



The **MASE** Monthly Newsletter

April 2015

Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service



Spring is Here



At last we are seeing brighter days, with lovely blue skies. There is still a slight nip in the air, but we can look forward to the summer months, when everyone appears to be a little happier.

Currently our news is full of the General Election in May and I am sure people are hoping that the right Party gets into power; whichever Party it is we need them to give extra thought to Dementia and put more money into the aftercare for Carers and their cared for. All too often we are hearing that people have been diagnosed with no information given to Carers, advising them of their rights to claim Benefits and informing them of organisations who can help, during what is a difficult and stressful time. These are the little touches that mean so much to Carers. Let's hope that whoever we get as Prime minister, has compassion and care and will make a significant difference by giving more to Carers and cared for who have to cope with Dementia every day.



Well worth reading before the General Election

As we head towards a General Election, these words written by an ex-Serviceman, are thought provoking, very significant and well worth reading before you decide which box to put your X in:

My eyes grow dim and there are holes in my memory. I can't hear when there's background noise, but I'll be dressed neat and tidy when the home help arrives.

We many elderly live in fear of the politicians who sit in judgement on us. They seem unworthy of all the care which we, as parents, gave them. They judge us too harshly because we've become too many and they too few. It's bad arithmetic, the diminishing revenues they're collecting to pay us our dues in old age.

We're supposed to be at leisure now, following gentle pastimes, engaging in quiet conversation and supporting useful charities. But woe betide us if we fall ill or become infirm, because our children are far away: we set them free to pursue the modern dream and now reassure them (should they ask) that the NHS and 'the social' will cater to our needs.

A nice lady comes for 15 minutes each morning to make sure I'm safe and to make my bed, or she might do my shopping instead. She reminds me, sternly, that the frozen meals are thawing in the kitchen and I must remember to take the cardboard top off before putting them in the oven.

I was told to ask for help, and I did. I've been 'referred' and 'assessed' and everyone knows my private business. I have been 'visited' and 'seen'; a community care worker has been 'allocated' who will rush through my life for 15 minutes every morning while muttering in a foreign tongue as she struggles to complete her tasks in the allotted time.

It's not your fault, it's not my fault, and it probably isn't their fault that we appear to be unable to care for our elderly and inform with dignity and respect. No one is to blame, except some people who gambled with our savings, betting that money which wasn't theirs, would go up or down.

They got it wrong and all the money is lost. Where did it go? Who is hoarding the many billions we lost? It's affecting my pension and my daily care. Should I need an operation it may be 'economically viable' on the NHS budget. Fair dos: I served my country in the Army, paid my taxes, put any money I had into my family home and led a crime-free life. The time is coming to put an X in the box for those who I want to represent me in Parliament, but I no longer know whom I can trust not to put themselves first. Will they put the interests of the elderly before their war games?

Health, education and policing are my priorities. What are yours?

Elaine Dunlop ☎ 01785 823110 or 07812 440226
Daphne Sharp ☎ 01785 211140 or 07939 505455

MASE Co-ordinators

✉ Elaine.dunlop12@btinternet.com
✉ Daphne.scharp@ntlworld.com

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

10 Tips when going away on holiday

If someone you love has Alzheimer's disease or dementia, there are many things to consider when planning a trip. A few simple measures will help to ensure that your travelling companion remains safe and comfortable. It is also essential that you contact your doctor and develop a realistic travel plan. That way, you can both enjoy your vacation to its fullest.



Take along an identification card that your companion keeps in their pocket, or handbag. Keep on it your telephone number, state that this person has a dementia. That way should they wander the Police can contact you quickly.

Keep things as familiar as possible. For example, keep bedtimes and eating times as close to normal as possible, and bring the person's favourite pyjamas or pillow. If the person has never travelled on an airplane before, this is not the best time to introduce something new.

Be prepared. Get plenty of rest before the trip. Pack for the patient, allowing extra time for everything. Bathe and dress him or her without rushing, and make sure you both wear comfortable clothing during the trip. Research in advance what medical services are offered at your destination, in case you need them. **Bring a brief medical history with you, including a current medication list, doctor's telephone numbers and a list of any allergies.**

Plan your itinerary well in advance. If staying with friends or family, make them aware of what Alzheimer's is and what the symptoms can look like. Minimize time spent with large groups, noisy places or energetic children. Avoid busy, chaotic locations. Check in with family members daily during the trip.

Be realistic. Carefully assess what the person's limitations and strengths are and shape the vacation accordingly. Also be realistic about your own and other caregivers' limitations and strengths - can you handle the person if he or she becomes agitated or wanders or is unable to sleep? Get your doctor's feedback on what is realistic and whether he or she recommends prescribing medication for the trip.

Limit the length of plane or car rides. If a trip is over four hours, two carers should be present. Bring along toys, photos, hobbies or other distractions in case the person with Alzheimer's becomes agitated. Carry handy-wipes for any spills. Avoid caffeine.

If you are driving and the person with Alzheimer's becomes agitated, pull over. Do not try to calm him or her and drive at the same time. He or she may become more disoriented and try to leave a moving car.

If you are travelling by air, avoid stopovers, and try to fly on direct flights only. Carry all boarding passes, passports, and other important papers yourself, rather than giving them to the person with Alzheimer's. Request a middle seat for your companion and an aisle seat for yourself so that he or she cannot wander away without you noticing. Pre-boarding the aircraft. Pack all medications in a carry-on bag-do not put it in checked luggage, which can get lost.

If you are staying in a hotel, request a large and quiet room. To protect against wandering order a door alarm or a childproof doorknob cover. Avoid rooms with sliding glass doors.

Have a back up plan. That way you can react to mishaps without become overly anxious yourself. Recognise when the patient is becoming upset or agitated, and stop any activities when necessary in order to get some rest.



In short, planning is the key to having a vacation that is enjoyable and safe. It is realistic to assume that the confusion of dementia will increase on a trip, leading to discomfort, fear or agitation. Being prepared can help avoid any mishaps and make for a safe and enjoyable trip.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

Registered Charity No: 1137193 - The Monthly Alzheimer's Support Evening Limited (MASE)

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