

Mo Shaol

MS Ireland Mission:

To enable and empower people affected by Multiple Sclerosis to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential.

MS Ireland

South Mayo Branch

NEWSLETTER

Issue 79

Christmas 2024 



Ducks on the partly-frozen river at Turlough, Christmas Day 2010.

Dia Dhaoibh! Hello there!

And so, Christmas is upon us once more. In advance, there is the anticipation, and this can be wondrous for some, but filled with foreboding for others. In addition to its religious significance for Christians, it also marks the mid-winter; however, as we know only too well in Ireland, the *real* winter comes mainly in January and February, the coldest and wettest (and often, most miserable) months.

These are months, despite the joy that many experience, when life can be at its hardest. Many people with MS (PwMS) feel the cold much more than others and this, alone, adds to their suffering and hardship. It can be an expensive time, when we spend just that little (or big) bit too much money and we have to trim necessary spending on ourselves as a result. It can also be a time of loneliness and sadness for some.

We hope you have a happy Christmas and a great New Year. Remember, though, if you need assistance, we in the South Mayo Branch of MS Ireland are here: to help when needed. We are here for **you**. *Nollaig Shonna agus Ath-bhliain mhaoi mhaise roimh cách!*

Jackie writes...



Hello all,

I hope that you all are keeping well and not finding the Winter evenings too long. To those of you I met at the Branch Christmas Party on Sunday 1st December it was lovely to see you in person, and I hope you enjoyed the afternoon.

2024 has been a very busy year for me here in MS Ireland and, as we come to the end of 2024, I would like to thank you all for your interactions with me. We have had [coffee mornings](#) in Claremorris and Breaffy House, and our final one this year will be in [Hotel Ballina on the 11th of December – if you're interested please let me know.](#)

We will be continuing our in-person physio classes in Ballina on Wednesday mornings well into January, for further details please make contact with me.

The Western Region is currently planning our activities for 2025. There are plans for an online Fatigue Management Course so if you are interested in this please let me know. There will also be the ongoing peer support groups online: yoga, mediation, physio etc. If you have any suggestions or ideas do feel free to link with me.

As always, I am available if you feel you need a listening ear, some information, advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wishing you and yours a very peaceful and happy Christmas and every good wish for 2025.

Take Care,

Jackie Keogh

MS Ireland Community Worker for Mayo and Roscommon

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Christmas Draw 2024



Christmas would not be Christmas in Castlebar without the annual Christmas Draw in Liam Cannon's Fruit and Veg Shop.

Another year, another crib. This crib was made by members of Castlebar Men's Shed and the knitted figures were made by members of Mulranny Knitting Circle.

Tickets are €2 for 1 line; €5 for 3 lines. The draw will take place on Christmas Eve.

A second prize of a framed photo of Lough Cullin will also be in the draw.

Upcoming Winter Activities

We hope that those of you who attended the Christmas Lunch in Ballintubber on Sunday 1st December enjoyed the afternoon.

We had hoped to have had an outing to the cinema followed by a meal in Castlebar during November, but that did not take place. We are now working to try to make it happen in February 2025. We will keep you posted.

Heartfelt Thanks

It is with great gratitude that we thank, once more, Melissa and Lynne from the Curiosity Shop, Westport, for their magnificent donation of €5,000 to the Branch.



A Mid-Autumn Break

By Alison Dalleywater

For your guidance and her enjoyment, Alison travelled to Lanzarote this October past. Now, read on...

It's hard to keep a 'glass half full' outlook on life when you are differently abled, especially when it comes to travel. There's no doubt about it, travelling in a wheelchair is hard work and many people are reluctant to travel because of this.

This October I found a wellness resort in Lanzarote called Casas Heddy, a unique holiday resort ideal for those less mobile, recovering from illness or injury, or just looking for pure relaxation. Lanzarote in October, with an average temperature of 23c and fewer tourists, is perfect. Situated away from the main tourist strip, every one of its chalet-style apartments are wheelchair friendly with grab rails, a wet room, lower sinks and lowered clothes rails. They have sliding doors with no lip so that a wheelchair just glides in with no annoying pushing of heavy doors. Only last week in an 'accessible' hotel in London I got wedged halfway into a hotel bedroom pinned by a heavy door.

The pool has raised sunbeds making it easier to transfer. There's a ramp, waterproof wheelchairs, some shallow steps with rails for the partially mobile and a lifeguard always in attendance.

It is inevitable that travellers will encounter the odd difficulty. My motorised wheelchair, Betty, got damaged on the flight over and a part was hanging off. *Note to self: pack duct tape and cable ties next time.* The resort handymen fixed this for me. One day I attempted a spin outside the resort but found

the rough roads and high pavements so untraversable that I turned back, feeling vulnerable and shaken.

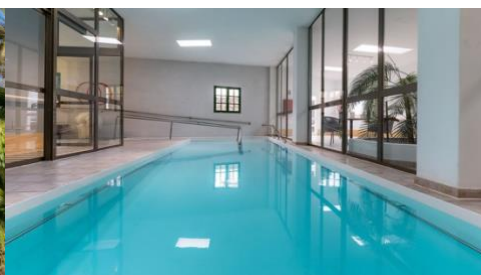
During my stay, I had aqua therapy, physiotherapy and reflexology. Sounds like torture, right? But I learned new ways to help myself. After one class in the pool, my legs were too wobbly to climb out and the staff had to hoist me out. Somewhat undignified. Another time, when trying to take a short cut which was steeper than I realised, Betty kicked me out like a bucking bronco which hurt my ego more than anything.

I was pretty run down when I first arrived, and the holiday gave me the Va-Va-Voom to survive another gloomy winter. But here are the cons:

- This is a disastrous choice if you have kids. I saw just one boy and he looked pretty hacked off. (*But maybe it's different when the schools are on holiday – Editor!*)
- It's not high-end accommodation, the chalets are fairly basic (rustic charm maybe)
- It's not the cheapest at around €900 pp a week for a standard chalet.

The fact that you can get there from Knock in just 4 hours, however, means it's just so easy.

My next big trip with my motorised wheels, Betty, will be island hopping/rolling in Greece where I will discover just how they intend to load me on and off the ferry boats.



Allison Dalleywater is a person with MS who is also a member of the Committee of our local Branch. For more information about the resort, see <https://www.casasheddy.com>.

Christmas Lunch, Abbey Lodge, Ballintubber, Sunday 1st December 2024



Committee Members, South Mayo Branch, MS Ireland, 2024

Name	Position(s)
Damen Barrett	Asst. Treasurer; Welfare Committee
Seamus Burke	Committee Member
Tony Candon	Chair; PRO; Council Delegate
Liam Cannon	Vice-Chair; Deputy Council Delegate; Welfare Committee
Yvonne Corrigan	Committee Member; Chair, Welfare Committee
Alison Dalleywater	Committee Member
Sharon Dillon	Treasurer; Welfare Committee
Louise Power	Secretary

Contacting the Branch

If you want to contact us directly, please do so through our new email address: southmayobranch@ms-society.ie or through the Regional Community Worker, Jackie Keogh, details below.

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