



# Omega Newsletter

Volume 63

Summer 2008

## Meditation, Mobility, Picnics and Chocolate!

Our main event for the summer is the OMEGA picnic in Florence Park - details below. Do bring your picnic food and sit around in the shade - it's always a relaxing and sociable occasion. At OMEGA events we do think of 'absent friends' so if you can't be there we invite you to join us at that time in a virtual picnic.

In September, by popular demand, for our main meeting Jan will give us another Meditation session. More about this and the follow-on classes are in her article. These classes are open to all, whether you can actually come along, or join with us in virtual weekly sessions. There is great comfort in doing something when you know other people are doing it too.

Also in this issue: Following the Spring edition and some requests for more information we found out about a number of services and concessions. These appear in 'Mobility Matters'. For those staying at home, Diane describes a relaxing hobby; calling all chocoholics! Nathan reviews a book aimed at ME sufferers and Hestia is back with another 'View from Indoors'. Norman brings us the latest research conference news. We have offers of CDs for meditation (for you to buy) and DVDs on important research at national conferences (for loan).

We noticed that the national media has featured several articles about ME. The Economist article (10<sup>th</sup> May 08) was about the Cambridge conference Norman reports on here; there were reports in The Guardian (6<sup>th</sup> May 08) and Daily Mail (31<sup>st</sup> March 08).

OMEGA continues campaigning on your behalf. We are now encouraging OCCMET to broaden their scope in treating younger patients; OCCMET now have a web page too. We have more details about both.

Is there anything you disagree with in our articles, any suggestions for what we might include? Write to us (at our email or snail mail contact address). We'd love to have your short articles, poems, drawings, letters, jokes, tips on living with ME.

Now the money bit: getting the Newsletter out costs OMEGA quite a bit and uses a lot of our subscription income. Also we now have the additional cost of having to pay for our meeting venues. So...we really can't afford to send more Newsletters if we haven't heard from you.

Patricia Wells (editor for this issue)

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## **The ME Conference Scene - 2008**

So far there have been 4 conferences on ME in the southern part of the UK and I have attended 3 of them. The psychiatry-based conference held in April did not include patients/carers.

### **'Putting the Patient at the Centre'**

This was the theme of the conference at Southampton General Hospital in February. It was organised by Hampshire Solutions, an alliance of people with FM/ME/CFS, professionals of many kinds and complementary therapists, and vigorously supported and chaired by Profs Stephen Holgate and Paul Little of University of Southampton. Two other Southampton Profs, Hugh Perry and Rona Moss-Morris, gave presentations. There were guest speakers from Spain, Canada and the USA as well as from the UK. Topics included diagnosis, genes, categories of CFS/ME, oxidative stress, inflammation in the brain, lymphatic drainage, nutrition, CBT and GET.

Two patients gave talks: author Brian Aldiss and Dr Charles Shepherd. There was also audience participation - we formed small groups and each group came up with a list of priorities for the way forward. There was a lively discussion when the groups came back with their lists. Most people wanted to hear more about molecules and biomedical aspects, including CBT expert Rona Moss-Morris. There is a good prospect that more research will result because Profs. Holgate and Little are involved with a new Medical Research Council (MRC) initiative.

### **'New Horizons 2008'**

This conference was organised by ME Research UK and the Irish ME Trust near Cambridge in May. It was a follow-on from the Edinburgh conference in 2007. OCCMET

GP Dr Jean Bailey also attended. There were international speakers from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Sweden and 3 from USA.

There is a wealth of ongoing biomedical research and this is rapidly increasing as the new Institute for Neuro-Immune Disease comes into full operation in Reno, Nevada. There were also talks on clinics in the UK, one by Dr. Gavin Spickett of the Northern Centre in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne area, and one by Dr. Gregor Purdie on plans for new clinics in Scotland. There were also boards with posters on a number of research projects, including one that I am doing together with Dr Sarah Myhill.

### **'Sub Grouping of/Treatments for ME/CFS'**

This was the 3rd international conference organised by Invest in ME. There were 4 renowned speakers from the USA and 5 from the UK. Oxfordshire was represented by OMEGA members Susan Sykes and me, and by Oxford GP Dr Shiv Anand, sponsored by OMEGA. OCCMET GP Dr Jean Bailey was keen to come but was unable to. While there were reps from the Chief Medical Officer and the MRC, no Clinical Champions (of the relatively new CFS/ME services) or the Department of Health were there. I knew that there are silicon chips where thousands of genes can be measured, but I learned about new chips that identify and measure all known viruses. Dr. Jean Monro of Breakspear Hospital described the numerous tests available for people with ME, but not via the NHS.

To find out more about these many interesting developments you can borrow DVDs (which I have on order) of all these conferences,

Norman Booth

## Mobility Matters

Following the last edition people have asked about what else is available. We have found various things to help when you find it difficult to walk, and taking taxis is too expensive. We have put in again the details of the new bus pass scheme in Oxfordshire.

### Blue Badge Scheme

01865-854409 or 0870-1226236  
email: [SCS@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SCS@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

This enables you to park in various places that are normally forbidden, e.g. single and double yellow lines, but not where it would be dangerous or cause an obstruction. The booklet gives full details. You need proof of disability, either a copy of DLA higher rate mobility (which is what most people with ME who are receiving DLA would get), or a letter from your GP stating that you have considerable difficulty in walking, e.g. cannot walk more than 50 metres - proof of a 'substantial and permanent disability'.

You return your form and documents to the County Council. If they accept your application, then you send £2 plus 2 passport-size photos.

### Octabus/Dial-a-Ride

01865-876176

This is a mini-bus that will come and pick you up at your house and take you wherever you want in Oxfordshire. The membership form has to be signed by someone who can vouch that you need the service, e.g. doctor or social worker.

Operating hours are 9am- 4.30pm (last pick up), Monday to Friday only.

Cost: initial payment of £5, then free if you have bus pass (see below).

Otherwise £1.50 each way within Oxford, £2 outside. Carers travel free.



Funding cuts prompt a pilot mobility scheme using pogo sticks

Ring for an application form. Once you have joined, then you have to ring at 8.30 in the morning to book for a week in advance. It is strictly on a first-come, first-served basis. The first person to book gets to arrange the times that they want, then other people coming after have to fit in with them. They make regular trips into Oxford on Wednesday and Friday mornings, going in at 10am and leaving at 1.45pm.

### Bus Pass

From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 (if you are over 60 or eligible disabled) a bus pass will entitle you to free off-peak travel on local buses anywhere in England. We have again listed the contact numbers and websites for Oxford City Council and the Oxfordshire District Councils below. They all have slightly different requirements; all need proof of disability and of identity, some need photographs. Some have local offices where you can take the documents. Ring them for details or look on the website.

**Oxford City: 01865-252849**

[www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)

You must live within the City of Oxford boundary. Carers travel free within Oxfordshire. Travel times: 9am to 11pm Mondays to Fridays and all day weekends and bank holidays.

**Cherwell: 01295-227001**

[www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

Carers can travel free within Oxfordshire. Travel tokens are available as an alternative. Travel times: 9.30am to 11pm Mondays to Fridays and all day weekends and bank holidays.

**South Oxfordshire 01491-823413**

[www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

Carers can travel free within Oxfordshire. £20 travel token available. Travel times: 9am to 11pm Monday to Friday, any time weekend or bank holidays.

**Vale of White Horse 0845-3006129**

**01235-520202**

[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk) email: [assistedtravelvowh@capita.co.uk](mailto:assistedtravelvowh@capita.co.uk)

Carers travel free within Oxfordshire. Travel times: 9.30am to 11pm Monday to Friday, any time weekend or bank holidays.

**West Oxfordshire: 01993-861000**

[www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

email: [enquiries@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@westoxon.gov.uk)

Carers can travel free within Oxfordshire. Travel tokens or railcards are available as an alternative. Travel times: 9am to 11pm Monday to Friday, any time weekend or bank holidays.

**Disabled Person's Rail Card 0845-605-0525**

[www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

You are entitled to this if you have a disability that makes travelling by train difficult. It's available to anyone who gets long-term incapacity benefit. Cost is £18 for one year, £48 for 3 years. This gives you, and an accompanying carer, one-third discount on all train journeys. It also gives other discounts, e.g. for hotels.

A leaflet/application form is available from the web-site, railway stations or over the phone. The leaflet also explains about dimensions for wheelchairs and restrictions on scooters, and how to access help to travel. You return the form with proof of Long-Term Incapacity Benefit, DLA (higher rate mobility) or Attendance Allowance.

**Exemption from motor vehicle license: 08457-712345 (Minicom users: 08457 224433).**

**DLA Unit, Warbreck House, Warbreck Hill, Blackpool, FY2 0YE.**

This applies if you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (the higher mobility rate) and you have a car which is for your use only, or which other people use for your benefit (e.g. to do your shopping).

The bureaucracy goes like this: If you get this level of DLA, ask them for form DLA 403 (the application for another form...). Fill it in and return it. They then send you a Certificate of Entitlement to Disability Living Allowance (Form DLA404).

When you get DLA404 you can apply to DVLA about the car license. Full details about what you do then are in Booklet V100 (Registering and Licensing your Motor Vehicle) from DVLA on

0870 850 0007. They seem to send this booklet when they remind you about renewing your license. Look under DLA and Exemption from Vehicle License.

This seems like a lot of hard work, it's best to do it one step at a time and very slowly follow the instructions.

### Shopmobility

National Federation: 08456-444442    [www.shopmobilityuk.org](http://www.shopmobilityuk.org)    [info@shopmobilityuk.org](mailto:info@shopmobilityuk.org)

This is for people who find it hard to walk about, or often need to sit down. Many people with ME use Shopmobility scooters or wheelchairs. They are free to borrow for a few hours at a time from depots in many towns throughout Britain. Local phone numbers are below.

On the first visit you register and then can just ring up and book a vehicle so as to do some shopping or hang out in town while sitting down. The service is great. No evidence of disability is needed, and there is usually no charge. (Some other Shopmobility centres require a deposit or payment or evidence of identity. Hours vary so ALWAYS ring first.)

Banbury: 01295-252722  
Bicester: 01869-320132  
Cowley (Oxford): 01865-748867  
Westgate Centre (Oxford): 01865-248737  
Witney: 01993-864787



Climate change has inspired a new range of Shopmobility scooters and wheelchairs

### Travel Assistance

All the train companies and major airlines can help you when travelling. Even some of the budget airlines provide a great service, but it's wise to check first. There are wheelchairs at most railway stations and airports or you can use your own if it complies with certain measurements. Folding wheelchairs can go in the hold on airlines and are not included in your baggage weight allowance. In airports this help means you do not have to stand and wait in long queues. There is assistance to help with luggage and help you off the train if you need this. Each railway company and airline has its own arrangements and there are too many to list. **Always ask for assistance if it would make your journey possible or easier. Always book assistance well before your journey (at least 24 hours for trains) and confirm it at each stage.** (Also see the article *Travels with a Wheelchair* in the last Newsletter.)

There may need to be some revisions to this list. If you apply for one of these passes, or book assistance, and have different information do please contact us at [newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com](mailto:newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com). Let us know if any amendments occur over time and with bureaucratic changes. Good luck!

Jan Seed and Patricia Wells



## **My love affair with chocolate**

You don't have to know me long before you'll hear me joking about the essential nature of chocolate in my life. I admit the chocolate situation is not quite as dire as I make it out to be, but it certainly plays a role in my well-being. I see chocolate in the dual capacities of alleviation and indulgence.

### **Chocolate as alleviation**

How many times have you heard people criticising comfort eating? My motto is: If it provides comfort, then go for it! When I'm overtired and suffering from a headache, and consequently feeling close to tears, I can either sit in my armchair and feel sorry for myself, or go to the shops and buy a block of my favourite chocolate and feel almost immediate cognitive relief. I am no less tired but the headache lifts and the mood improves and I can think more clearly. It's a pity about the effects on my waist-line but the immediate short-term benefits win out every time.

I've heard many things about the good effects of dark chocolate but have never been seriously tempted. I can keep a block of dark chocolate in the cupboard for weeks, only having an occasional piece. Unfortunately I happily eat a block of milk chocolate at a single sitting! I was encouraged, then, to recently read an article detailing a study where people were fed, on separate occasions, 85 grams of milk chocolate, dark chocolate, carob, or nothing (the control)<sup>1</sup>. After 15 minutes to digest it, the volunteers were given various tests to assess cognitive performance. The researchers found that the volunteers' scores for verbal and visual memory were higher after eating milk chocolate than after the other alternatives. Perhaps that

explains my own reaction to chocolate when overtired.

One strange thing I find is that the taste of chocolate changes, depending on my reason for eating it. If I'm tired and craving chocolate, it tastes wonderfully sweet. If I eat chocolate out of habit or simply because I feel like a treat, there is likely to be a bitter undertone to the taste. I assume there are chemical changes underlying this. I also assume that chemical reaction is the reason why I will suddenly switch to a different brand of chocolate and stick to it for months, then suddenly change again. In the last few years I've gone from Thorntons to Cadbury and for the last year have been enjoying Bendicks milk chocolate bars.

### **Chocolate as indulgence**

Everyone needs a treat from time to time. My chocolate treats come from Hotel Chocolat, who runs a chocolate-tasting club, as well as selling many special chocolate items. Imagine receiving a box of high-quality chocolates on a regular basis. In the interest of my waist-line and bank account, I only indulge three or four times a year, but it is possible to get one of these luscious boxes every month. Hotel Chocolat commissions the top European chocolatiers to produce new recipes, containing genuine alcohol, fruit, nuts, etc. and then trials them on their club members. I had never before realised how good chocolates could taste! I also hadn't realised how much fun I could have eating chocolates. The company produces a scoring sheet so you can eat the chocolates with a friend and rate each one out of ten. The times I have done this have been memorable, well worth only getting to eat half of the chocolates in a box. If my description has tickled your taste buds, go to [www.chocs.co.uk](http://www.chocs.co.uk) and check it out for yourself.

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<sup>1</sup> Raudenbush et al., Wheeling Jesuit University

## The benefits of dark chocolate

If dark chocolate tickles your taste buds more than milk chocolate then you may be interested to know that in a pilot study conducted by Prof. Steve Atkin (Hull York Medical School) patients were found to have less fatigue when eating dark chocolate with a high cocoa content than with white chocolate dyed brown. For further information:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7018055.stm>

### View from Indoors: Do me a favour Part I

Last year a 94 year old friend needed company for a few days. I was well enough to go to her and had nothing more urgent to do; just tell a few friends and cancel my carers. I could as easily rest in her house as in mine; her carers came in to help her. I've known her for a long time and like her very much. She and her family were grateful. I was happy to help.

I have needed such a lot of help in the past few years and I'm very pleased to be able to help someone else. It feels good to be able to reciprocate - to give something back, as they say. My mother, when she was widowed and became older and more frail, really didn't like asking people for favours. You were then beholden to them, she thought, and she didn't like that. I sometimes pointed out that she'd helped many people in her long life and it might be time for some payback. Karma maybe.

We all like to feel useful; and that's a tricky one for we people with ME. When we can't do our usual work or even, some of us, look after ourselves it's easy to feel useless. Sometimes we can only do something small; listen to a carer's

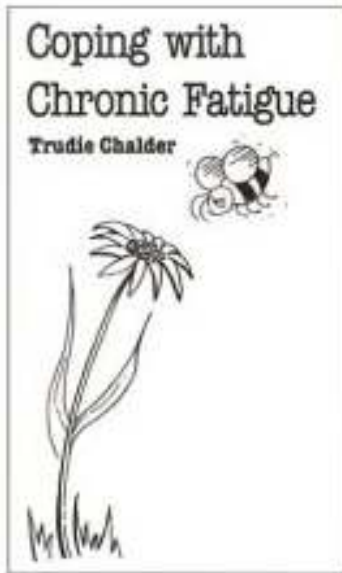
problems, pick up the phone (10 minutes max.) and ask how a friend is, send an encouraging text message. There are times when we can't do anything but survive. That is very hard. Maybe, I sometimes think, that's the time to be the receiver of help, so others can 'polish their karma'. In Greek mythology the three graces, so I'm told, represent giving, receiving and reciprocating. The three roles are all needed. Remembering this sometimes makes it easier for me to accept help. We can give other people a chance to feel good.

We all want to be independent; sometimes, paradoxically, we can only be independent with some help. Recently a friend sprained her ankle. She was going on holiday by air and the doctor said to keep her weight off the foot and rest it. Standing in long queues at check-in and security didn't seem a good idea, so I suggested that she might use the wheelchair service at the airport. She didn't like this idea at all. She said she wanted to be independent. I couldn't quite point out that for some of us the provision of 'assistance for travellers' enables us to be independent - otherwise we'd just have to stay at home.

It's difficult sometimes but we have to accept our own needs to be comfortable in accepting help. (And that's another story...) This sometimes means getting help on our own terms - knowing what we need. It often works for me to ask for help with something specific (posting letters, a lift somewhere) and so that people can say no without guilt or obligation. It is not always so easy to be so sensible - more about this next time.

Hestia

## Book Review: *Coping with Chronic Fatigue* by Trudie Chalder



I'm currently undergoing a course of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for my ME, and the psychologist recommended that I read *Coping with Chronic Fatigue* by Trudie Chalder (£4.99, 70 pages). So off to Amazon.co.uk I surfed and bought a second hand copy for a reasonable price. I read the

text with considerable intrigue since the book had received polarised reviews: this was obviously a 'love it or hate it' affair! So what material does this book contain to provoke such opposing views? Well, the author

urges the reader to document all activity-related fatigue in order to identify a sensible pacing program: good advice, avoid boom and bust! The author also introduces methods of managing negative

thoughts: more good advice. With all this good advice relating to mind and body, why didn't I like this book? Unfortunately, the self-help program is based upon the misguided premise that there is a common treatment for chronic fatigue, Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and ME. This explains the wildly conflicting book reviews: after following the author's self help program some people have got a lot better and some people have got a lot worse! This is not surprising really since treatment for ME and treatment for stress-induced chronic fatigue should be different. The author's



*'Exercise regularly: three times a week, half an hour of exercise. Make sure it is something you enjoy. A brisk walk in the country is enough.'*

*'While changing your levels of activity, your systems of fatigue will probably get worse before they get better.'*

assertion that muscle deconditioning through lack of activity and negative thinking are the basis of continued ill health is frankly insulting for ME sufferers as it ignores the plethora of evidence showing that ME is a physical illness. I think this book is best suited for people suffering from stress, depression or anxiety-related

fatigue. ME sufferers should read this book with a pinch of salt: digest the good advice and ignore the 'no pain, no gain' undercurrent (illustrated by the somewhat contentious quotes).

Nathan Smith

## Easy Meditation for Relaxation and Enjoyment

### *Meditation sessions with Jan Seed*

Meditation doesn't have to mean sitting in uncomfortable positions or breathing in a special way. We will be doing meditations very suitable for people with ME, which are easy and can be done lying down. They can help you be more comfortable in mind and body; and enjoy everyday life, no matter how boring or busy.

Following the successful sessions by Dido Dunlop earlier in the year, Jan has been running a monthly meditation group for Omega members. We have been using the gentle, easy techniques developed by Dido, translating classic techniques for modern westerners. We have simply enjoyed not trying to do anything, imagined ourselves in various beautiful and peaceful places, sent out healing light to ourselves and the world, become aware of both pain and joy in our



bodies and taken delight in everyday things. People have reported that they found it very enjoyable, and they felt relaxed and 'chilled' afterwards.

These meetings are open to all, whether you have ever meditated or not, and do not require any particular beliefs. The meditations are particularly suitable for people dealing with illness, whether as sufferers or carers, and for anyone wishing to deal with tiredness, busyness, and stress.



OMEGA members, family and friends are all welcome! Each session is independent of the others, so it is okay to come to only the ones you are able to.

Date	Time	Where	Cost
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	2 - 4 pm	North Oxford Association, Ferry Centre, Diamond Place, Summertown, Oxford, OX2 7PD	none
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> October	11 am - 1 pm	Exeter Hall, Oxford Rd, Kidlington, OX5 1AB	£5*
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> November	11 am - 1 pm	Exeter Hall, Oxford Rd, Kidlington, OX5 1AB	£5*
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> December	11 am - 1 pm	Exeter Hall, Oxford Rd, Kidlington, OX5 1AB	£5*

\*Ring Jan if the cost would prevent you coming along.

#### Virtual class:

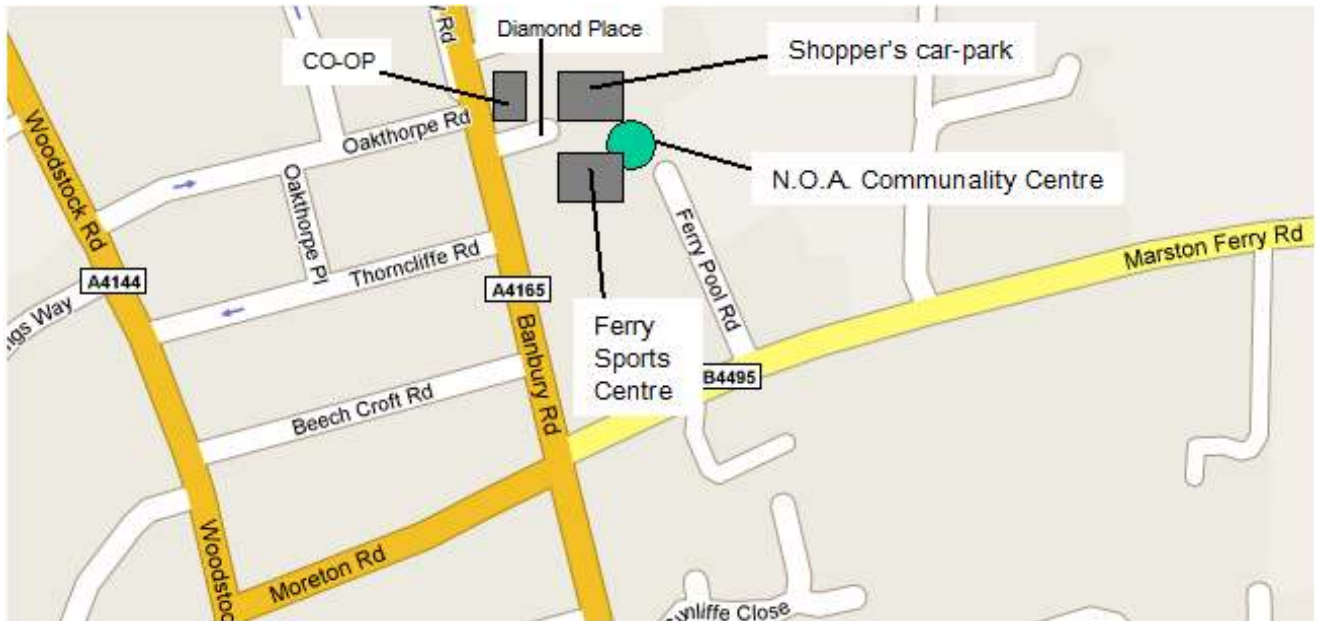
Some of us are also doing a virtual meditation class at home every Friday morning at 11.30. Sometimes it is difficult to have the motivation, or to remember, to meditate; and it can be easier if we know that other people are meditating with us at the same time. So every Friday morning, at 11.30, we are sitting or lying in our own rooms and meditating together. Do join us. Do any meditation you like, or you could listen to the CD.

The CD is of the 4 Meditations Dido Dunlop did for Omega earlier this year. For a copy, please send a cheque for £5.00, made out to Jan Seed; plus a stamped addressed jiffy bag (A5 size 1<sup>st</sup> class stamp) to: Cathy Brocklehurst, 41 Lytton Road, Oxford, OX4 3PA.

#### Directions to the Ferry Centre for the Saturday session

The North Oxford Association is behind the Ferry Centre in Summertown, North Oxford, just south of the shops.

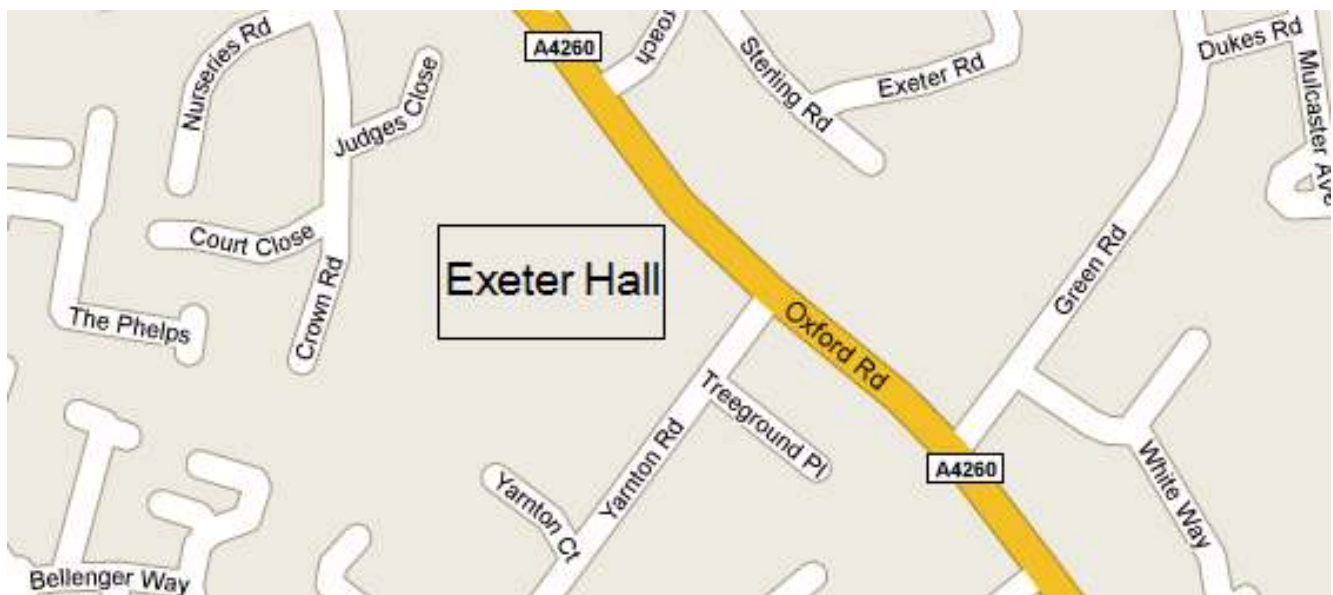
First alternative: From Banbury Road turn into Marston Ferry Road (traffic lights) then into Ferry Pool Road. Use the Ferry Pool car park (There are 5 disabled bays to the left of the car park, and one bay in Ferry Pool Road.) There is no disabled parking in the Ferry Pool car park and you have to pay (£1 for 2 hours, £1.50 for 3 hours). It's a short walk round the right hand side of the building; there is a sign on the wall. The annexe is on the right hand side of the entrance.



Second alternative: From Banbury Road turn into Diamond Place (by the pedestrian crossing). Diamond Place leads to the Summertown carpark (free parking for disabled drivers for 4 hours in 2 disabled bays. Otherwise pay and display (£1 for 2 hours and £2 for 3 hours). NOA entrance is quite near.

Third alternative: You can park in Oakthorpe Road for 2 hours, or there are disabled spaces at either end of the parade of shops in Summertown. Other street parking is only for 30 minutes. Or take any bus service to Summertown.

**Directions to Exeter Hall, Kidlington, for the Friday sessions**



From Oxford, take the Banbury Road North to the Kidlington roundabout. Continue into Kidlington along the Oxford Road (with Sainsbury's on your right). Go past the police station, through traffic lights, and Exeter Hall is on your left, after Yarnton Road. Parking at the hall or roads opposite.

**BRING:** a blanket and cushion - refreshments will be provided

## News and Announcements

### **OMEGA Picnic**

On Saturday 9th August from 12.30 we shall be holding the annual OMEGA Picnic in Florence Park, Oxford, near the bandstand. This is a great opportunity to chill out with fellow ME people, friends and carers. All are welcome. Please bring lunch (we usually share) and something to sit or lie down on. If it is raining we shall shelter in the bandstand.

**Directions:** From Cowley Road turn into Littlehay Road (near the Q8 Garage). Take the 1st right into Rymers Lane. Follow the road alongside the park to the last gate (opposite the allotments). You should be able to see the bandstand from there. There is space to park in the road.

### **Legal Challenge to NICE Guidelines**

On 17 June the High Court ruled for a Judicial Review. Judge ruled that flaws in the process, NICE's arguments and restriction of patient choice meant a full hearing should go ahead in the Autumn. Email us at [newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com](mailto:newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com) (subject NICE News) for a summary or see Dr. Charles Shepherd's report at: <http://www.meassociation.org.uk/content/view/590/70/>

### **Calling Carers**

Volunteer Befriending Sitting Service offers respite help. Call Carers Centre on 01865 205192 or email [info@carerscentre.co.uk](mailto:info@carerscentre.co.uk)

### **OCCMET Website**

OCCMET now have a page on the Oxon PCT website! You can see it at <http://www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk/local%2Dservices/community%2Dservices/occmet/> or just Google 'OCCMET'. Let us know what you think of it.

### **Children and Young People**

Are you under 16 years old with ME? Do you care for a young person who is ill? Are you an adult now but had ME when you were young?

We know that a lot of young people and their families have had a terrible time. The OCCMET team is now firmly established and doing great work with adults and some younger people. We really need them to extend their remit to treat children of all ages. To campaign for this, OMEGA needs what the NHS calls 'evidence of need'; we need your stories, your experiences.

If you have any experience in this area or would like to be part of this next campaign, please ring Tessa Keys on 01491 838727, or email [newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com](mailto:newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com)

### **Subscriptions and OMEGA money**

Subscriptions for 2008 are now overdue. If you are up-to-date, look away now!

If you have not paid, we are sorry but we need to hear from you. Our costs have gone up. Along with general inflation rises, OMEGA now has to pay rent for the venues we meet in. (Previously we used the Kidlington premises for free.) In future we will only be able to send the Newsletter to people who have paid or have contacted us for special arrangements.

The sub is still only £10 (waged) or £5 (unwaged). Your committee resists putting up the sub. (However, if you can make a donation, that is very helpful.) We understand that many people are not employed; if you have real difficulty paying, do get in touch with our Membership Secretary Lesh (details on back page).

Please send money to: Lewis Booth (OMEGA Treasurer), 'Lorien', Westlands Ave, Weston-on-the-Green, Bicester, OX25 3RD. If you would like email reminders of forthcoming meetings and national ME news, include your email address.

## Diary Dates

### Meditation Sessions:

Date	Time	Where	Cost
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	2 - 4 pm	North Oxford Association, Ferry Centre, Diamond Place, Summertown, Oxford, OX2 7PD	none
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Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> December	11 am - 1 pm	Exeter Hall, Oxford Rd, Kidlington, OX5 1AB	£5*

**Omega Picnic at Florence Park:** Saturday 9th August from 12.30pm. See page 11.

**OMEGA Socials:** Four Pillars Hotel, Sandford-on-Thames, **FIRST MONDAY** of EVERY MONTH. (Second Monday of the month if it falls on a bank holiday.) On bus route from Oxford. If you plan to come for the first time, please phone Diane Drayson on 01235 520104 or Lesh Lender on 01865 766310.

**Wantage and Grove ME/CFS Support Group, WAGS,** meet at the Cornerstone Coffee Shop in Grove. Contact Dorothy Hillbeck at 01235 765329 for dates and times.

### OMEGA Volunteers

Newsletter Editor	Norman Booth	01235 833486
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Treasurer	Lewis Booth	01869 350188
Meetings Co-ordinators	Lewis and Barbara Booth	01869 350188
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Bicester Contact	Nicola Williams	01869 247714
Witney and 'Invest in ME' Contact	Flora McKenzie	01993 774834
South Oxfordshire ME/CFS Support	Tessa Keys	01491 838727
Action for ME support line (open to all): Monday to Friday 11 am to 1 pm 0845 1232314, and also 6.30 to 8.30 pm Mondays (except Bank Holidays).		

OMEGA Newsletter production team: Diane Drayson, Lesh Lender, Nathan Smith, Patricia Wells. Next copy deadline is **Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> 2008**. To receive your newsletter by email, please write to: [newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com](mailto:newsletter.OMEGA@googlemail.com) with 'email newsletter request' in the subject line.

Contacting OCCMET: **New number: 01295 819191**, or e-mail to:  
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