



Newsletter

February 2026

Invitation to a Chiropractor talk

27 February 2026 at 10am

GUR Room, Greenfields, Theed Way, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 9SP

Dr Katherine Volkner from **Chirozone** has very kindly offered for her, or one of her Chiropractors, to give talk to our group on the benefits Chiropractor treatments for Multiple Sclerosis.

It will take place on **27 February 2026 at 10am**. This is the day we would normally hold our coffee morning. It will be held in the GUR room at Greenfields. This room can accommodate 20 people, so it would be helpful if you could let me know if you would like to come.

Everybody living in the Leighton-Linslade area and the surrounding villages who are affected by MS are welcome. This includes those diagnosed with MS, spouses, partners, family, friends and carers.

There will be no charge for entry.

The boutique cafe at Greenfields will be open. Hopefully there will be an opportunity to have a hot or cold drink afterwards.

Please let me know if you would like to attend, by phone, text or email:

Annie Roberts

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New Hope in Multiple Sclerosis: The Latest Research and Treatments

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a condition that affects the brain and spinal cord, disrupting the messages that travel between the brain and the rest of the body. It happens when the immune system mistakenly attacks myelin, the protective coating around nerve fibres. Over time, this damage can lead to symptoms such as fatigue, problems with balance and movement, vision difficulties, pain, and changes in thinking or mood. MS affects everyone differently, and while there is still no cure, research over the past decade has transformed how the condition is treated and understood.

Today, people living with MS have more treatment options than ever before, and scientists are making steady progress toward therapies that may not only slow the disease but one day repair damage to the nervous system. The pace of change has been especially noticeable in recent years, bringing real hope to patients and families.

Most current MS treatments are known as disease-modifying therapies, often shortened to DMTs. These drugs do not cure MS, but they work by calming the immune system and reducing its attacks on the brain and spinal cord. The main goal is to reduce relapses, limit new areas of damage seen on MRI scans, and slow the long-term progression of disability.

One of the most widely used modern treatments is ocrelizumab, commonly known by its brand name Ocrevus. This medication targets a specific group of immune cells, called B cells, which play a key role in the damage seen in MS. Ocrelizumab has been particularly important because it is effective not only in relapsing forms of MS but also in some people with primary progressive MS, a type that previously had very limited treatment options. Traditionally, the drug was given as a lengthy hospital infusion, but more recently a faster injection under the skin has been introduced, dramatically reducing treatment time and making life easier for patients.

Another important development has been the growing use of oral MS treatments. One example is cladribine. It appears to work by targeting two types of white blood cell (B and T lymphocytes), destroying them temporarily.

The immune system then rebuilds these cells, with the theory being that they will no longer target the body's own myelin sheath. It doesn't

appear to suppress the overall immune system, so infections can still be fought, and it also doesn't appear to damage cells other than the white blood cells, limiting side effects. It is administered by a tablet taken at home for short courses spread over two years. Unlike many treatments that must be taken continuously, cladribine works in brief bursts and can provide long-lasting benefit. For many people, the convenience of a tablet rather than injections or hospital visits represents a major improvement in quality of life. Expanded access to this treatment in the UK and Europe has made it an increasingly common choice.

Alongside these established therapies, researchers are developing an entirely new group of drugs that work in different ways. Among the most talked-about are medicines known as BTK inhibitors (Bruton's tyrosine kinase inhibitors). These drugs affect how immune cells communicate with each other, reducing harmful inflammation both in the body and inside the brain itself. This is especially important because inflammation within the brain has been difficult to treat with existing medications.

One BTK inhibitor, tolebrutinib, has shown encouraging results in clinical trials, particularly for people with secondary progressive MS who no longer experience clear relapses but continue to worsen over time. Early studies suggest it may slow disability progression in this group, something that has been notoriously hard to achieve. Other similar drugs including Fenebrutinib and Evobrutinib, are in late-stage trials, and many experts believe BTK inhibitors could become a major new option for MS treatment within the next few years.

While these immune-targeting drugs are crucial, many scientists believe the future of MS treatment lies in something even more ambitious: repairing the nervous system. Most current therapies focus on preventing new damage, but they cannot reverse harm that has already occurred. This is why research into remyelination, the process of rebuilding the protective myelin sheath around nerves, is so exciting.

In recent studies, researchers have experimented with combining existing drugs for

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new purposes. For example, a diabetes medication called metformin and an antihistamine known as clemastine have been tested together to see whether they can encourage the body to repair myelin. Early results suggest that some repair may be possible, although the effects so far are modest. Even so, these studies represent a major step forward, proving that repairing myelin is not just a theoretical idea but a realistic scientific goal.

Other trials around the world are exploring different ways to stimulate myelin repair, protect nerve cells from further damage, or support the brain's natural healing processes. Although these treatments are still experimental and not yet available to patients, they mark an important shift in thinking. MS research is no longer focused only on slowing decline, but also on restoring function.

There are also innovative approaches at very early stages of development. One example is foralumab, an immune-modulating treatment delivered as a nasal spray. The idea behind this therapy is to gently retrain the immune system rather than suppress it entirely, potentially reducing side effects. While this research is still in its infancy, it highlights how creative and varied MS research has become.

At the same time, scientists are learning that MS is not a single disease but may exist in several biological subtypes. Advances in imaging, blood tests, and artificial intelligence

are helping researchers identify patterns that explain why some people respond well to certain treatments while others do not. In the future, this could lead to more personalised care, where treatments are chosen based on an individual's specific form of MS rather than trial and error.

Despite all this progress, it is important to be realistic. No existing treatment can completely stop MS in everyone, and true nervous system repair remains a work in progress. Some therapies suppress the immune system and can increase the risk of infections, so careful monitoring is essential. Treatment decisions still need to be made jointly between patients and specialist healthcare teams, taking into account effectiveness, side effects, lifestyle, and personal priorities.

Medication is also only one part of living well with MS. Physiotherapy, exercise, mental health support, fatigue management, and symptom-specific treatments all play a vital role. Many people with MS live full, active lives with the right combination of medical care and practical support.

In summary, MS research in 2026 is a story of genuine progress. Treatments are becoming more effective, more convenient, and better tailored to different types of MS. New drugs are tackling disease progression in ways that were not possible before, and the long-standing dream of repairing nerve damage is beginning to move closer to reality. While a cure remains elusive, the outlook for people with MS today is more hopeful than at any time in the past.

Donation from Dagnall Walking Group

We have received a Donation of £90 from the Dagnall Walking Group.

This is the third donation we have received from them and are grateful for their support.

The Group members are all friends having a connection with Dagnall Village, which is a few miles from Leighton Buzzard. On the first Sunday of each month the group meets for a walk with members taking it in turns to

organise a place and route to walk usually ending up at a pub or café.

This month the walk was organised by my partner Pascale Searle, so I had the pleasure of joining them. I enjoyed the 4km walk with them and the post walk lunch at Sorrelli's Café even more!

So thank you Dagnall Walking Group.

Ian Summerfield

Group contacts and information

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Gene that protected humans 5,000 years ago may be linked to debilitating modern diseases

By Katie Hunt

CNN, January 11, 2024

Scientists have compiled the largest database of ancient DNA based on the bones and teeth of almost 5,000 humans who lived across Western Europe and parts of Central Asia from 34,000 years ago until medieval times.

Analysis of this uniquely detailed pool of ancient genetic information suggests genes that may have once protected prehistoric hunter-gatherers or Bronze Age herders from harmful pathogens may today increase the risk of neurodegenerative diseases such as multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's in Europeans.

The ambitious five-year project involving a team of 175 international experts combined previously known ancient genomes with freshly sequenced DNA from hundreds of skeletal specimens sourced from museums and other institutions across Europe. Together this data forms the world's largest ancient gene bank, according to the scientists involved in the project.

Early risers may have inherited a faster body clock from Neanderthals.

Researchers were able to use the database to chart the spread of genes — and diseases — over time as populations migrated and interbred, revealing how specific and dramatic changes in environment, such as the shift from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to farming, favored certain genetic variants.

By comparing the ancient DNA with modern-day samples, the researchers gained a new biological understanding of debilitating disorders and physical traits in the present day. The initial results from the project were published in four papers in the scientific journal *Nature* on Wednesday.

“What’s remarkable about this dataset is that now we can actually see what happened in the past, we can actually see what are the genetic variants that change in frequency in the past due to natural selection. And that allows us this very, very fine-grained picture,” said Rasmus Nielsen, a professor of integrative biology and geneticist at the University of California, Berkeley, who helped spearhead the project.

How Bronze Age herders are linked to MS

One of the key findings from the first batch of research, based on more than 1,600 genomes in the database, was connected to MS which affects an estimated 2.5 million people worldwide.

Northern Europeans are among those most prone to the disease, the study noted, but the reasons why are little understood.

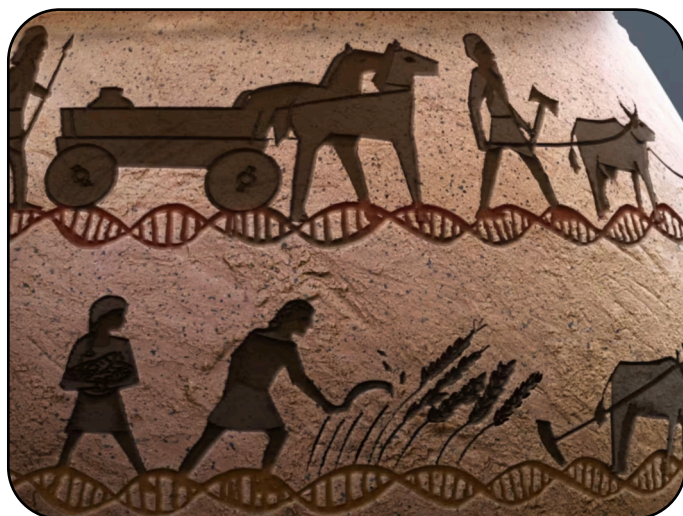
Researchers used the database to explore the genetic origins of MS. They found that genetic risk of having the condition correlates to the proportion of ancestry from a group of ancient pastoralists who introduced domesticated animals to Europe around 5,000 years ago.

These nomadic herders of cattle and sheep, known as the Yamnaya, originated from the Pontic steppe, which stretches from southeastern Europe into Kazakhstan. It's thought they were the first horse riders, making them highly mobile.

When they moved westward into Europe, they brought specific genetic variants that the researchers believe evolved to protect the nomads against pathogens carried by domesticated animals, the study found.

These genetic variants may have subsequently proved beneficial to European populations in making the shift from hunting and gathering to farming. And because the Yamnaya primarily moved into northern Europe, the team

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The researchers recovered DNA from the bones of ancient humans to better understand the genetic roots of disease. Sayo Studio

concluded that the increased proportion of pastoralist ancestry in present-day northern Europeans might be partly responsible for the higher prevalence of the disease there.

“These results astounded us all. They provide a huge leap forward in our understanding of the evolution of MS and other autoimmune diseases,” said William Barrie, a postdoctoral researcher in the University of Cambridge’s department of zoology. “Showing how the lifestyles of our ancestors impacted modern disease risk just highlights how much we are the recipients of ancient immune systems in a modern world.”

Today, the protective benefits of these genetic variants are no longer as useful, noted coauthor Astrid Iversen, a professor virology and immunology at the University of Oxford.

“We now lead very different lives to those of our ancestors in terms of hygiene, diet, and medical treatment options and this combined with our evolutionary history means we may be more susceptible to certain diseases than our ancestors were, including autoimmune diseases such as MS,” Iversen said in a statement

Alzheimer’s link

Researchers also mapped the origins of a genetic variant, APOE ε4, known to increase the risk of Alzheimer’s disease. The gene was linked to early hunter-gatherer populations that once inhabited prehistoric Europe, one of the four studies found.

“DNA from hunter-gatherers is present at higher levels in Northeastern Europe, which means the region has an elevated genetic risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease,” Barrie said.

Similarly, the ancient genetic information shed light on the evolutionary history of traits such as height and lactose tolerance.

In commentary accompanying the research, Samira Asgari, an assistant professor in genetics and genomic sciences at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, said that it was crucial to extend these types of studies beyond Europe to other regions to

“better understand how differences in population history might have contributed to the risk of autoimmune diseases such as MS.”

“Although human biology is shared, each population has a unique history and focusing on a single population limits opportunities for discoveries that can bring insights that advance medicine,” wrote Asgari.

The new database provides the “most comprehensive views of the genetic history of a region to date,” said Tony Capra, an associate professor of epidemiology and biostatistics in the Bakar Computational Health Sciences Institute at the University of California.

“This has enabled the authors to fill in missing details in our understanding of both who lived where and when as well as how natural selection shaped the traits of modern individuals,” he said.

However, Capra cautioned that there is “rarely a simple answer to why one population may have a genetic variant while another does not.”

“The evolutionary history of our species makes many contributions to our health and traits today,” said Capra.

“However, both then and now, all these genetic effects are modulated by the environment. And for most traits, MS included, the genetic effects are the result of multiple genetic variants,” he said. “Ultimately, we can’t say that MS came from Bronze Age populations, but these populations’ movements and environments contribute to differences in MS risk today.”



The researchers sequenced DNA from human remains in museum collections around Europe.

The Danish National Museum

Quiz: How well do you remember 2025?

Answers on page 9

1. What was the first named storm to hit the UK in 2025? Storm Éowyn, Storm Darragh or Storm Floris.
2. Outcry followed the unauthorised felling of a tree that had stood for more than 100 years in a gap in Hadrian's Wall. What kind of tree was it?
3. A 19th October heist in which European capital saw crown jewels disappear from which world-famous museum? London, Amsterdam, or Paris.
4. Blaise Metreweli became the first female chief of what in 2025? The Bank of England, MI6, or the British Embassy in Washington DC.
5. The UK government scrapped a plan to phase out what by 2035 at the start of this year? Diesel cars, gas boilers, or triple-lock pensions.
6. In January, the government backed plans for a third runway at which airport? London Heathrow Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, or Lerwick Tingwall Airport.
7. The UK's longest direct train service, which linked Aberdeen and Penzance, ran for the last time after a century of use in mid-May. To the nearest 50 miles, how long was the journey?
8. The UK and EU agreed in June to end checks on people and goods crossing which border? Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, Gibraltar and mainland Spain, or the Eurostar terminal at St Pancras.
9. Manchester's Viadux 2 was granted planning permission in April. When built, it will become the tallest building outside of London, with how many floors? 76 or 176.
10. Hosepipe bans came into force in Yorkshire, Kent, and Sussex in July. In which county were they imposed first?
11. The UK government sent alerts to all mobile phones on British networks on 7th September. But at what time?
11. Which country elected its first female prime minister in October? Australia, Japan, or Brazil.
13. The 90's band Oasis reformed and played their first concerts for 15 years in July 2025. Which UK city staged the first show of the tour?
14. What type of bird escaped from Paradise Park Wildlife Sanctuary in Cornwall and flew to Brittany despite having its wing clipped?
15. Which Premier League manager in 2025 lasted less time in his job than Liz Truss' term as Prime Minister?
16. In June 2025 the discount chain Poundland was sold by its owner Pepco Ltd. to Gordon Brothers. How much did this American investment firm pay?
17. What illegal activity were US Vice President J D Vance and British Foreign Secretary David Lammy caught doing in August 2025?
18. What breed of dog was voted Supreme Champion at Crufts 2025?
19. Pope Leo XIV became the the first American born Pope in May 2025. In which US City was he born?
20. In September England Women won Rugby Union's World Cup, which Commonwealth country did they beat in the final?
21. What caused Heathrow Airport to shut down completely in March stopping more than 1300 flights?
22. Which city became Britain's City of Culture in January 2025?
23. What honour did "Strictly Come Dancing" hosts Tess Daley and Claudia Winkleman both receive in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours?

Picture Quiz: Who and why in 2025?

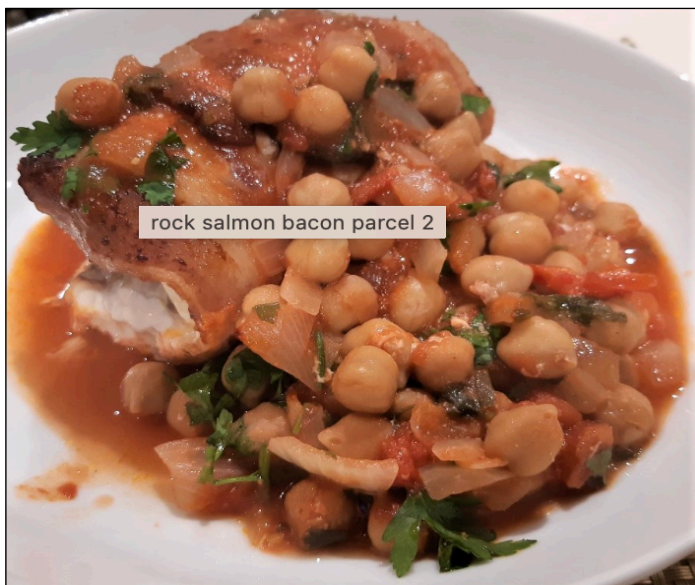
Answers on page 9



GOOD FOOD

Rock salmon aka small shark (Dogfish), offers a boneless flesh which melts in the mouth. It's rarely purchased in the UK and subsequently offers excellent value. I seasoned the filets and wrapped them in streaky bacon before resting on a tangy tomato sauce I'd knocked up and baking in a medium oven. The results are sensational: The velvet texture of the fish combined with the smokiness of the bacon, enveloped in the sauce and chick peas makes this a one pot stop.

Rock salmon bacon roll with chick peas in a tomato sauce



Servings: 2

Ingredients

750 grams rock salmon, filleted
150 grams bacon, smoked streaky
1 whole onion, diced
1 tin tomatoes
1 tin chick peas
5 grams sugar teaspoon
10 ml balsamic vinegar (2 tsp)
15 grams fresh parsley, chopped
3 cloves garlic, peeled & diced
5 grams fennel seeds, ground (tsp)
5 grams paprika (tsp)
13 ml olive oil (tablespoon)
Salt & pepper

Recipe courtesy of James Coke who has had PPMS for more than 20 years.

More of his recipes can be found at:
thedisabledchef.com

Method:

Season the rock salmon then wrap in the streaky bacon making into parcels.

Secure these with cocktail sticks.

Make the tomato sauce:

Saute the onion in half the olive oil until soft.

Add the tin of tomatoes, balsamic, sugar, fennel, tomato puree, half the chopped parsley and chopped garlic.

Allow everything to marry before adding chick peas, stirring through before transferring to a baking tray/dish

Rest prepared fish on the tomato sauce, spooning liquid over.

Sprinkle with paprika and drizzle with olive oil. Bake at 175 degrees for 35 minutes.

Dress with remaining chopped parsley and serve immediately.

Dates for your diary

Please put the following dates in your diary:

Chiropractor talk	27 February	10am at GUR room, Greenfields, Theedway
Coffee morning	27 March	11am at Greenfields, Theedway
Coffee morning	4 April	11am at Greenfields, Theedway
Coffee morning	29 May	11am at Greenfields, Theedway
Coffee morning	26 June	11am at Greenfields, Theedway

Quiz answers: how well do you remember 2025?

1. Storm Éowyn on 24 January 2025
2. Sycamore
3. Paris, The Louvre
4. MI6
5. Gas boilers
6. London Heathrow
7. 775 miles, so a point for anything between 725 and 825 miles
8. Gibraltar and mainland Spain
9. 76
10. Yorkshire
11. 3pm
12. Japan
13. Cardiff
14. Flamingo
15. Ange Postecoglou
16. £1 of course
17. Fishing without a licence
18. Whippet
19. Chicago
20. Canada
21. A fire in an electricity sub-station
22. Bradford
23. MBE

Picture quiz answers: Who and why in 2025?

1. **Oscar Wilde.** The British Library re-issued his reader's card 130 years after revoking it.
2. **Biddy Baxter.** TV presenter, presented Blue Peter for 23 years.
3. **George Orwell.** The Royal Mint marked 75 years since his passing by releasing a commemorative £2 coin.
4. **Dame Jilly Cooper.** Passed away in October aged 88.
5. **John Hemingway.** The last surviving pilot of the Battle of Britain passed away aged 105.
6. **Dame Sarah Mullally.** Became the first female Archbishop of Canterbury.
7. **J D Vance.** Became deputy President of the U.S.A.
8. **Benjamin Netanyahu.** Prime Minister of Israel. Prominent figure in Gaza dispute.
9. **Charlie Kirk.** Political activist in U.S.A. Ally of Donald Trump. Assassinated in September.
10. **Emma Watson.** Actress. Re-ignited dispute with J. K. Rowling.
11. **Rory McIlroy.** Golfer, winner of the Sport Personality of the Year 2025.
12. **María Corina Machado.** Venezuelan winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Gave her medallion to Donald Trump.