

friends connect

Hospital & Community Friends 'Caring in Partnership'

Issue 6
Spring 2004

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across the UK

Firestone Rock Band



About Friends

Over 43,000 volunteer Friends raise around £45 million every year for health and social care in the UK. They also support by running hundreds of shops, cafes, social groups, transport and visiting services.

Since September 1st 2003 our headquarters have moved from Colchester to London. All correspondence should now be sent to the new address:

NAHCF
11-13 Cavendish Square
London, W1G 0AN

Tel: 0845 450 0285
Fax: 0207 307 2571
Email: info@hc-friends.org.uk
Web: www.hc-friends.org.uk

"Quite often when we play, people don't want us to leave the stage," says Derek Francis, founder member of the Firestone Rock Band (FRB) from Surrey.

Having shared a stage with big-name musicians like Alice Cooper and Jules Holland, the band, composed mostly of people with learning disabilities, is confident of its own success.

Derek and his colleague Linda Scott formed FRB 20 years ago, after meeting people through their work in Social Services who loved to play music. Their popularity has been proven by the amount of people who have, during that time, been involved in the project, and by the type of events that they play at nowadays.

The opportunity to play at Surrey's music festival Guildfest for the last three years, and again this year – alongside pop stars like Daniel Bedingfield and Atomic Kitten – gives band members confidence,

self-esteem and a great sense of purpose, "You name it, being in the band is good for it," agrees Derek.

"At first, when people see us, they think 'ahh, it's a disabled band'", he says. "But when they hear us they're amazed."

FRB doesn't only perform on stage though. They also love doing workshops in schools and at community events. Geoffrey, the band's drummer, has learning difficulties, Derek explains. "But when you see him teaching a kid the drums, it's a whole role reversal," he adds. "It's fantastic."

"Being up on the stage and competing in auditions is all about band members saying 'We don't just want to be cleaners, we want to be musicians,'" Derek adds.

"When you look at a band like us – with Linda and I in our early fifties – competing against teenage bands, it just shows you what enthusiasm and hard work can do."

Mrs E M Steward, Chairman of Friends of Royal Earlswood Hospital, books the band twice yearly for their parties. Three of the members of FRB used to be residents of Earlswood Hospital too, so when they come back to play gigs, "it's like a family affair", Mrs Steward says, "they all get to see their old mates again."

Admittedly, Mrs Steward says, not all the patients are rock music fans. "Nevertheless", she adds, "the band are really wonderful to watch."

*Left: The original Blues Brother.
Above: Derek Francis and Linda Scott with the band.*



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New NAHCF mental health initiative



East Midlands Regional Development Officer Dawn Wright is giving Leagues in her region who have any connection with Mental Health the opportunity to come together and look at issues that face them regionally.

The East Midlands Mental Health Forum will be formulated by affiliated members of the NAHCF who work within the mental health setting or provide services to clients with mental health issues. It will give everyone the opportunity to meet, discuss common issues and concerns, share ideas and thoughts, look at training opportunities, evidence good practice, and develop a cohesive vision to benefit the clients and patients within the region.

To move the mental health agenda forward, representation from Friends Groups will be required if we are to enable the forum to be a success.

There will be the opportunity to speak to Dawn about the Forum at the East Midlands Regional Conference Saturday 27th March 2004, where the date for the initial meeting will be announced.

For further information:

Please contact East Midlands Regional Development Officer Dawn Wright on 01509 503 460 or email dawn.wright@hc-friends.org.uk

The power of the charity name

The Charity Commission issued a warning at Christmas about charities allowing publishing companies to use their name in marketing activities.

The warning came after it was discovered that some companies charge up to £700 for advertising space but pass as little as 6% on to the charity. Head Office has received phone calls confirming that some leagues had been targeted in this way, with advertisers using their logo and name to gain money for themselves.

If you are concerned about this matter, do consult the Charity commission report 'Charities and publishing companies' which sets out best practice guidelines for charities to follow. If you would like a copy of the report then call the Commission's Contact Centre Staff on 0870 333 0123.

The NAHCF operates a Corporate Member scheme. We work with specially selected businesses to provide the best of services to our members. We have recently been delighted to welcome Community Advertising to the scheme. Community Advertising are a publishing company who help charities to fund publications such as Diaries, Address Books, Year Planners, Fete Programs etc at no cost to themselves. Please contact David Elcock at head office for more information on their services and our Corporate Membership scheme.

We need your input!

We are asking all Friends Groups involved in either the new Patient and Public Involvement in Health (PPIH) or working with their hospitals regarding the implementation of Foundation Hospitals to let us know their views, opinions and experiences.

We are beginning the process of policy making for Friends Groups regarding these new strategies and we need your input. It is essential that Friends are involved early on to offer their expertise in these challenging times. For questions and feedback about this please call Dr David Sollis, Membership Services Officer on 0207 307 2570 or email david.sollis@hc-friends.org.uk

Having been in existence for over 50 years, there is a remarkable shortage of records at the NAHCF.

We are looking to collect any historical data, facts, anecdotes and artefacts that you think may be interesting for the future. Please send anything you would like to add to this collection to Dr David Sollis at the head office, marked 'Archive Material'. The address is on the front cover, or email it to the address above.

Friends Week 18-24 October 2004



Dorothy Woodward and Lewis Atkinson, volunteers at the Oxford Radcliffe Infirmary who have re-established the Saturday opening of the League of Friends Cafe.

Fancy having a go at something a little different during Friends Week 2004?

Really athletic grannies could do a sponsored aerobics session!

Indeed, when was the last time you attended a good old bed push?

Every age could take part in a fancy dress evening – pay £5 to attend – all ages welcome.

Never had a go at Karaoke? Fancy yourself as a bit of a Sinatra? Ask around to see if local pubs or churches would donate their sound system for a bit of free publicity.

Dancers among you could teach others a thing or two – how about re-creating the forties and fifties with some jive moves and tea dancing? You could even persuade a local dance teacher to open up a session and donate their profits – in return you may end up doubling their intake!

Sales always attract attention! Whether it be bring and buy, jumble or car boot.

Wind up the day in style with a cheese and wine evening – local supermarkets will have wine tasters that they may be prepared to lend you, giving tips on how it should be done.

Entertainment doesn't get much funnier than cabaret. What budding comedians, actors and singers are itching to get their chance in the limelight?

Encourage the young people in your area with your very own young musician of the year competition. What budding pianist or saxophonist wouldn't kill for a captive audience?

Keep thinking 'outside of the box' as the months roll on – who do you know who knows someone famous? It may just be worth a call, as we get nearer to October.

Let us know your ideas for Friends Week 2004 – let's make it the best week yet! Email newsdesk@hc-friends.org.uk or call us on 020 7307 2570

Welcome!

On behalf of the current Friends Groups we would like to welcome the following new members all of whom have joined the association since September 2003. We look forward to caring in partnership with you:

Arts Interest Group, London
Kingscare League of Friends, Devon
Friends of Winchcombe Hospital, Gloucestershire
Fibromyalgia Support Group for Surrey & Sussex
Friends of Great Dunmow Clinic, Essex
Southwell Care Project, Nottinghamshire
Friends of Alyn Family Doctors, Wrexham
Detainee Support & Help Unit, London
Tring & District Patients Medical Group, Buckinghamshire

Amber Valley Merchandising
Barclays Plc
Birkett Long
Blueheath
Community Advertising
House of Dee Plc
In House Recycling
Key Lekkerland
Masterfoods
Olympus UK Ltd
Palmer & Harvey Mclane Ltd
Sydney Packet & Sons

We would also like to thank the following companies who have supported the Friends Groups through their Corporate Membership of the NAHCF over 2003/04:

If you are a business that would like to know more about the benefits of our Corporate Membership scheme please call David Elcock on 02073 072 570 or email david.elcock@hc-friends.org.uk

Sign up to the new 'Friend Through Membership' scheme

You can now support the work of the National Association of Hospital & Community Friends by joining our new 'Friend Through Membership' scheme. Perhaps you could give membership as a gift to someone this Christmas.

The NAHCF is a membership organisation formed in 1949 which cares in partnership with around 800 UK charities working to enhance the quality of life for people suffering ill health, disability or social disadvantage.

Through this partnership we aim to promote and support the work of our

members through professional Regional Coordinators, grants, information and guidance on best practice, a high rate deposit scheme, comprehensive low cost insurance, conferences, publications, negotiated discounts with suppliers, merchandise and support materials for fundraising.

We also take an active interest in lobbying government and other health and social care agencies to make effective policy.

If you believe in our work and would like to support us, please consider becoming a 'Friend Through Membership'.

As a member, you will then receive:

- an exclusive 'Friend Through Membership' lapel badge
- subscription to the quarterly 'Friends Connect' magazine that will keep you up-to-date with all the great work being done by the Friends charities all over the UK – and also all the latest news from the NAHCF
- a personal invite to the Annual General Meeting
- regional and national conferences.

I would like to become a 'Friend Through Membership' of the NAHCF

Paying by Direct Debit

Making your donation by Direct Debit allows us to plan financially.

To obtain a Direct Debit Instruction Form please call 0845 4500285 or tick this box and complete and return the form to the address below.

Paying by Cheque

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ (suggested minimum donation £20, made payable to NAHCF)

giftaid it

Add nearly 30% to the value of your gift simply by ticking this box – we'll do the rest.

Note: to qualify, you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount NAHCF will reclaim.

Please print your contact details here:

Title: _____
Surname: _____ Forename: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____
Telephone (inc. area code): _____
Mobile No: _____ Email: _____

Feel free to photocopy this form for your friends

Disability on TV

The Community Channel (CC) is the UK's only not-for-profit TV channel dedicated to inspiring people to do more with their lives.

Through a range of lively, innovative and thought-provoking programming they help charities and community groups raise the profile of their work, deliver their services and raise funds.

They also provide a platform for people to have their say and give them the chance to get actively involved in the social and community issues that are important to them.

From mid-March though to the end of April the Community Channel are showing a range of programmes about disability. These include:

- One in Six – Carlton TV's acclaimed series giving an insight into the lives of a number of disabled people

- Talk – A drama about an able-bodied man who finds himself struggling in a world of people with disabilities

- Changing Attitudes – A documentary with Tanni Grey-Thompson to support the Disability Rights Campaign

- Sky-diving Granny An intrepid sexagenarian who takes up this most daring and dangerous of sports

- Keep a look out for the new 13 part drama series Kismet Road starting mid March on Community Channel, a pioneering 'soap' that uses drama to convey health messages to the UK's South Asian communities.

Remember that The Community Channel is your channel. They're there to tell your story. So if you've got campaigns, films or news you'd like to air, get in touch!

Tel: 020 7874 7626
info@communitychannel.org
www.communitychannel.org

The Community Channel is available 24 hours a day on Sky digital 684 and Telewest 233 and is on Freeview channel 46.



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Hospital saved – now first of its kind



L-R John Moody, Chairman of the Friends, Sister Suzie Ingrams, sister in charge of the new diagnostic centre, the Earl of Selbourne, Friends board member, and Peggy Jones, Secretary of Friends of Chase Hospital.

John Moody, Chairman of Chase League of Friends, describes himself as 'quite a shy person' yet has caused a stir locally and nationally during his short time in office.

John has myotonic dystrophy, a form of muscular dystrophy, and had to leave his previous job in a community centre post office because of tiredness. His physiotherapist suggested that he volunteer in one of the Friends shops.

Then the role of Chairman came up for grabs. "I originally didn't want to be that highly involved," John says, "but nobody else would do it, so I agreed to it on a trial basis. It's been three years now."

John has hardly stopped in his tireless campaigning for the hospital since the very beginning. Two weeks after agreeing to become Chairman, he was told that Chase Hospital was facing closure. For some this would have been a devastating development. For John it was like a red rag to a bull. "I wasn't prepared to be overruled by people who don't live in the real world," he says.

John set up at meeting with his MP, at which it was decided that the league

would publicise the closure as widely as possible. "We got articles in the local newspaper every week," he says, "and took a petition to number 10 Downing Street." Before long, the case was being discussed in the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

The result was that the government then offered Chase Hospital grants worth £1.4 million, to save the hospital, and towards the massive refurbishment needed.

These developments are ongoing. Part of the extension is a diagnosis treatment centre that is the first of its kind in the country. John attributes their amazing success "more to people power than anything. Once the authorities were aware of the numbers of people campaigning, they had to take notice." "I'm quite pleased with what we've achieved," he adds, with typical modesty.

"I wasn't prepared to be overruled by people who don't live in the real world"

Kings care!

Kingscare League of Friends in Kingsteignton are attached to a medical practice – they transport elderly and people with disabilities to their appointments, if they would otherwise have difficulty in attending them.

Just before Christmas they won a 17 seat minibus through their evening paper. "I didn't think we were going to win," says Maggie Bonnell, Volunteer Co-ordinator for the Friends. "When we did I had to get some people in to help me, as I don't know anything about buses." By making enquiries through her local volunteer agency, Maggie enlisted the help of one bus driver who is unable to work due to a back injury, and another with arthritis. Both were delighted to be able to give their time to directing the project.

The Friends are currently raising funds so that the bus can be fitted with appropriate equipment, but they hope it will be up and running as soon as possible. The need is certainly there – last month they transported 74 patients to and from appointments. Maggie has other uses for the bus in

mind though. "I'd like to be able to take them shopping – just to get them out really," she says.

Another scheme that the Friends have in the pipeline is a virtual reminiscence book. Lots of leagues collect memories and memorabilia on paper from their members, but

Kingscare have come across an accountant with the skills and equipment to do it digitally. John Rumbelow, who is blind and has cerebral palsy, is keen to use both his brains and his state of the art equipment to help the league out. "Volunteers will go out and record short interviews with people," Maggie explains, "after which John can edit them and type them up. We're submitting our application for funding at the moment."

Right: Volunteer co-ordinator Maggie Bonnell and Kingscare Friends with the minibus keys. Photo: Herald Express Publication, Torquay.



Left: Volunteer John Rumbelow at his computer editing suite.

Crying with happiness



The Arts Interest Group (AIG), established in 1991, provides transport and guides for frail people and people with disabilities to visit London galleries and museums.

The group, which recently became a member of the NAHCF, currently helps residents of Wandsworth, Lambeth, Southwark, Richmond, Merton and Camden. In the year 2002-2003, AIG made 99 trips to London museums and galleries, including the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert and the Tate Modern.

The organisation boasted three paid staff, 100 trained volunteers and 157 members during that time. Its founder, Georgina Willey, received an MBE in the New Years Honours List.

She said, "All of us have heart warming stories to tell. I will never forget a wheelchair-bound member crying with happiness as she went into the Royal Academy for the first time in years, because she thought she would never get there again."

Another member, Harry Baker, is 87 this year. A much-loved member of the group, his background is in painting and decorating. Harry is also a wheelchair user, and through the AIG has discovered a passion for a very different style of painting, which he has embraced with youthful enthusiasm.



Top: The AIG looking at a Titian at the National Gallery with actor and volunteer Neil Pearson.

Bottom: The Arts Interest Group outside a London gallery.

Opportunities for all

Disabled people volunteer in many of the same ways as non-disabled people. However, all too frequently popular images portray disabled people as the passive recipients of assistance from volunteers.

There are around 8.5 million disabled people in the UK, and they make up approximately 19% of the working age population, yet they remain under-represented in volunteering.

Volunteering is a valuable activity for all, offering the chance to meet people and to develop experience, skills and interests. However, many barriers still exist to volunteering opportunities for disabled people, including a lack of support and funding, negative attitudes of volunteer organisations and a lack of confidence from Friends that their services are accessible to disabled volunteers.

Recruiting

It is important for Friends to be approachable and positive about diversity in recruiting volunteers. Many Friends are unaware of potential disabled volunteers on their doorstep. Often, disabled volunteers will find out about volunteer opportunities in the same way as anybody else. However, Friends may also want to try some of the following methods:

- Ask for advice and support from any disabled volunteers in your organisation
- Work with schools and colleges with students with disabilities
- Contact your local Disability Action group or Volunteer Bureaux
- Contact the disabled students' committee of the local National Union of Students
- Contact your local groups of disabled people available at BCDP – www.bcdp.org.uk

Access

For many Friends groups, especially small ones with limited resources, the prospect of ensuring that its physical environment, working practices and attitudes are accessible to disabled volunteers can seem daunting. The disability access officers at your local council are a good starting point for advice and support.

Work practices

The amount of support that volunteers require varies according to each individual's needs. The disabled volunteers themselves will usually be best placed to tell you about their needs, so give individuals an appropriate opportunity to discuss these. Key areas to examine are:

Communication

Ensure that all written information, including recruitment material, is accessible to disabled volunteers. For example, information should be available in alternative formats such as large print, disk, Braille and audio. NAHCF corporate member, Transcriptions Direct who provide an excellent service at a modest cost, can advise on making information accessible (see back cover).

Think about providing information in plain English so that people with learning difficulties can access it. Some disabled volunteers will require specialist software or hardware, such as screen readers, so that they can access information on the computer. Others may require specialist equipment or human support to aid communication with others. For example, a deaf volunteer may need access to a textphone or sign language interpreter.

Strategy and policy

Ideally your organisation should have a statement that demonstrates its commitment to diversity and equal opportunities. This should also entail being flexible about how you involve volunteers within your organisation and ensuring all staff are aware of the needs of your disabled volunteers. For example, some basic disability awareness training could be included in your induction programme.

Financial support

Several of the adjustments you can make to enable disabled people to volunteer will have little or no cost. For example, you may need to be flexible about working hours for a volunteer who experiences fatigue as a result of their disability. A volunteer with diabetes may need access to a private area in which to take injections. Other adjustments can be more costly the NAHCF may be able to help you find funders who help with disability access. Alternatively, you could hire specialist equipment.

Physical access

When thinking about the physical accessibility of your organisation, some of the things you need to consider are:

- How to get to your organisation – is it easy to reach by car, bus, train or foot?
- Does the building and street have clear signage so you are easy to find?
- Is the building easy to enter? For example are there steps or a heavy front door
- Do you have a fully accessible toilet?
- Does the building have an induction loop or a textphone for deaf people?
- How easy would it be for someone to move around the building?
- Can your office and computer equipment be adapted?

Useful books

Disability Equality in Volunteering by Rachel Wilson, Publisher, Skill. Available from the NCV on 0800 028 3304. How to Make your Organisation Accessible, price £2.50 Available from Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, www.skill.org.uk

Adapted from www.volunteersweek.org.uk with permission



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Friends update

Golden Award



Duncan Cadbury, second from right, NAHCF Regional Development Officer Noel Nickerson, third from right next to John Simms MBE and the Mayor and Mayoress of Birmingham with Friends.

The Queen's Golden Jubilee Award was recently presented to The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital League of Friends in Birmingham. The award, recognising the Friend's welcoming service, gardening club, travel club and visiting service for non-English speaking patients, among other initiatives, was accepted by their President Duncan Cadbury.

Friends Make Pals



L-R Liz Fraser, Miss June Whitfield, Dr Mary Moore, Mr John de Braux.

June Whitfield, actress, and President of the League of Friends of St Helier NHS Trust was present at the opening of the Mary Moore ward recently. Also opened was a Patient Advice and Liaison Service, which the Friends raised over £40,000 to fund.

Hoist Donation



Three members of the Physiotherapy department helping John Saxby get into the hoist.

A mobile golvo hoist, costing £4,000, was presented to staff at the University Hospital of North Durham by the Chairman of the Friends of Durham Hospitals recently. Members who attended the presentation were treated to a demonstration of the hoist in action, with CEO John Saxby as the guinea pig!

Friends Swing

International swing star Rosemary Squires, whom our late Patron, the Queen Mother, once instructed to never stop singing, appeared at the Friends of Fordingbridge Christmas party. Rosemary, her husband Frank Lockyer and pianist Mike Brent entertained patients from the Ford Ward and Stroke Club. Secretary Ann Hickman, whose friendship with Rosemary initiated the visit, said, 'They all loved it. Rosemary goes and talks to everyone afterwards.'

Post Hits the Mark



Auctioneer rallies Friends fundraising total.

Moor Arts League of Friends recently raised £2,500 for people with mental health problems at an auction of postcards. The postcards had been turned into works of art by ordinary people drawing and painting on them. Two postcards each sold for £125. Organiser Louise Durham joked, "Needless to say, they were both of loose women. We're all off to life-drawing classes now!" The evening during which the cards were auctioned also featured a band, a bar and buffet, all of which was sponsored by local businesses.

40 000 Hours of Service



Hospital Friends volunteer guide, Joan Wooler.

The Friends of the Royal United Hospital, Bath, are celebrating providing a seven day week service throughout 2003, estimating over 40,000 hours given by the volunteers. At Christmas, they treated 320 Hospital patients to £3 gift vouchers.

Working in Partnership



Susan Harrison from the Rotary Club takes the blood pressure of a visitor.

A blood pressure testing service was just one of the events on offer at a fair held by Friends of Brighton and Hove Hospitals in association with the local Rotary Clubs recently. Over 350 people were tested on the day, with 22 advised to seek further information from their GP.

Friends Make Sense

Bronllys Hospital and Community Friends have donated £12,200 to their hospital for use towards a sensory garden, bladder scanner and defibrillator. The hospital was originally founded to help sufferers of TB and other lung diseases. Now it serves the wider community. The Friends were also able to donate £2,000 to a local medical centre for two electronically operated examination couches.

Friends Sued!



L-R Shop Supervisor Sue Richardson, Friends secretary Sue Heritage and Sue Head, treasurer.

One Friends Group, manned by three ladies called Sue, raised in excess of £400,000 last year for their hospital. The League of Friends of the William Harvey Hospital, Ashford, runs a very successful shop, which recently took £1,800 on one day!

Beep Beep!

All aboard the Friends of Northampton General Hospital Shuttle Buggy Service. The buggy transports outpatients and visitors around the hospital has been hailed as a huge success. The buggy was purchased thanks to a major donation from the Rotary Club of Northampton and from Carlsberg-Tetley T&G Union. It is operated by volunteers from the Friends who in the first four weeks transported 355 people throughout the hospital!

Still Giving

A forty-fifth anniversary was a double reason to celebrate for Stafford Hospital and Community Friends recently. Not only could they look back on forty-five years of fundraising and volunteering, but the Friends were able to donate three large cheques, totalling £30,000, to needy hospital departments.

Two Hospitals Benefit



Christmas at Rossall and Fleetwood hospitals.

Rossall and Fleetwood Hospitals League of Friends have wasted no time in fundraising this year. They have already donated two powered sling lifting hoists costing £8,473 for Rossall hospital, and 2 specialist trolleys for operating theatres costing £6,645 for Fleetwood. Christmas antics added smiles to fundraising in the hospitals.

Another Fine Year

A League of Friends were able to donate over £182,000 in 2003 to Yeovil Hospital. Amongst the many purchases afforded by the donation was two new single adolescent rooms in the Children's Ward costing around £28,000. But that was not all – almost overnight, a bright blue Portakabin arrived next to the existing Scalliwags building to provide 10 extra fully equipped nursery places for children of hospital staff, courtesy of the people of Yeovil through their League of Friends.

Rocking Horse



The rocking horse brings delight to a young patient, accompanied by Friends.

The Crawley League of Friends presented a rocking horse called Dapple Daisy as the final piece of equipment to the Child Development Centre. They had already donated a gymnasium, sensory area, soft play area, new audiology suite, speech therapy equipment, toy library, parents reference library and a PC adapted for the disabled costing around £100,000!

Hear Hear!



L-R: Myrtle Summery (League's Secretary), Marianne Gliddon and Phil Holt (Audiological Scientist), Rosalind Phillips (Friend's Vice Chair) and Colette Reid (Chair, Friend's Fund Raising Sub-Committee).

The League of Friends of University Hospital of North Staffordshire raised £9,000 for a Tymstar tympanometer for the Audiology Department of the hospital. This equipment, designed especially for babies and young children, helps to diagnose the nature of any hearing problem identified in the newborn hearing screening programme. Staff and parents can then decide on the best way to treat and manage the condition.

Let us know what your friends group has been up to. Send your stories and photos to newsdesk@hc-friends.org.uk, or to the address on the front cover. Let us know your ideas and what you have planned for Friends Week 18-24 October 2004, we'd love to hear from you!

Please get your articles to us before April 30th, 2004, for inclusion in the next issue. Thank you!

Shop talk

Easter is coming and we know what that means! Chocolate!

However Friends who run shops may be bamboozled by the wide range of seasonal lines available at the wholesalers. Eggs, mini eggs, boxes of chocs and baskets – the question is what will the visitors to your shop want to buy? And what will generate the most profit?

NAHCF Corporate Member, Beverley Patridge of Masterfoods lends us her expertise in making the right choices, both in what to purchase and how to make sure it isn't still sitting on your shelves after Easter.

'I would suggest to concentrate on a core range from the lines available to you at the wholesaler. In each category I have listed, there are two priorities, small shops should perhaps only list priority 1 and bigger outlets might list both 1 and 2. This range provides a good balance across the Masterfood brands but at the same time focuses on the strong sellers.

Child's Eggs

1. Maltesers Egg
2. Milky Way Magic Stars

Filled Eggs

1. Mars Mini Eggs
2. Galaxy Solid Eggs

Teen Eggs

1. Mars Large Egg
2. Twix Large Egg

Boxed Chocs

1. Celebrations Small Carton
2. Maltesers 146g box

Adult Eggs

1. Celebrations Luxury Egg
2. Maltesers Giant Egg

In terms of display I would offer the following points when trying to maximise sales:

• Remember 50% of purchases are made in the last two weeks before Easter

• 72% of consumers are buying for children

• 20% of purchases are made on impulse, therefore the consumer was not planning to buy an egg when entering the shop

• Do not put Easter lines in the shop as an alternative to confectionery. Standard confectionery sales can go up by 50% at Easter

• Ensure the products are easy to reach

• Maintain the display levels right up to Easter, the last two weeks will give over half of your sales.

Want to contribute to Shop Talk? Send us your ideas to newsdesk@hc-friends.org.uk, or to the address on the front cover. We'd love to hear from you!

Annual general meeting

December 1st 2003 saw a successful AGM of the NAHCF at the Victory Services Club, Marble Arch.



Friends group representatives from across the country attended along with Corporate Members and heard the latest news from the Association. Friends enjoyed chatting with our Corporate Members in the exhibition area, and discovered ways in which their fundraising and supports services could be boosted with their help. The afternoon saw a more relaxed and informal approach with the NAHCF Regional Development Officers (RDOs) taking workshops with Friends from their areas.

An inspiring multimedia presentation was premiered celebrating the work



Top: Peter Green receives Honorary Life Membership. Bottom: NAHCF staff chat with Friends.

Benefits of online delivered wholesale

Running a shop to support your Friends fundraising, and as a practical way of providing a service to the institution that your group is based within, doesn't necessarily mean a weekly trip to the wholesaler.

Lugging heavy goods in and out of your local cash and carry every week is hard work, and due to its nature can sometimes rule out a willing volunteer from helping due to a physical disability.

However, there is an alternative to this weekly workout – get the supplier to do the manual handling work for you. Due to advances in online technology, delivered wholesale is now truly a viable option.

At the NAHCF one of our Corporate Members, Blueheath, specialises in just this service.

Placing an order online is fast and easy, with all the products you need organised clearly into categories for your convenience.

To cater for the last-minute nature of running a shop, you will receive your order the very next day, and delivery is free!

If you are worried about how the whole process works and have

concerns about online buying, Blueheath customers are assigned their own Business Development Manager to assist with any special needs they may have. He or she will be happy to visit, help you with your first order and assess your situation before you receive your first delivery.

This relatively new way of purchasing is an excellent way to reduce demand on the shop volunteer/workers time and opens up the possibility for more people to be involved in an area where their disability would have in the past reduced the opportunities available to them.

For further information: Please call Emma at Blueheath on 0207 689 2457 or visit www.blueheath.com

already achieved by RDOs working in partnership with the local Friends Groups. The end of the proceedings saw an opportunity for the Association to formally recognise the sterling work of four special Friends for their dedication and long service to the NAHCF through Honorary Life Membership. NAHCF Chairman, Baroness Emerton, and President, Lord Fraser presented these awards to Oliver Rowell, Peter Green, Roy Green and Marilyn Kropidlowski. We look forward to seeing more Friends represented this year.

Friends Connect Magazine

Friends Connect is published by the National Association of Hospital & Community Friends (NAHCF). NAHCF works in partnership with around 800 UK charities to provide volunteering in support of health and social care. We provide member charities with comprehensive advice and services. Membership is by subscription.

Publisher
NAHCF, 11-13 Cavendish Square
London, W1G 0AN

Tel: 0845 450 0285
Fax: 0207 307 2571
Email: info@hc-friends.org.uk
Website: www.hc-friends.org.uk

Editorial: Anna Brett & David Elcock
Production/Mailings/Advertising & Sponsorship:
David Elcock
david.elcock@hc-friends.org.uk
Send press releases to:
newsdesk@hc-friends.org.uk
Graphic Design: Matt Kevan
design@kevan.tv



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Access For All – Alternative Formats

We are investigating the possibility of producing alternative formats of Friends Connect and the Annual Report for blind and visually impaired Friends, volunteers and interested parties.

Formats that may be made available depending on demand would be Braille, Large Print and Audio. The NAHCF is committed to equal opportunities, but there would of course be added costs involved in the production of these formats, therefore we would like to see what demand there would be for this service. If you are interested, please return the form below to David Elcock at the London address marked 'Alternative Formats'.

Yes, we would be interested in borrowing copies of Friends Connect and the Annual Report in alternative formats:

Please tick:

- Electronic document (PDF)
- Braille
- Large print
- Audio cassette
- Audio CD
- Digital audio file

Please print your contact details here:

Name: _____
Friends Group: _____
Membership number: _____
Telephone (inc. area code): _____
Email address: _____

Feel free to photocopy this form