

Thank you to Juliet Pearson who raised £80 running for Parity in the Fleet 5K in October.

New Volunteers

Welcome to Barbara Rogers who is helping us with fundraising and events. Barbara will be liaising with schools in the area.

Welcome also to IT volunteer Anthony Wraight who has helped sort out e-mail issues and other computer nightmares.

Thank you to everyone who braved the horrendous climb up the tree and did the zip wire challenge in September! Thanks also to the team at Three Peaks Outdoor Pursuits in Runfold who ensured a safe, exciting event. We were also joined by Eagle DJ Kim Robson who raised over £250 for Parity and promoted the event on air.

Many supporters are looking for the next adrenalin buzz. If you think zorbing might be the challenge for you -rolling downhill in a giant transparent ball- please get in touch.

Thank you to Jim Dunaway for putting hours into building a huge shelf unit in the Parity office, it has sorted out the clutter once and for all.

Thank you to Brian Cusden for installing a white-board to record Parity's campaign to raise £2 million for a dedicated building.

New Bike Challenge

Cycling Coach Donald Ashton has put together another bike ride fundraiser for Parity.

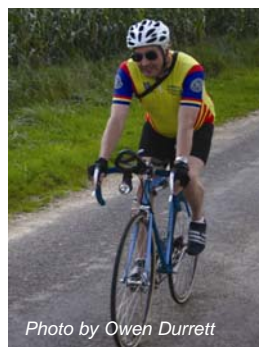


Photo by Owen Durrett

Following the success of the Farnborough to Meudon ride last year, Donald has created a one-day ride around North East Hampshire which will take place on Saturday 3 May.

It should be a great way to start off the bank holiday weekend. Individuals, their families and teams are all invited to take part. For more

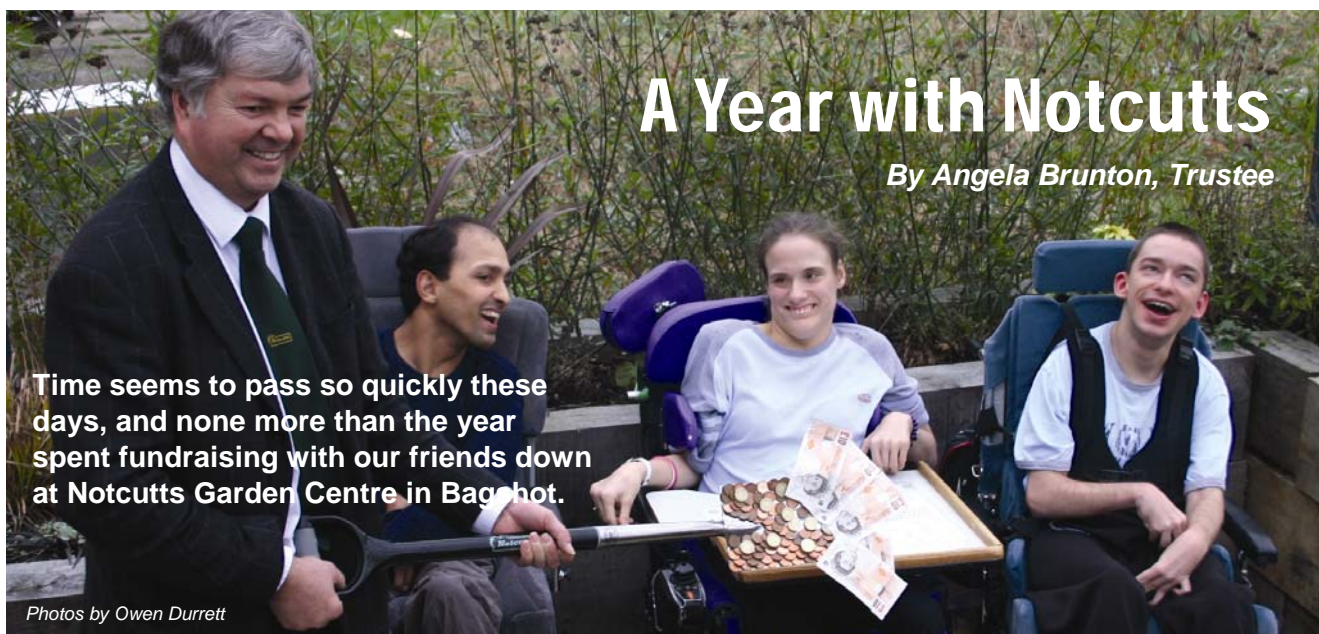
information please visit the events page at www.parityfordisability.org.uk.

Skydive 2008

A group of Parity supporters are getting together to skydive in Cambridgeshire during the summer. If you'd like to be one of them, please contact Helene or Bernadette, or visit the events page at www.parityfordisability.org.uk for more information about skydiving.

A Year with Notcutts

By Angela Brunton, Trustee



Time seems to pass so quickly these days, and none more than the year spent fundraising with our friends down at Notcutts Garden Centre in Bagshot.

Photos by Owen Durrett

It all began by joining the wood turners and craftsmen at their "Wood is Good" Day – our stall had such an amazing variety of wooden items for sale and started the funds off with a healthy £158.

Next on our list of events was the Curry and Quiz night – with appetites satisfied after a very tasty meal, it was eyes down for the quiz. Owen, our quiz master, wasn't at all fazed by the friendly banter and groans as the questions were read out, nor was he going to stand for any sneaky conferring between teams! The night was a great success, and the £700 raised was just the 'icing on the cake'!

Easter approached and the children were pestering their mums to get creative for our Easter Bonnet Parade. We had some truly magnificent entries and the overall winner wore the biggest smile whilst clutching her prize of a large fluffy bunny. All the other youngsters weren't left disappointed, Easter eggs for everyone! £281 raised that day!



Moving on to the month of June and Parity's Blooming Clothes Show. Our stunning models received just applause as they walked down the catwalk. Christine and her ladies did a marvellous job of selecting the clothes and teaming them together with the right accessories. The highlight at the end of the day was the 'bride and groom' when several whispers of "what a stunning wedding dress... can't believe that's from a charity shop!" could be overheard.

Even Notcutts Manager, Jim Coggins, got into the spirit of the day and stood in as father of the bride for one of the photo shoots! Another great day, another great total, £500.

Throughout the summer months, £147 worth of balloons were sold in all our shops, these to be released from the Garden Centre during August Bank Holiday weekend. The winner was Margaret Longman's daughter – Margaret is a volunteer at our North Camp Shop. Amazingly, Irene's winning balloon landed 242 miles away in France.

Before we knew it, Christmas was upon us and Owen was being asked to don his quiz master's hat again. So it was action replay, except this time our guests enjoyed a traditional Xmas meal with all the trimmings. The wine flowed, the laughter was loud and the banter never waned! What a result, £767 for Parity.

So our final project at Notcutts was upon us – assisting Father Christmas! A rota of volunteers escorted over 285 children through Santa's Grotto during the festive season, all enjoying the delight on the children's faces and silently chuckling at some of things they said to Santa! It was all good fun, though hard work, but all worthwhile for the £1,000 Parity gained.

So our year with Notcutts comes to an end. This is just a brief resume of all the activities we have undertaken during the year; there have been tombolas, raffles and collection tins galore - even the wearing of Marigolds to empty the coins out of the wishing well! When you hear that we raised £6,091.67 in all, it certainly makes it all worthwhile. We have made some special friends at Notcutts – thank you so much to the Manager, Jim Coggins, and all his staff for always making us feel so welcome and for all their support. We look forward to seeing them all again soon.

Change in Parity Staff Structure

By Paul Roper, Chairman

I think most readers are aware that we have a vision to build a dedicated centre. We have moved towards that vision by achieving planning permission to build the centre on the part of the Farnborough Football Club car park.

We have agreed, in principle, the basis to acquire the land to build the centre. There just remains the small project of raising £2 million pounds by a capital appeal.

After carefully considering how best to move forward, it was felt that there are some important changes that must be put into place. We believe it is important to have a single member of staff at the helm of Parity; equally it is vital we are able to raise sufficient voluntary income to support our service provision during the capital appeal.

As a result of these decisions, Alison Cooper has been appointed Executive Director of Parity. With the exception of the Company Secretary all staff now report to her through the agreed staff structure.

Helene Abbiss has taken full time responsibility for Event and Community Fundraising in addition to PR. Parity will depend heavily on a successful fundraising programme over the next two or three years during the capital appeal, consequently to give Helene more time to concentrate on fundraising activities, Christine Stevens has taken over full responsibility for shops and will report directly to Alison.

The next newsletter will be issued in May 2008. The deadline for submissions is March 31.

This newsletter is published by Parity for Disability. If you have contributions for future editions or comments resulting from this newsletter, please contact Helene Abbiss c/o Parity for Disability, 94 Whetstone Road, Farnborough, Hants. Tel 01252 375581. E-mail info@parityfordisability.org.uk.

Donations

Many thanks to the following, who donated to Parity between Aug 1 and Jan 31:

The Saddler's Company
Staiter Charitable Trust
Vassiliou Trust
Camberley Ladies
Woodroffe Benton F'tion
Plastow Family Ch Trust
Alan & Joyce Stemp's 50th Ann.
Mr C Irvin
Mrs P Nield
Mr & Mrs A and J Fox
The Charlotte Bonham-Carter Trust
M Powell
Mr P Blows
Mrs M Drewett
Herrington & Carmichael
The Richard Kirkman Trust
The Sir James Roll Ch Trust
BAE Systems
Mr N Peart
In Memory of Marian Holt
Austin Phoenix
Cove Parish
In Memory of Cllr Graham Tucker
Quarries Masonic Lodge
Estate of Mrs E Jasper
The Roger Vere F'tion
In Memory of Sophie Biggs
Surrey Heath Mayor's Fund
Religious Society of Friends
LIBDA

Parity 100 Club Winners

Congratulations to:

August – B Melsom

September – J Dickie

October – S McPhee

November – A Hamilton

December – B Melsom

January – C Cooper

Dates For Your Diary

Parity Draw

Jan - March

A chance to win great prizes! The Parity team will be selling tickets at different venues throughout the local area. The draw is on 28th March. If you can sell tickets, please contact us.

Parity Day

Tuesday 4 March

Hold your own fundraising event, large or small, in support of Parity and help raise awareness of a vital local charity.

Parity Firewalk Challenge

Sun 9 March 3.30pm

A chance to change your life by walking barefoot over burning coals, and raise funds for a good cause.

ASICS Fleet Pre-London Half Marathon

Sunday 16 March

This is known as the warm-up race for the London Marathon. Why not run on behalf of Parity? Entry deadline is Saturday 16th February.

Talent Night

Tuesday 25 March 8pm

At Propaganda Music Canteen, Fleet High Street, Fleet. Enter to sing your heart out or come along on the night to enjoy the show.

Quiz & Curry Night

Thursday 27 March

At Notcutts Garden Centre, Bagshot. You and your team can pit your wits in our quiz and enjoy great curry, as well as a big discount off shopping all evening. Pre-booking essential.

St George's Medieval Banquet & Ball

Friday 25 April

At the Royal British Legion, Farnborough. Celebrate St George's day in style! Dine with the King, Queen and Court Jester and enjoy medieval entertainment. Fancy dress is optional. Pre-booking essential.

Parity North East Hants Cycle Challenge

Saturday 3 May

A scenic 54-mile circular cycle ride around NE Hants and a great way to start the bank holiday weekend.

Parity Tug of War Challenge

Saturday 12 July

At the North Camp Summer Fair in Farnborough. Enter your team now!