

GAIN Charity  
Lancashire & Cumbria Branch  
Bilsborrow Village Hall  
Bilsborrow  
Near Preston  
PR3 0RE



## SUMMER / AUTUMN 2019 NEWSLETTER

It is a pleasure to welcome readers, old and new, to this edition of the branch newsletter. The publication is sent twice a year, the first goes out prior to the branch Annual General Meeting in June, and the second is published mid - late November. It is important to highlight that our 100 Club renewal form is always enclosed with this edition - and, for the first time we are including an open meeting reminder letter, and a small card giving the dates of our open meetings in 2020, which we hope you will find useful.



The branch AGM and annual Plant Sale was held in June. Our Chair Sybil Loxam gave a rundown on branch activities for the previous year and thanked the committee members for their hard work and support during this time, before adding that all committee officers were willing to stand again. Sybil also mentioned how we would welcome new people to the committee, explaining that we meet just four times a year, usually on the Wednesday evening prior to the quarterly open meetings. Extending thanks to everyone who attend our social meetings, Sybil continued by saying it is always a pleasure to welcome new people as well as the regular attendees. Thanks, were also given to the local contacts who visit Royal Preston Hospital every five or six weeks, raising awareness, calling on consultants, and if they wish, visiting patients with GBS and variants, this is valuable work and is most appreciated by the charity.

It was unfortunate for GAIN Charity's Chief Executive, Caroline Morrice not to be with us due to a prior commitment, which was incompatible time wise, but she had sent a resumè of the charities activities that was read on her behalf. We heard how it had been an exciting time at GAIN, with moving to a new office and welcoming a new ambassador to the team. The addition of a third member to the office team was also highlighted, as was how the number of calls being received in the office is increasing, and that more support can be offered to those people than previously by putting them in contact with a suitable peer support volunteer or just sending an information pack. The number is increasing and that includes those wanting to speak to a peer support volunteer, adding that the charity has 54 volunteers around the UK, and many of them have been in contact with patients and their families during the past year. It is not always the person that lives the closest, but it is the person that has the most in common with the patient, which could be through diagnosis, age, gender, family situation and what they ask for help with. Rarely people get a visit, the majority receive just the one phone call, get the answer they need and not look for further contact. Occasionally people will get in touch for further help and advice and may be put in touch with the same, or depending on the question, a different peer support volunteer. Caroline highlighted the "Eat Crisps for Charity" campaign which is spreading far and wide with large organisations and businesses spreading the awareness of GAIN while crunching their pack of cheese and onion. Finally, it was suggested we all 'keep an eye' on the website for updates about the charity, information about participation in trials and studies or for what's new in the shop. Have a look at Facebook and Instagram to see the latest news.

Mike Hunt, Branch Secretary gave his account of branch affairs, echoing Sybil by acknowledging the work of everyone involved in making the branch the success it is. He was followed by Joan Haresign, Branch Treasurer who gave an update on branch finances, she also thanked everyone for their continuing support, giving particular credit to those who fund raise for us. It was then over to Glenis Gill, 100 Club Co-ordinator who explained how important the 100 Club was in also raising funds and pointed out how anyone can join. Next came Rosie Hyslop who is lead on 'Rosie's Project' - reiterating the aims of the project, and adding how further discussions and meetings were in the pipeline with the University of Cumbria, Lancaster in order to bring the project to fruition.

Usually, once our officials have given their updates and other branch business has been concluded, Sybil would hand over to our guest speaker - however, as time is normally of the essence at our AGM, our popular Chair entertained us with a humorous account of her career in market research. Explaining that all interviews undertaken were always face to face and covered a variety of topics, visiting places ranging from a chicken factory, GP surgeries, to market research on polling days and visiting farmers; who were always the 'salt of the earth'. Sybil recalled a particular Saturday morning visit where she found a cow laid out on the floor, and a vet requiring help to push the animal's intestines back inside, another notable memory was of meeting her late husband George at one appointment. It was more than apparent that the four years doing the job had been hugely enjoyable, she had met many lovely people and visited various places, mentioning also how sometimes she was paid not in money, but with cheeses, pans and socks and other items, but this depended on the venue. We were all kept chuckling and smiling at her escapades and delightful tales.



Following on from her talk, Sybil, unexpectedly announced that as from the end of the meeting she would be standing down from her role as Chair and also from the committee after 20+ years - a remarkable span of dedicated service, in so many different ways, all inspirational and practical. A wave of surprise was apparent from the audience, but Sybil quelled concerns regarding the future of the branch - responding positively by saying that the branch would continue in exactly the same way....and how she would still attend the open meetings, and will always be a loyal supporter. Heartfelt thanks for all her contributions and support over the years were paid by all present. As our head office and the committee were aware of Sybil's announcement, Rosie was able to present Sybil with a card and a gift of thanks sent by Caroline Morrice and staff at head office in appreciation and thanks for her work promoting the branch and as a local contact, she was also given a token of appreciation for her huge commitment to the branch over the years from the committee.

As usual once the Q & A session had concluded, refreshments were served, followed by the drawing of the 100 Club numbers, after which our regalia officer and raffle aficionado Tim began the raffle - we trust some of you were lucky to have had a ticket drawn! So far, no mention has been made of Tim, but we must sing his praise and offer our grateful thanks for taking charge of the raffle at each meeting and for all his work behind the scenes.... THANK YOU, TIM!!



We always endeavour to make sure our newsletter is as interesting as possible by covering the branch social meetings and from time to time include personal stories of recovery, journeys with GBS and other feats of achievement. So, if you have a tale which you would like to share in print please forward it to Rosie via her GAIN email address as shown on the final page of this edition.



September arrived very swiftly and soon it was time to make the hall ready for the meeting. We had been expecting to host representatives Lynn Matthews, Brenda her sister and carer, and Christa, Lynne's support dog from the charity Dogs for Good, as well as Mr Charlie, who is Christa's little friend. Unfortunately for us, they were unable to be at our meeting as Lynn's sister had received a nomination in the carer section of BBC Radio Lancashire's Community Heroes Awards and the two events coincided. However, we have booked Lynn and friends to be with us at the September 2020 meeting. We are very pleased to say that an award of Highly Commended was given to Brenda.

Once everyone had assembled, the meeting began with Secretary Mike Hunt, welcoming everyone and after a few short notices, it was announced that Rosie Hyslop had accepted the role of branch Interim Chair until the 2020 AGM when the position would be reassessed.

Taking to the floor Rosie began by thanking everyone for travelling to the meeting, and following a few short comments about the branch and its success she highlighted the new range of GAIN merchandise and Sybil's popular homemade jams (all of which could be purchased at the meeting), and urged people to purchase tickets for the raffle, also pointed out were the branch scrapbooks which detail important events in our history and are available for browsing through at each meeting.

Our speaker, Mr Alan Banes received a very warm welcome and began with telling us a little about himself, one interesting fact was how the talk he was giving to us was his 300th! Alan gave a very interesting, fun and light hearted presentation titled Romance in the Movies, this was enhanced by film clips of musicals and actors / actresses from the 1930's, beginning with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in 1935 up to present date, including the ever-popular Grease, Dirty Dancing and Ghost. Audience participation was required in response to the questions asked and it was lovely to see and hear attendees taking part by tapping their feet and singing along. At the end of this entertaining visit, Alan mentioned his Christmas presentation, seizing on how popular his first visit had been and with our Christmas meeting only weeks away, Rosie asked for a show of hands for Alan to return in December - the vote was unanimous! And we are delighted to announce Alan will be entertaining us once more at our Christmas Party.

While refreshments were being readied Mike hosted our Q & A Session, queries covering GBS and CIDP were raised and were discussed to the best of our ability. This is always a popular segment at our meetings and



we were pleased to see, once again, a variety of topics being brought to the fore. **However, it must be remembered that any comments or opinions given during the session are only from personal experience, as none of us are medically trained. With this in mind we recommend contacting your hospital consultant or other medical personnel for tailored, professional advice.**

As usual during refreshments the draw for the 100 Club was made, followed by the raffle - some may have noticed this was shorter than usual, in order to preserve time, the committee had agreed to a maximum of 10 prizes being drawn at each meeting.

During the meeting some suggestions were made by some of our newer attendees on how the Q & A sessions may be improved. These, along with other ideas for the social meetings will be looked at by our Committee when they next meet.



Everyone on the committee, would like to offer sincere thanks to all who attend our meetings during the year, to those who help with setting up the room prior to starting and to the people who help with refreshments and washing up - we couldn't do it without you! We would also like to send our grateful thanks to everyone for your continuing support and we look forward to meeting you all again at our future meetings.

**2020 MEETING DATES**

***Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March***  
***Speaker: Pat Ascroft***

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June**  
**AGM & Plant Sale**

***Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September***  
***Speaker: Dogs for Good***

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December**  
**Christmas Party &  
Jacobs Join**



Everyone on the committee would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!



**LANCASHIRE & CUMBRIA BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS**

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