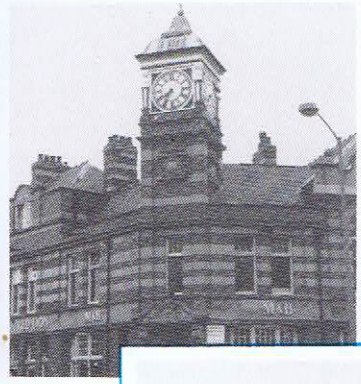
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Registered as a Charity in accordance with the National Assistance Act 1948
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BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman:
Mrs. MOLLIE BIRD
Malham House, Malham Road, Wilnecote, Tamworth B77 4LL. Tel: 0827 896601

Secretary:
Mr. ROBERT PITTS
16 Overdale Avenue, Walmley, Sutton Coldfield B76 8HJ. Tel: 021-351 3323

Treasurer:
Mr. DONALD PRITCHARD
45 Conchar Road, Sutton Coldfield B74 2DA. Tel: 021-354 9837

Membership Secretary:
Mrs. SYLVIA HARVEY
34 Silverdale Road, Erdington, Birmingham B24 0SH. Tel: 021-350 3833

Welfare Officer:
Mrs. JEAN KERRISON
107 Little Sutton Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield B75 6SN. Tel: 021-308 1962

Press Officer:
Mr. JOHN PALMER
39 Old Oscott Hill, Kingstanding, Birmingham B44 9SR. Tel: 021-350 1462

Catering Officer:
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Events for 1992

Branch Meets First Wednesday of Every Month at
WALMLEY CRICKET CLUB, Eldon Drive, (off Penns Lane)
at 7.30pm Where an informal evening is held

January 1st	New Year Quiz
January 5th	Annual Dinner
February 5th	Slide Show
February 19th	Pantomime Trip
March 4th	Annual General Meeting
April 1st	Cheese and Wine Party
April 4th	Jumble Sale
May 6th	Auction
June 3rd	Open
June 7th	Seaside Coach Trip
June 13th	Coffee Morning
July 1st	Strawberries and Cream
July 19th	Summer Barbeque
August 5th	Natter Night
September 2nd	Fish & Chip Supper
September 6th	Coach Trip
September 12th	Flag Day
October 7th	Open
November 4th	B & B Christmas Present Auction
December 2nd	Christmas Party



The Committee.

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Chairman's Communique



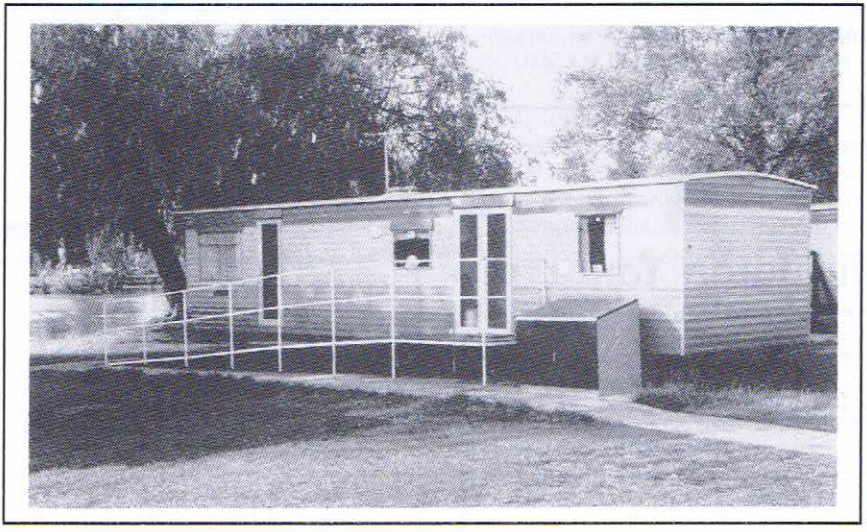
Chairman, Mrs. Mollie Bird.

Our Branch has now been in existence for over fifteen years, we were inaugurated in June, 1976. It seems to me that each year we go from strength to strength.

1991 has been a marvellous year for the branch thanks to to the overwhelming kindness and generosity of many groups and individuals, but in particular the Sutton Coldfield Municipal Charities. The Charity gave us the money to purchase and equip a static caravan that has been specially designed for the disabled. This enables our members to have a holiday and change of scenery, which is beneficial both to the person with multiple sclerosis and their carer. Everything achieved over the past fifteen years, by our branch, for our members, has been by people giving their time, talents or their money. If you feel that you have time, talent or money to donate to our branch, it will be gratefully received.

We are an active Branch and we extend a sincere invitation, to anyone who is interested, to come along to our monthly meetings, always on the first Wednesday of the month, at the Walmley Cricket Club, Eldon Drive at 7.30pm, I can assure you of a warm friendly welcome.

MOLLIE BIRD, Chairman



The new holiday caravan at Billing Aquadrome, Northamptonshire.

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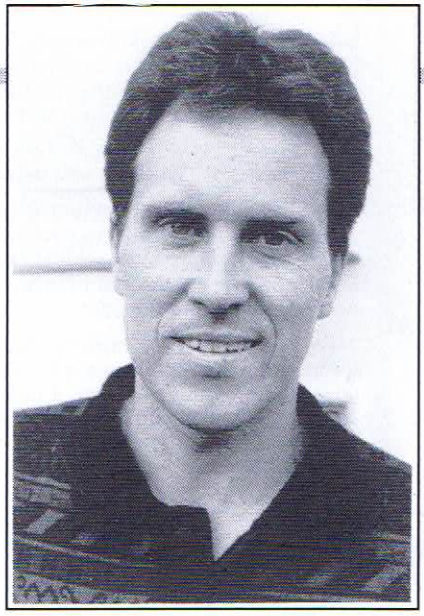
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Secretary's Snippet



Secretary, Robert Pitts.

As we move on into 1992, I see a lot more new faces at branch meetings which is a healthy sign to ensure that the branch continues on into the future and helps suffers in the area. These new faces are largely brought about by the fact that the branch has an excellent press officer, John 'Scoop' Palmer who diligently works away, gettng out press reports to the local papers and bringing Multiple Sclerosis into the fore and increasing peoples awareness of the branches work.

We all know how differently M.S. can effect people and that's why with the advent of the branches caravan at Billing Aquadrome, I feel that the branch has become a more fairer place for sufferers, where not only can we provide help with respite care for those that need it, but also offer help with a holiday at the branches caravan for those wishing not to go into respite care, yet cannot afford an expensive holiday. I believe that welfare should not stop at respite care, but continue into helping sufferers and their families to maintain a normal life as much as possible.

At last years A.G.M. a member raised the question of whether enough of the branches resources were being spent. Well although it's rumoured that our treasurer can peel a Jaffa orange in his pocket, the truth of the matter is that we can only spend the money if people come forward and apply for grants, and members should remember that any application is dealt with in the strictest confidence at committee level and therefore should not be afraid to come forward. This is the main purpose of our fund raising.

While on the subject of fund raising, did you know that we can only raise about 25% of our membership to collect on flag day, well I think it's a pretty poor show, and I hope that more members will come forward in the future, even if it's just to show their appreciation of the work done at branch meetings throughout the year.

ROBERT PITTS
Secretary

When you are first told that you have multiple sclerosis (M.S.), you are likely to feel both shocked and bewildered. You will probably think of the many striking pictures published in newspaper advertisements of the black line cut across people's eyes, limbs, spine or life in a wheelchair.

This is not the true picture. Less than one in five will eventually end up in a wheelchair and very very few permanently lose their sight.

M.S. is a strange disease which may apparently get better at times (remission) and then get worse again for a while (relapse). These ups and downs can seldom be explained. Symptoms such as tingling arms, cold or heavy legs not only vary from month to month but hour to hour — try to accept this variability though no two people are the same.

For new sufferers it's horribly scaring until a name can be given to these queer feelings, but after they are explained they can be accepted. M.S. does not mean your life has come to a stop; it means that you must change into a lower gear. The time at which you learn the diagnosis is the time you should think positive, look at your priorities. It's better to achieve the possible rather than fail to achieve the impossible.

You have Multiple Sclerosis

There are ways you can help yourself. Avoid getting overweight, easier said than done if you enjoy your food like I do, but try you must. Try to keep as fit as possible with sufficient rest and sensible exercise. Two wonderful ladies Ed Hawkins and Billie Bartlet give up their valuable time each Friday evening to run free Yoga classes for M.S. sufferers. I personally gained much from these sessions. Maybe they could help you. Another tip is if possible spend part of each day doing something that you enjoy.

On the first Wednesday of each month our branch holds its monthly meeting, why not come along. You will meet different people from many walks of life with or without M.S. but who fundamentally wish to have a good time, and not talk about M.S: Put aside any fears or nervousness you have about seeing the morbid or negative side of M.S: Let me assure you that you will not see it at our branch meetings.

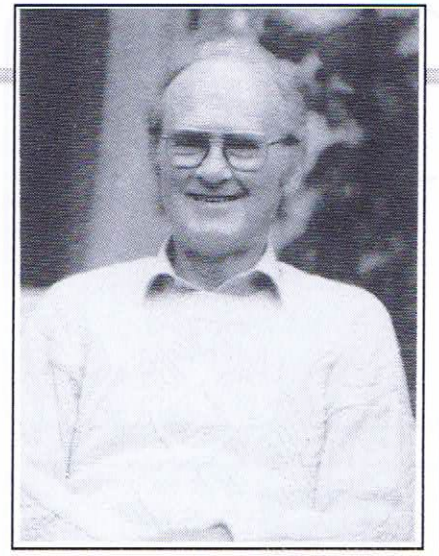
We organise many social events (see list of events). We aim to keep in close contact with members and give help when needed. We raise money to cover our own costs and contribute towards research into M.S.

Please come and have a look at us one Wednesday I think you could be pleasantly surprised and if your not, what have you lost, or contact one of the committee whose addresses and phone numbers you will find near the front of this book.

I myself feel privileged to have come into contact with so much courage and so much caring work from so many lovely people.

To anyone reading this who has not got multiple sclerosis I would like to remind them that they would be more than welcome to our branch, you do not have to have M.S. to join our happy band.

Treasurer's Tidings



Treasurer, Don Pritchard.

It seems many years since I submitted my first report as treasurer with the words — "I am pleased to inform you that our finances are in a fairly healthy position" — and I am delighted to again reiterate those words that a treasurer loves to say - "our financial situation is still fairly satisfactory."

Mind you, without the many donations received from many generous donors, and the hard work done by our committee and faithful and loyal members, our funds would be very low indeed. So at this stage I will not say "times is ard' but a grateful thanks to you all. However as our chairman has already mentioned we are indeed most grateful to the Sutton Coldfield Municipal Charities for donating the cost of a static caravan, especially adapted for the disabled, which we have sited at Billing Aquadrome, and may I add, mainly due to the efforts of our chairman Mrs. Mollie Bird. What a pleasure for our members who have been able to enjoy a holiday in such splendid surroundings.

As a local branch entirely dependant on voluntary funds, I consider we are very active. We endeavour to offer members a service — through our many social events, and of course our never ending welfare work, ably executed by our welfare officer Mrs. Kerrison.

You know time and age does creep up on us so quickly, so it is with a certain amount of regret that this is my last report as your treasurer. I have decided to tender my resignation as from the A.G.M. in March. I have enjoyed my duties, because it has enabled me to meet so many nice people, and in my own small way, help so many of our members. I shall of course still remain a loyal member — who will take charge of your singing group!

Thank you all for the support and kindness you have given me in my six years as your treasurer.

DON PRITCHARD
Treasurer

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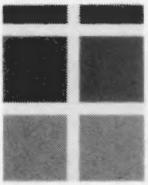
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WK7/6



The Branch was to the fore to record the big event in Birmingham in 1991. The Queen and Prince Philip arrive to open the new Internatinal Convention Centre last June.



Some of the sixty one members who enjoyed the branch outing to Southport.



No not the knitting class, it's the ladies on the visit to the Thames Barrier. I think the men were looking for the pub.



Some members at the coffee morning held at Erdington Methodist Church.

With Grateful Thanks

A glance down our list of donations might suggest that these come like Goldilocks Bears, in three sizes. The size of the donation usually reflects simply the method of channelling peoples' generosity to the benefit of our funds. Large donations do occur but rarely. Almost everything the branch finances comes from quite small amounts of cash from many people. Who are these people?

They are — the people in the street on flag day.
They are — the pensioners on a tight budget and an open purse at coffee mornings.
They are — groups of highly organised women at well dressed social functions.
They are — Policemen, Accountants, Sportsmen and School Children.
They are — young people in jeans and T-shirts who do something daft to raise a smile and some cash.
They are — generous folk who are prepared to commit their money on a sponsor form.
They are — people in work who pause momentarily to buy a raffle ticket.
They are — extraordinary people who run marathons or do quite crazy things like cycling from Lands End to John-O-Groats, or London to Brighton.
They are — the jobless, lame, blind and disabled people.
They are — people who gather in groups called clubs or societies, churches or branches, colleges or schools, shops or offices or whatever.
They are — just very generous people, God's children.

We thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

We would particularly like to thank —

Mr. Ackerman
Asda Mere Green and Minworth
Birmingham City Council
Birmingham Security-Surveyors Society
Boldmere Golf Club
Mr. Byrne
Mr. Docherty
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Poets Corner

THE RIME OF THE M.S. TREASURER
(With acknowledgement to Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

There was an M.S. Treasurer and
"Times is 'ard" quoth he,

"The branch is without money
So pay the subs., to me."

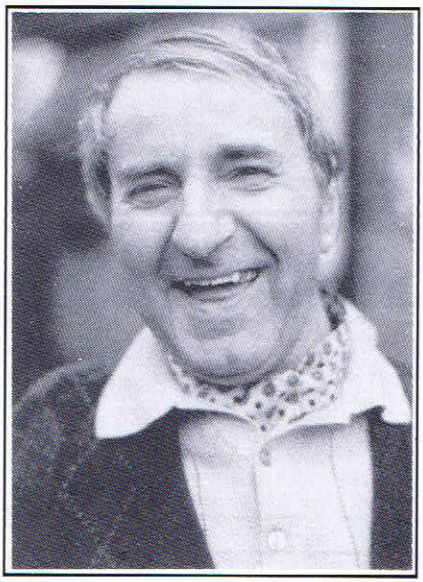
He tells great tales of daring do
Of such brave men, and true,
Of days without their mild and bitter,
And when their hands turned blue.

He rambles on about the war.
"There was a ship' quoth he,
A destroyer on the convoy run
By name, "The Oribi."

"We ploughed through frozen wastes" said he,
When ice, mast-high, went floating by,
On the voyage to Murmansk
Across the Baltic Sea.

We cheer thee, M.S. Treasurer,
Now you are back on land,
To see the way you work and save —
Our fortunes to expand.

God bless the M.S. Treasurer!
As members plagueth thee,
With never-ending pleas
For the branch's scant monee.



Tony Hale.

TONY HALE (member)
former editor of Sutton Coldfield News

GO CLEAN

A regular saying now is "Go Green,"
I add one extra mine is "Go Clean."
It's not safe to walk at night for fear of who you meet.
A mugger is not someone you feel inclined to greet.
Daytimes not much better! It's no pleasure in the street.
When you constantly worry, where to put your feet.
Badly repaired footpaths invite you to fall.
And you do! Right where a dog has paid a call.
Bottles, cans and paper lie scattered all around.
Dropped by thoughtless people onto the ground.
Our standards have fallen so who do we blame?
Yes! The Council is usually the first one we name.
But they need help from people like you and me.
That's if we want to keep our city litter free.
M.S. may bring many problems give help please not pitty.
Couldn't we at least have pride in our own great city.

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Words on Welfare



Welfare Officer, Jean Kerrison.

It has been another busy year! We have been pleased to welcome several new members who we look forward to seeing at our various social occasions.

The caravan is now ready for occupation and is available to anyone who suffers with M.S. Members who do not manage to get to club should telephone Mrs. Bird for details of bookings. I realise that a caravan holiday is not a complete rest for the carer but the caravan is situated in a very pleasant spot beside the lake and the many facilities on the site helps to make life easy. It is not a long tiring journey to get there and as we all benefit from a change of scene I hope many of you will go.

Helen Ley continues to be available to members whilst carers have a rest or are going on holiday.

Two of our members have recently decided to move into residential accommodation. It was a very hard decision to make but I am pleased to say they have both settled down very well. The first few weeks were not easy but everyone was kind and helpful and they both now feel that they have made the right decision. If you are considering making a similar move do talk to as many people as you can and visit as many places as possible and don't do anything in a hurry.

There is now a freephone Benefit Enquiry Line specially for people with disabilities — 0800 882200. BEL is designed to help make the social security system more accessible and less daunting to people and ensure their problems are handled with speed and sensitivity.

JEAN KERRISON
Welfare Officer

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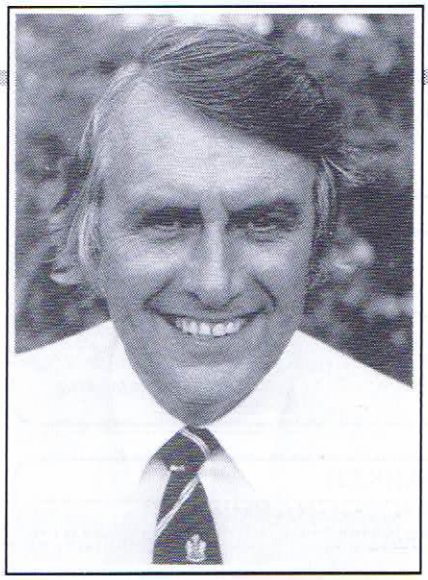

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In the Land of the Giant Spider



John Palmer.

I thought this year, instead of the usual words of thanks and platitudes, I would tell you about my recent journey into the great unknown; to a hidden land of mists and strange tales, into the depths of the uncharted. No my trip was not into deepest Ecudor or Outer Mongolia, but into my garage.

Why, you may ask, did I venture into my garage? After all, it's only an overspill for the attic. Equivalent to one of those chutes in a tower block where things just slide in, never to be seen again. Well, I had decided to save a large cardboard box, after all, you never know when a big box may come in useful.

I did what I normally do, stand on the path and just throw it in the direction of the garage. Imagine my disappointment when it landed back at my feet. I concluded this was natures way of telling me that my garage was full. Initially I blamed Sheila my wife, she had asked me to save two biscuit tins last Christmas.

Then I thought more about the situation, my mind began to recollect a 1959 Greaves Scottish trials motor bike I parked there after my last trial, back in March 1969.

I had always assumed the bin-men must have taken it away, but could it actually still be there.

Standing on tiptoes, I could see the huge pile of half-full paint tins and jam jars of hard paint brushes, the turps long evaporated, remnants from various decorating sprees and my inability to distinguish centimetres from inches when measuring the size of a room or the bargain tin I bought with glee because it contained 10% extra.

My garage had become the great stopping-off post. One-third of the contents were destined for the bin but never made it, another third might come in useful one day, that day had never come, the last third ——— well, I challenge anyone to know why the last third had entered this haven.

No-one in my family has ever owned an old roller or a pile of old roof tiles. Where did they come from? Could our neighbours be putting their junk in my garage, sneaking in some old bicycle tyres while I was at the rugby or out buying more paint.

It was not all doom and gloom, rummaging through the junk one comes across old friends long thought lost, an old football programme Villa v Blackpool, February 1st, 1958, containing names never to be forgotten Matthews, Taylor, Perry, Hitchens, McParland and Lynn, a 1953 Beano annual and my old trusty Greaves, it was like David Lingstone's meeting with Stanley.

I was that happy if June Warner (Editor of the Sutton Observer) had been there, I'm sure I'd have given her a kiss in thanks for the coverage her paper has given the branch over the past year.

JOHN PALMER
Press Officer and Editor of the Year Book and Branch Bugle

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Remember Flag Day.



*D** I'll start dieting next week.*



Who needs Mrs. Beeton.



Don's impersonation of Nigel Mansell.



Two lifers.

Disabled and Able to Sail



Barbara Gibbs.

The Jubilee sailing trust say that the STS Lord Nelson was purpose built 'for physically handicapped and able bodied to share the challenge of crewing a ship at sea." The chance to sign on as voyage crew aboard a square rigger may seem like a dream but can become a reality. Ray and I signed on as voyage crew for the trip to Antwerp in September. The whole voyage from start to finish was a marvellous experience. Everyone was given the opportunity to try everything.

Of the forty voyage crew, twenty were disabled. Six of us were in wheelchairs but we were all looked over by ten permanent crew. We were divided into four watches for four hours at a time. Everyone on the ship got to know each other and trust each other.

We left London on Sunday the first of September in brilliant sunshine. I nearly ended up in the river after being pushed down a sloping gangplank very badly. It was very exciting to see Tower Bridge raise just for us. Even then the 115 foot mast only just went under.

We all soon learnt how to set sails and brace the yards and furl the topsail. There were so many ropes that no one could remember them all after just a week. We all took turns to steer the ship (take the helm) and even I could spot a marker bouy four miles away by the end.

The highlight of the trip for me was sitting half way up the main mast after being hoisted up by some of the crew and Jamie (the Bosan). On coming down I asked him if he had every tried it and he said he was to frightened and any way it wasn't safe.

When we arrived in Antwerp everyone went ashore for a B-B-Q and had a really good time.

On the way home the weather got very rough and we were blown back to the Thames estuary in one day.

After only being able to walk occasionally I was able to walk around the ship by Thursday and by the time we arrived back in London was able to walk off the ship by myself. Several people including men were in tears to see me do it. That's how close we became.

We shall treasure these memories for ever, and both of us feel that our time aboard 'Nelson' is one of the best experiences of our lives and the people we met some of our best friends.

BARBARA GIBBS

What is Multiple Sclerosis?

Multiple Sclerosis, MS for short, is the modern international term for what was once called Disseminated Sclerosis.

MS is the most common disease of the central nervous system. An as yet unidentified powerful agent attacks the myelin sheath which protects the nerve fibres of the central nervous system. As a result many of the millions of fibres which run through the spinal cord fail to carry their messages clearly. Some parts of the body cease to function properly.

MS often affects vision, sensation, use of limbs and muscular co-ordination.

80,000 people in Great Britain suffer from MS—the majority of them between the ages of 30 and 60. The first symptoms usually appear in the age group 20 to 40. One third of all the young chronic sick in this country are victims of MS.

MS is no respecter of persons, attacking people in all walks of life and often causing grave social and domestic problems.

MS is debilitating and can be progressive. There is no fixed pattern and no two cases are the same. Doctors do not as yet know its cause or cure and are able to offer very few guidelines. This is intensely frustrating both for those with MS and for the doctors themselves.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was formed in 1953. The Society has the twin objectives of caring for the needs of those who have Multiple Sclerosis and of raising money to sponsor research into the cause and cure of the disease.

There are now more than 350 Branches and Associations of the Society throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland. All Branches are run voluntarily, many by people with MS, or their relatives and friends. Members are visited regularly and efforts are made to ensure that they receive all the aids and benefits to which they are entitled.

The Society works in close co-operation with 28 National Societies through the medium of the International Federation of Multiple Sclerosis Societies, particularly in the field of research.

Headquarters:
The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
25 Effie Road, Fulham, London SW6 1EE
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Get Out and About

OUT AND ABOUT

There are a number of services to help you get out and about.

ORANGE BADGE SCHEME

An Orange Badge grants car parking privileges to people who are severely disabled contact: Birmingham Social Services, Snow Hill House, 10-15 Livery St. B3 2EP

NATIONAL KEY SCHEME

There are some 1,120 toilets throughout the country for use of people with disability. Each fitted with a lock. A key can be obtained with a list of these toilets from: Access for All, 1 Curzon Street B4 7XG. Phone: 021-359 0654.

MOTABILITY

This is a government-backed organisation to help disabled people buy or lease a car. You must be in receipt of mobility allowance. Many garages throughout the city operate the scheme — look for the motability symbol.

CONCESSIONS ON BRITISH RAIL

British Rail has a rail card for people with disabilities. This allows the holder and a companion to travel half-fare
A free leaflet is available from your local station.

HELP AT THE STATION

If you are disabled and require help at the station or to board a train telephone 021-644 4288.

RING AND RIDE

If you cannot use public transport this scheme can provide individual bus services in certain parts of the city. Sutton Colfield at present is not included.
Ring 021-333 3110.

BUS PASSES

If you are under retirement age, you may be entitled to a subsidised disabled bus pass, contact; Social Services, Snow Hill House, 10-15 Livery Street, B3 2EP Phone: 021-235 2131.

CENTRO

Centro has set up a transport special needs committee to consider transport facilities.If you have a question or a point to make contact John Palmer (Press Officer).

EVERY TUESDAY

Every Tuesday there is a get together next to Walmley Library in Emscote Drive from 2.00pm to 4.00pm where members can have a natter and a cup of tea.
If you wish to know more ring Sylvia Harvey on 021-350 3833.

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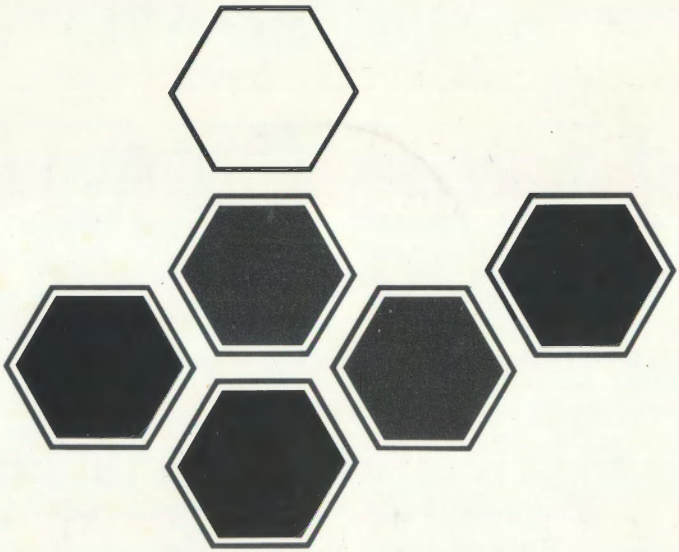
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