

YORKSHIRE DALES BRANCH NEWSLETTER

# CHATTER

JANUNARY 2026

## Emily's Skydive in Memory of Her Grandpa

When Emily Moorcroft stepped out of the plane door and into the open sky, she carried with her the memory of someone extraordinary — her Grandpa, John Wimpres, who passed away from Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in 2020, just two years after his diagnosis.

"I decided to do the skydive because it was something I've always dreamed of doing," Emily explains. "I thought it would be a good opportunity to raise awareness about MND. It felt like the perfect way to remember my grandpa and do something big in his memory."

The jump itself was everything she hoped for — exhilarating, emotional, and unforgettable.

"I absolutely loved the experience and was ready to go up again as soon as I touched the ground!" she said.

Emily's fundraising efforts have raised over £1,500 for the West Yorkshire Branch. She is deeply proud of what she has achieved. "I am so happy with the money I have raised and am glad I have been able to be a part of the fight against MND."



## In this issue:

- Thank You to Harrogate Pythons RFC, [page 3 & 4](#)
- Kevin Sinfield completes 7in7 Together Challenge, [page 7](#)

## MND Association Tree Shines at St John's Christmas Tree Festival

St John's Church in Knaresborough opened its doors for its much-loved annual Christmas Tree Festival, 6-22 December, and this year marked an exciting milestone: the first-ever MND Association tree on display.

With a record 97 decorated and illuminated trees filling the church, the festival showcased contributions from local organisations, schools, charities, and community groups. But for the Yorkshire Dales branch of the MND Association, this year was particularly special.

The branch proudly erected its very first Christmas tree at the festival. Thoughtfully decorated and warmly illuminated, the tree represents the branch's growing presence in the community and its commitment to supporting people affected by Motor Neurone Disease.

A big thank-you goes to Rachel and Mia, whose time and creativity brought the display to life. I'm sure you agree the tree looked fantastic!



## Otley Christmas Tree Festival

The Yorkshire Dales Branch also had a tree standing proudly at this year's Otley Christmas Tree Festival.

All together there were 40 beautifully decorated Christmas Trees inside Otley Parish Church from 40 charities or community groups. Thank you to Veronica for helping to make the tree look beautiful.





## Thank You to Harrogate Pythons RFC

The Yorkshire Dales Branch would like to offer our sincere thanks to Harrogate Pythons Rugby Club for their fantastic fundraising efforts and continued support. Their support started on Saturday July 12th when they organised an MND Association Tag Rugby Tournament raising £598!



### The #EK12-#RB7 cycle

The team's biggest challenge was in September, when members of the club came together to take on a remarkable cycling challenge—organised and led by Jon Wiggins. The team cycled the Leeds Liverpool Canal from Liverpool FC's Anfield stadium to their ground, the John Saynor Ground Station View in Harrogate, calling in at Wigan Warriors Brick Community Stadium and Leeds Rhinos Headingley Stadium on the way. Their triumphant arrival at Station View raised a further £153!



Jon explained that the challenge began from a desire to support club member and friend Eddie Kernoghan, who was diagnosed with MND, as well as the many others living with MND. As a lifelong Leeds Rhinos fan and someone personally connected to families affected by the disease, Jon felt compelled to do more. What started as a personal idea quickly grew into a team effort, as fellow club members stepped forward to join the ride—or, as Jon joked, perhaps just to see whether he might fall in the canal!



They called the challenge the #EK12-#RB7 cycle with nods to Rob and Eddie and the numbers they played in. Their dedicated team of cyclists—Jon Wiggins, Mike Ruthen, Kelly Grove, Dan Scott, and Tom Everingham—have taken on this journey with passion and determination. Behind them was a committed support crew: Lisa Wiggins and Lindsay Ruthen, following closely in the support van, and Justin Ross, who has been instrumental in preparing for the team's return to the club.



Sadly, Eddie died in June before the team completed this challenge. Before he passed away, Eddie shared how proud he was that the club was doing something to support the MND Association, and his family continue to express their gratitude for the club's efforts and compassion. The ride itself raised an incredible £7,505!



## Thank You to Harrogate Pythons RFC – continued...

### Annual dinner auction

On October 9th the club held its annual dinner auction and raised a further £500 for the Branch by auctioning a limited edition print, 'Brothers in Arms', featuring Leeds Rhinos legends Rob Burrow CBE and Kevin Sinfield CBE - with the help of England rugby's Joe Marler who was a special guest at the event. This brought their fundraising total to an amazing £8,756.



We are also delighted to hear that the club plans to continue their support into the future. Club coach Tom Baxter has committed to running the MND Association Tag Rugby Tournament again next year and beyond, and Jon hopes to take on more cycling challenges to keep awareness growing.



### Thank You, Pythons

To everyone at Harrogate Pythons RFC—cyclists, organisers, supporters, and the wider club community—thank you. Your dedication, compassion, and team spirit make a meaningful difference to people living with MND and their families.

## Christmas Lunch

December 8th we held our Yorkshire Dales Christmas Lunch at The Inn at South Stainley.



## Get involved in research

There are many ways you can get involved in MND research, from filling out a survey to testing a new treatment or by taking part in a study.

People living with MND, their family, carers and healthy volunteers are all needed to help researchers understand the causes of MND, and improve diagnosis, care and quality of life of people affected by the disease.

Find out more about how you can get involved in research [here](#).



## Fundraising Round Up

A big thank you to everyone who has helped to organise, completed events and/or fundraised over the last few months.

Here's a snap shot of some of the activities people were involved in to help raise funds for the Branch:

- Coffee morning at St Mary's Church, Carleton raised £173.
- Ride for Lee raised £592.
- Bingo Night, raffle and auction at Bilton Cricket Club raised £1,722.
- Dance competition raised £1,331.
- Keighley Friendship group raised £51 from a Coffee & Cake morning.
- Harrogate Pythons fundraising see [page 3](#) and [4](#).

Thanks again for all your support – whether you've donated, volunteered, cheered us on we couldn't do it without you.



## Dates for your diary

Here's of some of our fundraising events coming up over the next few months:

- January 10th 2026, Asda Harrogate Stall
- February 2026, Otley Garden Centre Stall
- March 7th 2026, Cake, Coffee & Tombola Morning - Bilton Cricket Club
- March 26th 2026, Easter Card & Cake Sale - Allhallowgate Church Hall, Ripon



**MND Friendship Group - Keighley**

Every second Saturday of the month - 10am - 12 midday

Keith Thompson Centre, Coronation Mount, Keighley, BD22 6HE  
Tea, coffee, biscuits and chat!

For further information, please contact: Ziggi O'Connor 07380 192376  
or Alun Owen 07711 308441 / [alun.owen@mndassociation.org](mailto:alun.owen@mndassociation.org)

Follow us on FaceBook: West Yorkshire Branch of the MND Association

 [mndassociation](https://www.facebook.com/mndassociation)  [@mndassoc](https://twitter.com/mndassoc)

[www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)  
Friends Circle House, 5 Summerhouse Road, Northampton, NN2 6BE  
Registered charity no. 295034 | Created in September 1977 | 18/03/2025

 Registered with  
FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

## Snippets of MND Association National News

### The Rob Burrow Centre for MND

The Rob Burrow MND Centre has opened its doors to people affected by MND in West Yorkshire. The centre, which was funded by a £6.8 million fundraising campaign run by Leeds Hospitals Charity and supported by Kevin Sinfield CBE, is based at Seacroft Hospital in Leeds. It is named after Rob Burrow CBE and is the first purpose-built centre dedicated entirely to MND care, research, education and holistic support.

The facilities have been designed with patients and families at their heart, providing a calm, welcoming and fully accessible environment. The MND Association (MNDA) funds a number of health and social care professionals at the centre, including a MNDA Research Nurse who joined the team in August. The Leeds centre is one of 24 MND Care Centre and Networks the MNDA supports across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Read more on the MND Association website [here](#).



### Telegraph Christmas Charity Appeal

The MND Association (MNDA) has been named as one of the four charities for this year's Telegraph Christmas Charity Appeal. Between the start of November and the end of January, the newspaper will feature stories and interviews from across the MND community, showcasing the MNDA work and the support offered to people affected by MND. It is hoped that the partnership will raise over £100,000.

### Councils: Unlock the Door

The MND Association (MNDA) has launched a new campaign demanding local councils Unlock The Door and act faster for people with MND who desperately need housing adaptations.

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) scheme provides funding for adaptations like stairlifts, widening doors, ramps and more.

However, MNDA research shows applying for a DFG is a complex and slow process, leading to unnecessary anxiety and pressure for people with MND, often in the final months of their life.

The report reveals the average time from submission of a DFG application for a large adaptation to completion of the works is 375 days in England, 357 days in Northern Ireland and 289 days in Wales.

With a third of people dying within a year of diagnosis, this is unacceptable. That's why the MNDA is calling on every council to commit to completing all approved large adaptations within four-and-a-half months. Read more about the campaign [here](#).



## Kevin Sinfield completes 7in7 Together Challenge for MND Association and MND Charities

Kevin Sinfield CBE concluded his 7 in 7: Together Challenge on Sunday 7th December. Kevin, who is patron of the MND Association, wiped away tears as he thanked the community and everyone who had taken the time to line the streets, cheer the team on and donate during the week-long challenge.

He ran from Queen Ethelburga's school near York to AMT Headingley Stadium, home of the Leeds Rhinos and completed seven ultra marathons in seven days, raising more than £1.2 million.

The challenge began in Bury St Edmunds and took the team through Ipswich, Cork, Swansea, Sheffield, Workington, Whitehaven, Dundee and York before finishing in Leeds.

At every stop along the way crowds of people turned out in huge numbers to show their support. Kevin's final day saw him run from Queen Ethelburga's School near York to AMT Headingley Stadium, passing through Green Hammerton, a flooded Cattal, Wetherby, Linton, East Rigton and Bardsey, before entering Leeds via Moortown and Meanwood.

The Yorkshire Dales Branch supported the effort at a checkpoint set up at Linton Memorial Hall. Fundraising Group Lead Alan and his wife Anne were joined by fellow branch members and the Harrogate Brass Band, who played festive tunes. The team paused for a well-earned bacon sandwich before sharing an uplifting message with Yorkshire Dales Branch members.

Among those cheering Kevin on was Harri, who, along with his family, proudly banged the drum as Sinfield continued his journey. Harri has also chosen to fundraise for the Yorkshire Dales Branch and will be taking on the 2026 Manchester Marathon. He said: "It's a privilege to be running the 2026 Manchester Marathon in support of the Motor Neurone Disease Association—a charity that now means EVERYTHING to me and my family. In October of this year, my world changed forever. My mum, Vivanne, told me she had been diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND)"

Those wishing to support Harri's marathon journey can visit his fundraising page: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/harridineen>



## Coffee and a Catch up

The first Tuesday of every month we host an informal meet up for all those affected by MND.

It's a place where you can share your stories, ideas and meet others affected by MND.

The catch ups run 2pm until 4pm in the café at Weetons (was Crimble) just outside Pannal on the road into Harrogate. All are welcome, just show up, or if you want more information then do please get in touch. We hope you can join us.

Upcoming dates:

- Tuesday 6 January
- Tuesday 3 February
- Tuesday 3 March



**mnda**  
motor neurone disease  
association

**fighting  
motor  
neuron**

**Coffee and Catch Up 2pm - 4pm**

Yorkshire Dales Branch Support Group

First Tuesday of every month at Weeton's Garden Centre Cafe, Leeds Rd, Pannal, Harrogate HG3 1EW

For information, please contact:  
**Libby Wade 07803 208139**  
**Margaret Thompson 07704 421513**  
**Alun Owen 01604 800619 or [alun.owen@mndassociation.org](mailto:alun.owen@mndassociation.org)**

f mndassociation    @mndassoc

[www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)  
Francis Crick House, 6 Summerhouse Road, Northampton, NN3 6BJ  
Registered charity no. 294354 | Created in RightMarket - 16/12/2025 - 12:32:12

FR Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

## MND Story Hub

Story Hub has launched on the MND Association's website. The MND community is a powerful source of information, practical advice and support.

The Story Hub features first-hand accounts from people with MND as well as their families, carers and volunteers and we will be adding more monthly.

From written reflections to powerful video interviews and lovely home photos, each story offers a unique glimpse into life with MND - the challenges, the experiences and the moments of joy.

Each story offers a unique insight into the experiences, challenges and moments of joy that underline life with MND.

The stories are categorised by themes such as support, living with MND and volunteering, making the Story Hub an interactive and useful resource.

You can visit the Story Hub on the MND Association [here](#).





## Reader Spotlight: David



David is one of our readers, and one of his joys is poetry writing. He very recently wrote this piece and kindly shared it with us.

*I see joy smiling and I smile too.*

*As someone and I am not alone  
who has been diagnosed with MND  
I choose to live in the moment  
and make each moment the best I can.  
Our yesterdays are history  
and made us what we are.  
Our tomorrows await us  
and I will face those as I must.  
Our todays , each moment  
is where we can choose  
to make the best of each day.  
I love life and do my utmost  
to enrich myself with joy each day  
and of course share that Joy.  
My friend Hope is always by my side  
and each day when I wake up  
I see joy smiling and I smile too.*



## '100' Club Winners

Congratulations to the 100 Club Winners:

- October - Jessica Tomkinson
- November – Peter Johnson

There's still time to join. If your interested please email:  
[secretary@mndyorkshiredales.co.uk](mailto:secretary@mndyorkshiredales.co.uk)

## The Local Lotto

On average we receive at least £30 every month from the Local Lotto. If you would like to find out more or join in and boost our monies then please have a look at the website and buy some tickets! The website is:  
<https://www.thelocalotto.co.uk/support/motor-neurone-disease-association>

## Tell us your views

We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter. We would love hear your views; what you enjoyed, didn't enjoy or would like to see more of. Please email your views to [samantha.george@mndassociation.org](mailto:samantha.george@mndassociation.org). The next edition is due to be published in March. We would really like to share more stories from across our Yorkshire Dales MND Community. Email your ideas to [samantha.george@mndassociation.org](mailto:samantha.george@mndassociation.org)



Can you help us save money by sending you paperwork by email instead of the Royal Mail? If you have an email address just let us know.

## Find us online

Yorkshire Dales Social Media Channels are:



Instagram  
[mnd\\_yorkshire\\_dales](https://www.instagram.com/mnd_yorkshire_dales)



X: @MNDA\_Dales  
[https://x.com/MNDA\\_Dales](https://x.com/MNDA_Dales)



Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/MNDYorkshireDales>



Website  
[www.mndyorkshiredales.co.uk](http://www.mndyorkshiredales.co.uk)

## Your Yorkshire Dales Branch Contacts

- Branch Contact, Veronica Ace – 01423 569754 [veronica.ace@mndassociation.org](mailto:veronica.ace@mndassociation.org)
- John Pike – 07775 586357
- Secretary, Ruth Pridmore – 01423 530764 [secretary@mndyorkshiredales.co.uk](mailto:secretary@mndyorkshiredales.co.uk)
- Treasurer, Geoff Catley - 01423 870143
- Community Support Coordinator, Alun Owen - 01604 800619  
[alun.owen@mndassociation.org](mailto:alun.owen@mndassociation.org)
- Local Relationship Fundraiser for North and East Yorkshire, Jenn Scribbins -  
01134 830706, [jenn.scribbins@mndassociation.org](mailto:jenn.scribbins@mndassociation.org)

### National Contact Information:

[www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)

MND Connect – 0808 8026262 or by email to [mndconnect@mndassociation.org](mailto:mndconnect@mndassociation.org)





