



SUMMER ISSUE 2013

December 2012 meeting

It was no surprise when Santa along with his helper, chief Elf Audrey, made his usual appearance at our very well attended December 2012 Christmas party. Members were busy chatting and 'catching up' during the first half hour, followed by our chair Sybil who gave a warm welcome to everyone. The party started with our traditional tortoise drive which created lots of chaos and fun, Peter was the winner with the highest score and received a large tortoise shoe cleaner brush, Iain received the loser's prize. Next we were entertained with a humorous sketch, 'Lawn Maintenance', performed by Sybil and George who had everyone laughing from start to finish. Afterwards members tucked into the most scrumptious buffet with so much food that everyone kept going back for more.



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**The Story of an Amazing and Courageous Young Man
Grant Prichard**

Grant was born in Lancaster in 1994, at the age of 6 he joined the Scout movement as a Beaver, for Grant this was the beginning of an astounding journey, and as he became older he moved to Cubs, followed by Scouts and then Explorers. Grant's interest and involvement with these organisations gave him access to a variety of experiences; he has a passion for cycling, and is a member of Cogset at Lancaster and prior to his illness was often to be found at the Velodrome in Manchester.

Sadly, at the age of 15 Grant became ill with Guillain Barré Syndrome (GBS) and it was whilst at the Velodrome that his family realised how ill he was. In total, and during their quest to obtain a diagnosis, Grant saw three different doctor's, the first told him it was growing pains and to return in two weeks, during this time he developed flat feet, in order to help with this he was bought some inner soles as his Mum thought this may have helped. Grant then visited a second doctor who told him to return in six weeks, as this would give the inner soles time to work. By this time Grant's family were not satisfied with this and took him to see a third doctor, who, within five minutes diagnosed GBS, immediately Grant was sent straight to hospital and given immunoglobulin treatment, this, in the family's eye was a success.

On being released from hospital, Grant was determined to carry on with his life as normal, enjoying the activities that he did before GBS, and so just two days later he went to the scout camp at Littledale, which is

just outside Lancaster, along with the other Explorers attending he tried to Gill walk,, however, he found this too difficult and decided the best course of action would be to sit on the bank and wait for the others to return. Grant's inability to take part normally in the camp activities did not deter him at all, and very soon the opportunity to attend a camp at Great Towers arose, this he insisted he was not going to miss! Although he was not yet walking properly and could cover only a short distance he still attempted to join in, and when the other Explorers realised Grant was finding it difficult to get around



they would give him piggy backs around the site, they then went on to using a wheelbarrow to wheel him around - this caused great hilarity, but they always laughed with him and never at him.

In 2012 the opportunity arose to visit Denmark with other Scout groups from the Lancaster area, this trip even included a day trip to Sweden to visit the World Scout Jamboree, for Grant and his fellow traveller's this was an amazing sight as there were 38,000 Scout's in attendance.....in Grant's own word's " It was some sight".

On arriving home from the Denmark trip, both Grant and his brother Scott said they would like to attempt to gain their Explorer belt's by taking part in West Lancashire Scouts Explorer Belt 2012, with this in mind they began to raise funds to enable them to do this. The Explorer Belt is the challenge of a lifetime, open to Explorer Scouts aged 16 and over and are members of the Scout Network. It is the chance to take part in a ten-day expedition that brings a real understanding of a different country, its people and way of life. To complete the Explorer Belt Award, an Explorer Scout or Scout Network member must:

be over 16, plan and train for an international expedition as part of a small team, arrange travel to another country and travel through that country over 10 days, visit rural and urban areas, complete a self selected major project, complete about ten smaller 'surprise' projects, keep to a given food budget, keep a notebook or diary during the expedition, take part in a debriefing after the expedition and deliver a presentation about the expedition.

Altogether 33 young people from the local area took part, these were split into groups of 3's and 4's on arrival in Romania. The distance covered each day had to be at least 100 miles and with them they took all of their



belongings with each one carrying a total of 22 kilo's. When Grant arrived home he totalled up the distance that his group had walked in 10 days, it came to a staggering 116 miles.....and it had been done in a searing 40 degrees! This really was no mean feat for anyone!! Those who took part in the expedition were presented with their awards at BAE Systems, Warton, near Preston on 7th December 2012, the families and friends in attendance saw the journey of the Explorers in pictures and heard reflections of the amazing journey's they had experienced. Each and every one of the Explorers deserved the applause and recognition for completing the expedition.

All of this Grant has achieved in the 2½ years since being ill with GBS, Grant keeps going from strength to strength, and just gets on with life while seeing things as a new challenge, during this time he has never once said "Why me?"

Grant's achievements have been made possible with the help and support from family, friends and also by Rosie Hyslop (GBSSG Child/Parent Contact) who gave unstinting support and advice to his Mum.

A few words from Grants mum, Tricia:

It is hard to put into words the unconditional help and support that Rosie (GBSSG child/parent contact) has given Grant and myself, and is still giving us along with other members of the Guillian Barré Support Group, at the same time we must not forget the other members too who give their time and support to others in the same way.

When Grant was discharged from hospital all the knowledge I had was he couldn't walk very far so he was going to need physiotherapy and regular hospital visits for checkups. When we got home that day we both just sat down and slept with exhaustion. The following day I phoned Rosie, I was given her name and number through a mutual friend that knew Rosie's daughter also had Guillian Barré Syndrome some years earlier. I must have been all of two hours on the phone and Rosie's support set me up to cope with this devastating illness that my son was going through. The greatest advice was everybody is affected differently and their recovery rates are all different. Rosie told me that I needed to re-think my ways of parenting. I am used to sending the kids to school no matter what illness/complaint they had, but now it had to be different. I had to listen to Grant and if he said he couldn't do anything I had to take this on board. She told me that even when recovered some are left with residual symptoms - Grants is tiredness, if he's ailing for something then he sleeps for England - this is our new normality. People think just because you look normal everything is fine and you are fully fit - we all know this is not correct. We are really lucky Grant's recovery was very good and relatively quick, but others are not so lucky. Rosie also told me things about the illness and the way that Grant may feel - these were things that Grant wouldn't say to me - tingling in his hands and feet, and feeling extremely exhausted, Grant wouldn't tell me these things as he didn't want to worry me but it was all part of the illness that I didn't understand or know but importantly needed to know.

Rosie's advice and time in the first telephone call was invaluable. She offered a sympathetic ear, good advice and help. She offered her time to go to the hospital with us for checkups if we wished. She listened to us when we were worried and all the advice and help was given unconditionally with a smile and a genuine caring attitude. No matter what time of night or day she was there for us.

Thank you Rosie.

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AGM 9th March 2013

Firstly, Sybil (Chair) opened the meeting by giving an overview of branch activities during 2012. She thanked each individual member of the committee for their sustained hard work and support, explaining each of their roles and all the additional jobs each one took on. In turn Mike (Secretary) thanked Sybil for her dedication and hard work that she gives to the branch throughout the year, she has held money raising events such as a GBS Christmas Tree, sewing aprons, making various handicrafts, scarecrows, the list is endless.



Next Joan (Treasurer) presented the accounts, she thanked all those who have sent donations over the past year, also those who have given items for the sales table, Sybil for the craft items, Rosie for collections and re-cycling of used ink cartridges, all of which help to swell our funds. Joan gave special thanks to George who manages the 100 club so efficiently and Tim who organises the Raffle at meetings with numerous prizes to be won, not forgetting the extremely large box of chocolates he brought which was auctioned. Thanks were

expressed to 'Kenyons Blackpool Ltd', Ann's employment up to her retirement, they have donated slippers and shoes for our stall which has boosted the funds. Finally Joan gave a big thank you to all who have supported our fund raising with such enthusiasm.



'Rosie's Children's Initiative' is still at the forefront in conjunction with head office, although slight changes have been made due to the current economic climate, we are looking to fund a training medium for medical professionals to help with GBS and CIDP in children. This has been Rosie's dream for a long time and she has persistently worked endlessly to get to where we are at present. This year we are looking to raise extra funds especially for this children's project.



Michael Hunt (branch secretary) was our speaker and he gave both an enjoyable and interesting talk of his experiences crossing the Sahara Desert. Mike recounted a thirty day crossing of the Sahara towards the end of a journey in a Bedford truck from Johannesburg to London in 1973/4. The Sahara stretch was through the centre from Niger, into Algeria and then Morocco. It hasn't been possible to take this route for several years due to civil wars, but



Mike says that then it was peaceful, although some of his party were arrested on trumped up charges of entering Algeria unlawfully, taken to the coast and put on trial while he and his companions were held outside Tamanrasset in the middle of the desert, as they were kept in the dark as to what was happening, the situation was quite tense, but the cases were eventually dismissed. With the help of an illustrated memoir, Mike described the amazing geography and remarkable Taureg nomads, including a morning spent with a family group watering their animals at a well and, later, a drive around a mountainous region - the Hoggar Massif - half the size of France.

The entire journey took four months during which he climbed Kilimanjaro and an active volcano in the Congo and crossed the Ituri Forest during the rainy season. He's promised to give further talks about his travels from time to time.

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Jonathan Moore's 'Tour of Wessex'

Jonathan, son-in-law of members John and Joan Haresign, is taking part in the tour of Wessex cycling event which takes place over the weekend Saturday 25th May – Monday 27th May 2013. The Tour of Wessex is a 330 mile, 3 day cycling event taking in 18,000 feet of climbing through the Wessex countryside, so not an easy ride. Although Jonathan has taken part in many cycling events, this will be the first one to raise money for charity, he chose the GBS charity as his father-in-law John contracted the disease in 2007 and he saw how debilitating the illness was and how long and arduous the road to recovery can be.



The North West and Cumbria branch along with head office support are fund raising for a project that will help children who suffer from GBS and related illnesses. At present the format of the project is yet to be decided and we are in consultation with paediatric and neurological consultants the GBS medical board

Jonathan has set a target of £3,500 and if you would like to support Jonathan in his efforts you can do so by contributing an amount via the Just Giving internet site or by sending a cheque to our branch treasurer Joan Haresign, details are;

Jonathan is registered with Just Giving at www.justgiving.com/moor071
Or by post to
Mrs J Haresign, 1 West Mount, Orrel, Wigan, Lancs WN5 8LX
Cheques payable to 'Lancs & Cumbria GBS support group.

We would like to thank Jonathan in advance for all his hard work in training for this event and to wish him all the best. Also thank you to those of you who have or those of you who are going to contribute to Jonathan's event.

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Our next meeting at Bilsborrow Village Hall is on Saturday June 15th, we will be holding our annual plant sale along with welcoming a guest speaker. There will be a question and answer time over a cuppa where we chat about our experiences and the after effects of GBS and CIDP, everyone is welcome.

MEETINGS 2013

- JUNE 15THPLANT SALE AND SPEAKER
- SEPTEMBER 21STTO BE DECIDED
- DECEMBER 7THCHRISTMAS PARTY AND JACOBS JOIN