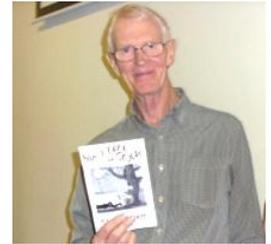


SUMMER ISSUE 2014

December 2013 we hosted our traditional Christmas party, it was a huge success with over 30 members attending. Firstly we had our tortoise drive which always creates a little fun, followed by Steve Morris who entertained us with a humorous selection of his monologues and poems, his view of life's goings-on. Mike introduced Steve by giving us a brief on how he came to know him.

"About 12 years ago, when I was chairman of a community publishing co-operative in Wigan called Towpath, someone phoned me and asked for help and advice about publishing a collection of poems. I didn't hear from him again until Jo, my wife, told me that while on an organised walk, this tall sandy haired bloke was spouting on about getting some monologues published. The top and bottom of it was that within a few months we had published his first book, he'd joined our committee and we've kept in touch ever since. This man has a talent for writing and presenting the most outrageously funny and sometimes scurrilous tales about the lives and habits of northern folk".



Steve has produced several collections of scribbling and a CD, also he has many radio and public appearances to his credit over the last few years. His monologues are hilarious and Steve entertained us with a few of them which are full of northern tradition and customs. He is very talented with an unusual imagination.

A Jacobs Join followed with a stunning array of food which members had brought, so while everyone tucked into the fare Tim held his usual raffle with lots of prizes. Rosie gave an up-date on 'Rosie's Project' after meetings held in November which she attended with Caroline from head office, she briefly outlined the possible route it will take. There were various stalls which were well supported.

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Our AGM was held in March and Sybil, Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone who attended, giving a special welcome to new guests Anne and Tim, and Chantel and her mum. A few members were too ill to attend and our thoughts were conveyed. Sybil began by introducing each committee member individually, explaining the enthusiasm, dedication, duties and tasks that each one carries out throughout the year, she also introduced new committee member Gerald Wilson. Mike followed by saying Sybil was always thanking everyone else, so it was time for us to thank her and show how much we appreciate the work that she undertakes all year. Next was the business of the branch followed by our Treasurer

SYBIL Joan, who gave an excellent report on the accounts, thanking everyone who had helped to boost our funds during the year.

Following the formalities we held a question and answer session, this gave both regular and new members chance to discuss particular problems following GBS and CIDP. These included the voice box which had stopped working, the throat being affected, one member found that basically her body forgot to breath. Tingling and numbness was a persistent problem, and the inability to smile affected some. Members felt it was beneficial sharing their experiences.



Mike, branch secretary, rounded off the social with another episode of 'epic overland expeditions' – very much a reflection of his carefree and single youth. His interesting talk, with help from Jo his wife, was Istanbul to New Delhi, taking in the Turkish archaeology sites along the south coast, Syria, Jordon including Jerash and the magnificent Nabatean city of Petra – in his words 'the most magnificent ancient site in the world'. Mike had come armed with a 'magical lantern' and several photos, so we were able to appreciate some of the vastness and wondrous cliff-carved architecture of the 'Rose-red city half as old as time'! As Mike says he was very lucky to have been able to travel to some of these places

before they were closed down by politics and civil wars. We only had time to move on to Persepolis in Southern Iran,

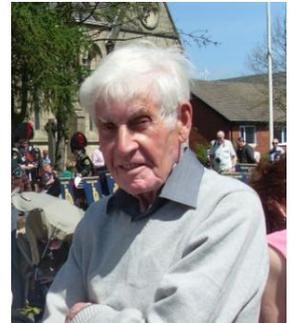
the site of the ancient Persian Kings, Xerxes and Darius, etc, but Mike has offered to complete some of his travels in the future.

Refreshments of tea and coffee with home made cakes were enjoyed and gave members a chance to chat and catch up, meanwhile Tim, with Glenice and Andrews help held the raffle with lots of prizes as usual.

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George Loxam

The committee of the Lancashire and Cumbria branch of 'GAIN' (Guillain-Barré & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies) are deeply saddened to report George passed away on April 10th 2014 after a long illness. We would like to send our heartfelt condolences to Sybil (chair) – George's dear wife, and his family and friends. George had been a member of the group since 1995 after Sybil was taken ill with GBS, he later became a member of the Lancashire and Cumbria branch committee where he contributed so much. In recent years George actively and efficiently ran the 100 club, provided refreshments at the branch meetings, and was also a great support to Sybil in her role as Chair.



Members of the branch have some lovely memories of George, at the Christmas party he would dress up accordingly with Sybil and together they would entertain us with their humorous sketches. One Christmas in particular George dressed up as Noah adorned with flat cap and tools of the trade, hammer, screwdriver and tape measure ready for building the ark, together, with Sybil dressed as a messenger they had everyone laughing.

The committee and several members from the branch joined Sybil and the family at St Oswald's Church in Warton to celebrate George's life, the fact the church was nearly full was a lovely testament to him. The hymns, reads and the poems were very fitting, underlining the caring and kind gentleman that was George.

George had many good qualities and was very much respected by all, we feel proud and privileged to have known him and he will be greatly missed by all at the branch meetings.

GEORGE – *Where do I start? Maybe how we met.*

I was a senior market research interviewer, a job which fitted in with being a single parent and bringing up two children. I loved my occupation as it was so varied and the other interviewers teased me asking why I had never met anyone in my job as there was plenty of opportunity, but I replied, "I don't mix business with pleasure and all I see of the men I interview is the back of their hands and their kneecaps, no eye contact at all", but all that changed many years later. I called at several firms four times a year interviewing the person who dealt with sending out parcels for the firm and they filled in a diary for me followed by a short interview. In the third year I was told my respondent at Remploy in Barrow had left but the factory manager wanted a word with me. I expected to be told off for using the firms time but this lovely Yorkshire voice asked what did I require as he said he would do it for me. I was astounded but slightly annoyed when I went to do the final interview as arranged, to find he had gone off to Liverpool. Phoned him Monday to conduct the interview over the phone and ask him to post the diary to me, I found it through my letter box later that day from 50 miles away. He phoned the next day to make sure I had received it and said if ever I wanted any help with any surveys to call on him, I still hadn't met him face to face. Later on I genuinely needed help as I was asked to arrange a venue, book refreshments and get ten people for a group discussion. I phoned Mr Loxam to ask if he could help or suggest anywhere, he phoned me back later to say it was all fixed up! Ten of his best workers, use of the canteen etc. I went in a pink cotton jumpsuit, met the co-ordinator who was taking the discussion and Mr Loxam who informed me that he had arranged for a tray of tea and biscuits (best china) to be brought to his office so I could sit with him. He chatted about his son, told me he was divorced and the time flew by. He had the most wonderful deep brown eyes that twinkled and a fabulous smile. I drove home in a state of sheer bliss. As I got out of the car it felt rather draughty around my back and rear, to my horror I discovered the jumpsuit had split all down the back. Can you imagine, I cringed with embarrassment, do you know from that day until twenty eight years later he still didn't tell me whether he saw this or not. As George was taking his final breaths, I gently whispered "and you still didn't tell me if you saw that pink cat suit was split"!!

George was a lovely man, very thoughtful, considerate, definitely supportive, fun to be with, and whatever we did together we enjoyed – my cottage which goes back to the early 1700s, we took apart and discovered the old beams,

the inglenook, the bread oven, we changed the garden round and had open days for Motor Neurone Disease along with other gardens. We enjoyed our holidays together, Turkey being a favourite spot, went to evening classes together to learn Turkish, we did our share of self catering, went on cruises especially long haul to Brazil and Singapore. We could beg to differ especially when playing Scrabble on holiday. We would just laugh and say The War of the Roses continues, as he was a Yorkshire lad and I a Lancashire lass. He loved taking long walks over 'Warton Crag'. We got married at Gretna Green on 21st December 1995, I had booked a surprise trip to India as George was 65 on the 26th December and was retiring, he always expressed he would love a long haul holiday. Unfortunately whilst in India I was struck with GBS and it was touch and go. George took the full brunt of all this as I was heavily sedated, he did everything. Many years later it was his turn – he had a rare non-cancerous tumour in his stomach and had to have his whole stomach taken away. Later followed another encapsulated tumour from his lungs near his heart and complications set in, he was put on oral chemotherapy for three years and poor George, his personality changed. I miss him greatly but have so many happy memories to look back on of a lovely man.
 Sybil.

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Tim Hoyles

The saying goes – **NO PAIN NO GAIN** – and that was certainly true for Tim when he underwent a fundraising leg wax at the 'De Vere Hotel, Heron's Reach, Blackpool. Tim is a popular member of the branch, he has raised funds in the past, but his main role is organizing the raffle at the meetings, as well as being a member of the committee. He was struck down with GBS in 1997 and was left totally paralyzed, up to this point he was a keen horseman attending horse shows, showing ponies in-hand and breaking horses and ponies in. After spending several months in The Royal Preston Hospital, Tim returned home and worked hard at his recovery, he then became a member of the support group. When he joined the Lancashire and Cumbria Branch it was a lifeline, he had such a lot of support and made many friends which helped his recovery, something which he says 'I am so very grateful and will never forget the support I've received'. Tim wanted to give something back and to boost branch funds towards 'Rosie's Project', so the arrangements were made for a full leg wax and with sponsorship he raised a huge amount of money. This was his most challenging event to date, and also his most painful, although he said he couldn't stop laughing. At the June meeting he was presented with a 'certificate' as a reminder.

Tim wants to thank everyone for their support and generosity.

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June meeting started with a tribute to George Loxam, Mike Bonney expressed our sadness of his passing and of Sybil's loss and said how much he will be missed at both the committee and the social meetings. Sybil thanked everyone for their support and thanked those who attended George's funeral.

A very interesting talk on bees and bee keeping by John Hewitt followed, members were given an insight and some amazing facts about these insects.

John Hewitt

Beekeeping is a relatively new activity in my life. My background is in engineering; trained as a professional electrical and electronic engineer. My first job in 1973 was as a computer engineer. Having been offered the opportunity of a redundancy package at the age of 45, I decided to make a complete change. Whilst working in computing, we moved to a smallholding, so I used this facility to become a chicken farmer, producing free-range eggs for sale in local shops and door-to-door. Using my skills as an electrical engineer, I also started up an electrical contracting business part-time, which eventually became my sole occupation.

I started keeping bees in 2010, mainly because I could see that many of the flowers, particularly on vegetables and fruit, were not being adequately pollinated. Having got that first colony, I quickly became addicted and decided that this was the way I wanted



to go. The two areas I am particularly interested in are rearing queens and training novice beekeepers. Whilst I was producing eggs, I also lectured part-time on small-scale free-range egg production to the smallholder course at Myerscough College and enjoyed this immensely.

To be successful in these two areas, you need to have expert knowledge and have the credibility. I am therefore going through the training and assessment to be a Master Beekeeper within the British Beekeepers' Association. I have already completed the seven written examinations on all aspects of bees and beekeeping and will soon be going through the practical assessments.

When I started out, I didn't realize how big the subject was and, to my surprise, I have now found out that honeybees are not the main pollinators of my vegetables. They do a significant amount of pollinating of fruit, but it is the bumblebees, solitary bees, and some flies that do most pollinating of the vegetables. In the early 1900's they were nearly wiped out but it is the bee keepers today who are helping to stop their decline.

John explained there are basically 3 types of bees, the bumble bee, honey bee and solitary bee. The bumble bee is recognizable because it is bigger, has more hair, they do not swarm and are not aggressive. Bees play a vital role in pollinating crops and flowers which otherwise could die out. The nest has one queen bee and she can lay 2000 eggs a day, there are lots of workers that look after her and the young, feeding, cleaning and repairing the hive.

Honey bees have to work really hard to produce only a small amount of honey, they can fly as far as 3 miles from their hives collecting pollen, nectar and water, they also collect the sticky substance from trees called propolis which helps to make the hive waterproof. John explained about the 'waggle dance' the workers perform indicating the location of food from the hive, taking into account the angle from the sun's vertical position.



The drones are male and their sole purpose is to mate with the queen. Once they've fulfilled that purpose they die.

John brought with him a hive and demonstrated the internal structure, he explained how the sliding frames had to be exactly a 'bee space' apart and how bees pack the pollen and nectar in the cells.

Refreshments was served with homemade chocolate cakes, oat biscuits, fresh cream cake and scones topped with fresh cream and strawberries while members continued to ask many questions about bees which John was pleased to answer. Sybil thanked John for a very interesting talk. Jacqui said she found his presentation very interesting as she is fascinated by the science of bee-keeping. She said his passion and knowledge was evident and he was very entertaining, adding that she hopes he comes back again to tell us more about his hives.

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We are extremely grateful to Rosemary Ackerley and Ian King who has kindly donated £10,000 from Rosemary's late father's estate to GAIN, with the stipulation that half was to be shared with the Lancashire & Cumbria Branch and ring fenced for use with 'Rosie's Project' It was very generous of them and is hugely appreciated as it will give our funds a much needed boost. Once again thank you very much.

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The committee would like to wish you all an enjoyable summer and hope those of you who are still recovering continue to do so. We look forward to seeing you at our branch meetings in Bilsborrow, everyone is most welcome.

2.00 pm at Bilsborrow Village Hall

September 20th Speaker to be arranged

December 6th Christmas party, Jacobs join, Tortoise drive