

GRAVESEND EPILEPSY NETWORK

Registered Charity Number 802373

January 2014 Newsletter No 32.

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Chairman's report

Welcome to 2014!

What a way to greet a New Year, high winds, torrential rain and floods. America in a huge freeze with -30 degree temperatures. Thank goodness for global warming, otherwise it could have been a whole lot worse!!

2013 was a year of extreme highs and lows. Financially we had a number of welcome donations, plus, inheriting a bungalow in Lancashire! This was from the will of a Mr. Arthur Bickerdike. You will get more details of these items later in the Newsletter.

On the downside in the Group, we have seen the violent death of a highly regarded lady, Jean Shaw plus Chris Ryan & Vav Gauci who were both seriously injured in the same car accident. Another member, Louis Gauci, has just had a quadruple heart bypass, he is progressing slowly. A long term member Pearl Vining has also had surgery. As has David Reely and Lynn Savill. So many members experiencing their own medical ups and downs during the course of the year.

To all of them we wish you a speedy recovery and a healthy, happy new year.

2013 also emphasised that the average age of the membership is increasing. Three long term members have now retired from work (one being myself) and as I have lamented before, we are not getting any young people/families coming to the Group to generate a base of interest. We need this to carry the charity forward for the next generation. It saddens me still that the few new people that do come along are not welcomed or chatted to, so they don't come back. They are not given the social interaction and SUPPORT that the charity was set up to provide. Not exactly what we expect from people that have received that support themselves. Do people now just see the charity as a social club? IT HAS TO CHANGE OR THE CHARITY DIES!!

GEN were able to donate £10,000 to a research project aimed at targeting epilepsy conditions and creating a specific effective medication for each individual. On the back of this donation representatives of GEN were invited to the opening of a new multi-million pound Research Centre at Epilepsy Society's site at Chalfont St. Peter, Buckinghamshire. The name of Gravesend Epilepsy Network will also be engraved on a plaque of donors in the reception of the new research building. This plaque joins another in Chalfont's MRI unit from when we made a previous £10,000 donation several years ago.

As ever, we endeavour to provide support to families in North West Kent and the surrounding area, who are affected by epilepsy. We have people providing this in the local neurology and paediatric clinics. We also have a new person providing benefits support (after the previous one had taken the training we paid for and then used that to provide his own, chargeable, service.) Are we bitter? You bet we are!

Please note that there have been a few changes to the Committee. I would like to thank the outgoing committee members Stewart Marshall and Lee Shiret for their input to the decision making in the past year. In exchange we welcome Ann Hudd as the new Vice Chair, Peter Codling as Membership Officer, Katrina Heaver as Fundraising Officer and David Reely as Community Box Officer. To all, we thank you for volunteering and look forward to a productive and fulfilling 2014.

I would like to thank the other members of the Committee for their commitment during the past year.

Also, a thank you to our members for supporting our various activities during 2013 and I hope that now I am retired I will be able to come along to more gatherings in the coming year!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Fred Savill

Thanks to all our kind friends that have given generous donations this year. These include Elaine & Richard Tayler, Lillian & Alan Gipson, Elaine Hickson, Gwen & Fred Savill, Team Heaver, Ruby Lamble-Murton & friends, Bryan Dann who gave £50 in memory of Jean Shaw and Janet & Tom Berrie.

Lots of these names appear each year. We don't want you to ever think that we take these donations for granted. We appreciate every penny that is ever given to us. It enables us to help people with epilepsy and their families. I think by now that most people know that any money over is given to research into epilepsy and to recognised epilepsy projects.

A few words about Janet & Tom's donation. They have specifically asked that it should be spent on a local, social event! So.... suggestions please. **LS**

We met up at Sainsburys to be presented with a cheque from MeeHealth Care. It turned out to be a lovely couple of hours. There was a delicious buffet with alcoholic and non alcoholic drink available. Two local charities had been chosen to receive generous donations. Gravesend Epilepsy Network and Alzheimer and Dementia Support. We felt very honoured to have been chosen. When the time came for the cheques to be presented Fred, our Chairman, gave a short speech saying thank you on behalf of GEN. Although I hadn't been asked, I thought that I would like to say a few words. I wanted to let everyone who attended know how much the Epilepsy group has helped me. I was very, very down and depressed and tried to commit suicide. Jackie my wife then found out about GEN and we started going along to coffee mornings. I met lots of different people and realized that I was not alone. They helped me by just being there. I hope to put into GEN anything that I can help with to pay back in some small way everything the group has done for me. **PC**

Early in 2013 I had a telephone call from a company called MEE Health. They were opening a new health drop-in centre at the revamped Sainsburys store at Pepper Hill. They said that they make donations to 2 local charities whenever they open a new outlet and we had been chosen for this particular opening. I supplied them details of what we do and how long we have been running and gave them quotes to be released to the local press to coincide with the opening. 2 days before the presentation I had a call from the Daily Mail asking how much we had received from MEE Health, I said that I did not know as the presentation had not taken place yet. They said that they would ring back afterwards. On the Saturday of the presentation the Daily Mail had a big write up on MEE Health and how Cherie Blair and an American doctor had put this 'offshore' company together to avoid paying tax!

Several members of the group went along to the presentation which included a light buffet and drinks. There were also representatives from Alzheimer's & Dementia Support, who were also receiving a donation. The new Deputy Mayor and a few other invited guests were also there. I was speaking to MEE Chief Finance Officer before the presentation during which he was called away a number of times to take calls from his boss. (I found out later that he was telling him to increase the donation amount!)

When it came to the actual presentation MEE Health employees gave speeches and then gave both charities cheques for £1500! Both the representative from Alzheimer's & Dementia Support and I gave speeches about our charities and what the donation would be used for. Just before winding up the speeches our Peter Codling asked to say a few words and gave a very moving speech about how being involved with GEN helped him after he tried to commit suicide. Everyone was so emotional afterwards that all we could do was gather round and thank Peter for HIS support of what we do.

After the presentation I was telephoned by my contact at MEE Health who told me how moved their people were at Peter's talk and asked me to provide another press release for them to send out. **FS**

At the get together at Sainsburys MeeHealthcare donated £1.500 to GEN. We send them our thanks for the amazing donation and assure them that not a penny will be wasted. **DH**

The coffee mornings at Riverview Café continue to be well attended. Sometimes there are so many of us it's hard to find a seat! Food and drink is very reasonable and very tasty. If you've never been before try and come along sometime in 2014 and meet with us. You don't have to be mad to come but it does help! Only joking there are a couple of sensible ones there! **CR**

Our coffee mornings at Riverview Cafe have continued to be a great success. The staff know when we are coming so have the tables ready and it's lovely for us all to get together and have a chat. I would like to say a big thank you to all the staff for accommodating us every fortnight. **SG**

Just like last year the contributions we received from the Give As You Earn scheme and the Easyfunding scheme amounted to £120. We are extremely grateful for the regular and welcome amount these schemes bring in and thank the people involved. **DH**

Thanks once again to our many used stamp collectors. These include Joan Silverton, Sheila Marshall, Clive Sharples, Liz Allen, Bryan Dann, Maggie Lendrum and friends, Janet Berrie, Nigel Jackson, Sandra Avis, Georgia Heaver and the residents and friends at Blenheim Grove. See below on how important this now is for us. **LS**

This year we are going to be collecting used postage stamps in a big way! We have been collecting stamps for the Chalfont Centre for Epilepsy for many years and all the money raised goes to research. This year they have stopped collecting them. Then as a coincidence I had an email from a company that buys used stamps. Susan had already rung around every epilepsy organisation to see if they collected them and a couple of them said no, but they would be interested if we found one! So, we are writing to all of the epilepsy organisations telling them to send theirs to us! We will then sell them by the kilo and the money raised will go to research into epilepsy.

Is there anyone *you* know that would save their used stamps for us? Or any Company you could approach to ask if they'd consider it? Give it a go! They can only say no! Or yes!!! **LS**

In March, Fred & I were asked to go along to Epilepsy Society at Chalfont St Peter for the official opening of their £3.4 million development. This integrates the brand new Research Unit with the existing Medical Unit & MRI suite. The Research Unit will house the only DNA sequencer in the UK dedicated to epilepsy. It will revolutionise the way epilepsy is diagnosed and treated based on a person's DNA. You may remember one of the Professor's at Chalfont coming along to the Group a few years back-Prof Sanjay Sisodia. He has said that he hopes, within 5 years that treatment may be individualised. Wouldn't that be amazing!

We were able to donate that day £10,000 for research and we have included the thank you letter from Epilepsy Society. Their letter also includes the exciting research that is being carried out at present. **LS**

In March we had our Bring and Buy sale. Everyone donated something towards this and thanks to great sales techniques a great sum was raised. Well done everyone! **SG**

Please don't forget to ALWAYS get the same manufactured anti-epileptic drug. This is so important. Some people with epilepsy have found that they have breakthrough seizures when the drug company is different. Take the box so you can check when you collect that they are the same. Then politely refuse them if they are different and tell your pharmacist why. I have a letter from a leading Professor telling GP's and Pharmacist's why this is important. If anyone would like a copy please let Susan know on the Helpline. **LS**

Gravesend Epilepsy Network is listed on 'Easyfundraising'. This is an organization that helps charities raise funds. AND YOU CAN HELP US WITH IT NOT COSTING YOU A PENNY! Everyone who uses a computer uses a Search Engine; this could be Google, Yahoo, Bing, Ask etc. There is a search engine called EASYSEARCH. This site works with easyfundraising. Every search you type in to easysearch makes Gravesend Epilepsy Network half pence. If you register with easysearch or easyfundraising it gives GEN 50p! Everything you purchase, be it Amazon, Thomson's, LateRooms etc through a search on easysearch makes money for GEN. Do have a look and consider helping us raise funds.

There are 4 people registered so far and we received a cheque from easyfundraising for £17.89 for the quarter year! **LS**

I'm sure, by now, that most of you know Linda Jadidi. Susan, Linda & I work the Epilepsy Information Desks at Darent Valley Hospital. She has kindly written the following. **LS**

In May Susan and I attended a special assembly at Dartford Girls Grammar School. We had been invited by Ruby Lamble-Murton whom Susan and Lynn have known for some years through Ruby's visits to the Paediatric Epilepsy Clinic at Darent Valley Hospital. Ruby explained how she had cajoled her classmates in Form 8C into joining her in some fund raising activities to support Gravesend Epilepsy Network; she planned to hand over a cheque at the assembly and wanted us to speak briefly about GEN and what we do.

It's some years now since I stood in front of a hall full of 13 year old girls (I taught in a local secondary school before I retired) and I confess I felt just a touch nervous to find myself sitting on a dais with the better part of 150 pairs of eyes turned towards us. I was so relieved that Susan was there right next to me! But I needn't have worried because the girls were all beautifully behaved and listened attentively to what we had to say.

Miss Ford, Head of Year 8, introduced Susan and me to the girls and asked Ruby to tell us what she and her friends had been doing. Ruby stood up and started to describe some of the activities she and her friends had taken part in. They made cakes and sold them at school during break – delicious! They arranged a non-uniform day, paying for the privilege of coming to school in civvies instead of bottle green, and with the help of their mums held a sponsored sleep over. I'm not too sure how that one worked but I bet it was an absolute hoot!

The girls raised the fantastic sum of very nearly £120; Ruby was so proud to hand the cheque to Susan, and we are all so proud of her for her initiative and her determination to see her project through. I thanked Ruby and her friends and spoke briefly about GEN and what we do in practical terms to improve the quality of life for people with epilepsy and their families by continuing to run our free telephone helpline, by providing free literature and by continuing to train our volunteers.

The girls agreed that they had worked hard and their smiles told us they'd had tremendous fun into the bargain.

An enormous thank you, Ruby, for thinking of us at Gravesend Epilepsy Network. **LJ**

In May Andy Smith the Epilepsy Specialist Nurse at Darent Valley Hospital came along to give us a talk. It was very interesting and informative and I know I certainly learnt a number of things. A good question and answer session followed his talk. **SG**

A store collection in Morrisons took place on 2 days in May. A sum of £260 was collected by Volunteers over the 2 days. I would like to say a personal thank you to those who shook a bucket, especially as I was unable to be there. I know just how cold it can be standing in the doorway, after I did the same last year. **DH**

There has been much publicity about Disability Living Allowance (DLA) being phased out and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) being brought in. It has been really worrying for people as it is going to be much more difficult for people with epilepsy to be granted this benefit. It has been reported that approximately 600,000 less people will qualify (not all with epilepsy).

If you have been granted 'lifetime' benefit it will not affect you until October 2015 when you will be asked to go along for a face to face consultation.

New claims are registered with the application form, and then come the paper or face to face consultation. The Department for Works & Pensions then receives a recommendation from the Assessment Provider and makes the decision. There is to be a Standard Rate or Enhanced Rate.

If you are asked to complete a form remember any additional evidence you may be able to provide. Think about 'good days' and 'bad days'. How your condition may vary day to day, month to month. Any 'hidden' symptoms such as stress, pain, fatigue etc. And always take along somebody with you.

The worry is that PIP is not appropriate for fluctuating conditions. That the Assessment Providers have limited understanding and that there is no 'professional' evidence. It has been reported too that there has been extremely poor performances from some Assessors. Watch this space. **LS**

In June we lost one of the most loved Members of the group. Jean Shaw was involved in the horrific car crash with our other 2 members, Chris Ryan & Vav Gauci. Chris was driving them all to church when, on the Pepperhill Northfleet turnoff on the A2 a car hit them at speed. Jean died instantly and Chris & Vav suffered terrible injuries from which they are still recovering.

Jean was 72 years old and had been a member since 1999. Everybody liked her and she is sorely missed by us all. When she attended coffee mornings or evening meetings, you could always guarantee an extra special time was about to start. Not only will *we* miss her, but her dog Jimmy (Jimbo). He has found some new friends though with Susan, David and Bullseye. They have adopted him and Susan has told me he is settling in well; although I am sure he misses Jean as we all do.

My shoulder definitely misses the smack it would get from her left hand every time she thought I was being rude to her! Now would I ever think of being rude to her? Never!

I think that because I am the Treasurer of GEN, she thought I was the Chancellor of the Exchequer and would smack me, because like everybody else, she didn't like the job he was doing.

Her funeral 3 weeks later was attended by a large number of people whose lives she had touched. I hope that she will rest in peace, but by now, I would think she was up in Heaven causing trouble, just like she did at our meetings! **DH**

Just wanted to add something about Jean who died so tragically in June when we were on our way to church. One thing to thank God for is that she never suffered and was laughing and happy when the crash happened and she died instantly.

She was a good friend for many years even before she moved to Gravesend to be closer to me. I miss her a lot. She had a stupid sense of humour which matched mine and we had some great laughs. She also packed a powerful punch as you all would know if you've been on the receiving end! She was a great character and people will either remember her for her quick wit or quick temper!

She was great dog lover who would do anything to help with any animals. I know she would be so pleased that Susan and David adopted her beloved Jimmy aka Jimbo and how happy he is with them and his new friend Bullseye.

Just to let you know, the driver of the other car is being prosecuted for 'death by careless driving' he pleaded guilty on the 20th December 2013. But due to the death and the seriousness of the injuries that Vav & I suffered the case has been referred to the County Court to be heard at the end of January. **CR**

Vav had 9 broken ribs, a broken sternum, a cracked wrist and chipped knee. Chris had 14 broken ribs, a broken collar bone and badly gashed leg. Both were bruised extensively over all of their body. They are *still* recovering. **LS**

In August at the Fleming Centre (formally the Age Concern Hall), Chris Bull came along once more with another historical talk on Gravesend and local areas. This time he covered the 'ghostly' buildings which were very interesting. He says he doesn't *believe* in ghosts. He says he doesn't *disbelieve* in ghosts! He lets you make up your own mind. Personally I agree with both statements!! There I stand, or sit, on the fence. Good fun and interesting. **CR**

In August Christoph Bull from Gravesend Library came along to give us a history talk. It was about ghosts in properties in Thong Lane and Gravesend. His talks are always captivating and interesting and we look forward to hearing him again during 2014. **SG**

There are new driving regulations for Group 1 license holders who are fit free after one year of not driving. You may now be able to drive even if you are still having seizures. This is the case only if all of the following apply: 1) you stay fully conscious during your seizures 2) you would be able to act, react and control a vehicle normally during the seizure 3) you have only these types of seizures and no other type 4) you have never had a seizure that affects your consciousness or ability to control a vehicle. Previously, with these types of seizures you would have needed to be seizure-free for one year before applying for a new license. This is still the case if you have or have ever had other types of seizures which affect your ability to control a vehicle – for example, where you become confused, feel numb or weak, or are unable to remember what has happened. For more information go to the DVLA website. **LS**

In November 2012 I had a telephone call from a Solicitor in Lancashire saying that he was administering the Will of a Mr. Arthur Bickerdike, who had named GEN as a major beneficiary of his estate.

The Will had nominated small bequests to members of his family, plus requested that his estate provided an annuity of £800 per month for his daughter, Lynne, who had several medical problems, including epilepsy. The rest of the estate, including a 2 bedroom bungalow, was left to our charity.

The cash value in the estate was not enough to generate the annuity for the daughter, so I offered up various suggestions on the best way forward to provide this. We finally agreed an approach that left us some cash, plus the bungalow. However, the cash will not be enough to pay off the outstanding accounts of the Financial Advisor, Solicitor, Utilities and local workers bills.

This will have to come out of the proceeds from the bungalow sale.

During the coming months I liaised with the Solicitor, a Financial Advisor (to generate the annuity) and an Estate Agent to get the best price for the bungalow. Things were hardly moving at all, so, in September, Lynn & I decided to travel to Chorley in Lancashire to kick a few bums and get things moving. The Estate Agent had previously indicated that we should be able to get about £125,000 for the bungalow, but it needed the house contents clearing and the garden also cleared as Mr. Bickerdike had died in December 2011 and the house and garden left untouched for almost 2 years. The best offer the estate agents had received to sell in its current condition was £98,000, which we turned down. Knowing in advance that we would need to employ someone to clear the house and garden Lynn went onto various websites to source a local person to carry out the work as it was impractical for us to do it from so far away.

One Friday at the end of September Lynn & I got trains to Chorley and met the Solicitor. He explained that the original Will had been drawn up by a locum Solicitor and was illegal. A new Will had been drawn up and he was in the process of getting everyone to sign to accept it. Being Trustees of the charity, both Lynn and I read and accepted the revised Will on behalf of GEN. After the meeting the Solicitor drove us to the bungalow to meet up with the Estate Agent. It was at this time we discovered exactly how overgrown the garden was, and what a terrible condition the bungalow contents were in. All the upholstery had mildew from being left untouched during the 2 years. It was a very daunting prospect. We spent that Friday, Saturday and Sunday clearing food from cupboards, emptying wardrobes and disposing of furniture and other items. Lynn advertised an open house on a website called Freecycle, inviting people to come along and take stuff away. This was to avoid GEN paying for its removal. We had some success with a number of people taking various bits and pieces away, which helped considerably.

Luckily one of the 2 local people we interviewed to do the huge amount of work was not fazed and agreed to clear both indoors and out, plus remove everything left, for a reasonable fixed price. This guy was amazing. He kept us informed of his progress throughout the 3 weeks he spent working on the project. When Lynn & I went back in November to check everything, we discovered he had done an amazing job, including painting all the woodwork to freshen the place up. We felt extremely lucky to have found such a great worker and cannot thank him enough.

When we went back in November Lynn and I continued to clear the kitchen cupboards of food items and Lynn cleaned all the white goods in the kitchen. These, we thought, were brown in colour but when cleaned they were actually white! Mr. Bickerdike had been a smoker and everything was stained from the smoke. Not pleasant. During this visit we twice went to see his daughter, having written and telephoned before we went. Unfortunately she has speech problems so misunderstandings occurred and she was not home on both occasions we visited.

We again met up with the Estate Agent, who was impressed with the amount of work that had been done and was confident we should now achieve the asking price of £125,000.

After turning down 3 offers of between £115,000 & £122,000, 2 weeks before Christmas we accepted an offer of £124,995 and are just waiting for the formalities to go through. In addition, although the Estate Agents charged a fee of 1.5% Lynn managed to knock it down to 1%!

During this time I have been consulting with the Charity Commission, Inland Revenue and Land Registry about the charity owning property to ensure that everything we do remains legal. We will keep endeavour to keep GEN Members informed. **FS**

I am not sure if everyone realizes how fortunate we are to have Lynn and Fred representing us. Not only do they help us all individually but as a group also. I refer mainly to the bungalow that we have inherited as a group.

As the property was in Chorley Lancashire it wasn't viable to just 'pop' up there to see what was happening with the Estate Agent and Solicitors. They gave up weekends and weekdays to firstly go by train and the second time by driving all the way up there, taking 5 hours, to find there was a lot more work for them to do than we, the Committee, had all anticipated.

No moans, they just got stuck in and got on with the job. They were cleaning, negotiating prices, meeting Solicitors, gardeners and decorators.

They brought it up to a decent standard. It has been empty for 2 years, and finally got the estate agent to 'pull his finger out'. This resulted in someone putting in an offer recently which the Committee decided to accept and it is now going through.

I would like to take it upon myself to thank them both on behalf of GEN for their continued dedication.

Thank you. CR

We had a surprise letter in September from GIVEACAR.co.uk. I quote 'Giveacar is a not-for-profit scheme that encourages car owners to scrap cars or sell their old, unwanted cars, giving the proceeds to a charity of their choice'. A lady from Gravesend kindly named us as her charity and GEN was sent a cheque for £85.74. A letter of thanks was duly sent. **LS**

In October eight of us attended the Epilepsy Society Annual Conference in London. It was an excellent day and we all picked something up from it, be it new developments, benefits advice or how to make your way around the NHS. ES staff were there to answer any questions and the whole day ran really smoothly. **LS**

In November we had our AGM along with a fish and chip supper. Sadly Stewart decided to stand down as Vice Chairman. We had 3 nominations for his job, Peter Codling, Ann Hudd and Dave Reely. It was very close but Ann came out on top! Congratulations Ann! David Reely is going to be sorting our collection boxes for us by seeing which premises will take one. And Peter Codling is our Membership Secretary. We have Team Heaver, with Katrina heading them. They have many good ideas as our fundraising team.

So I would like to say welcome aboard to all the new Committee Members. I'm sure they will join us all by endeavouring to work for the benefit to GEN.

Following our AGM we had fish and chips delivered from Livingstone Road Fish Bar; once again the food was lovely and fresh (and cheap!) They had 38 portions to cook so a big 'thank you' to them. **SG**

We were sorry to say farewell with a big thank you to Stewart Marshall at our AGM in November. Stewart has been our stalwart and one of our longest standing Vice Chairman. We have been with him during his down times and now his very up times! He has assured us that he and Sheila will still be coming along to meetings, coffee mornings etc. The 2 lovebirds have in fact, said that they will carry on with the raffles at the Hall. So it's not a complete farewell but an adieu. **LS**

Taking over as Vice Chairman is Ann Hudd. Ann & David have been involved with GEN for many years. Both have retired recently so 'want to be more involved'. Ann has already got involved by sorting out people who wanted Christmas dinner with the good idea of slips for deposits. Welcome Ann! **LS**

After our Benefits Officer Sam Broadhurst left us last year to start his own business, we were on the look out for someone to take this important job on. And up steps Joanne Stringer. Jo is a long time member of GEN and has worked for many years at the Disability Information and Advice Line (DIAL). She has agreed to take on the role of Benefits Officer for us and is busy reading up on all of the new legislation regarding DLA and PIP (no small task). Nice to have you on board Jo! **LS**

I would like to say thank you to Lynn & Fred and the other Members for letting me join the Committee. My job will be to ensure that the collection boxes are placed in as many shops in Gravesend Town Centre as possible. I will then go round at a later date and collect them, when hopefully, they will be full! Whilst waiting I am going to sit down and think of some more games for the group. I think everyone enjoyed my 'Guess the number of Sweets' game at the Drinks & Eats Christmas meeting. This made £13.50 for the group so I will see what other games I can come up with. **DR**

I am pleased to be a Committee Member and as I have recently retired from my job as a Disability Employment Adviser I can use some of my time in answering any questions that I may be able to help with to do with employment and disability. I look forward to the coming year with the group especially the coffee mornings. Best wishes to all. **AH**

Over the last several years we, as a family, have run a charity stall at the Invicta Club in Gravesend. We have done this to raise money for Gravesend Epilepsy Network. We have a tombola, white elephant and bric a brac stalls. This has raised a substantial amount for the charity over the years. The charity helped us many years ago and this is our way of putting something back. **KH**

In December we had our Christmas Drinks and Eats. Everyone bought along some food and drink, Christmas cards were distributed and a great time was had by all. **SG**

We had our Christmas meal at Riverview Cafe and once again they didn't let us down. They decorated the tables, the food was fantastic and by the end of the evening no one could move because they were so full! We thank them for such an enjoyable evening. **SG**

As we did in 2013 my family and I (Team Heaver!) will carry on raising funds for Gravesend Epilepsy Network in 2014. It would be greatly appreciated that if anyone has any items that they would be willing to donate that they will let me know. I will be happy to collect and then store the goods until we have enough for a stall. Watch this space! **KH**

The anti epileptic drug Mysoline has been replaced with primidone tablets. The formulation of the tablets, manufactured by SERB Laboratories, is identical to that of Mysoline. **LS**

We are hoping to hold a sponsored walk at Jeskyns Park sometime in August. This event will be open to everyone. Not just GEN members, but friends, relatives, neighbours etc. All should be encouraged to take part! This can also include anyone with mobility problems, dog walkers etc. We will endeavour to make the walk suitable for all. The distances walked would be linked to ability and will be negotiable! **KH**

Earlier in the year Epilepsy Society produced posters asking people to join a campaign. This was to try and get local councils to let people with disabled bus passes travel before 9.30am. And also be able to take a companion/carer. In Gravesham half of this has worked out! People with epilepsy can now obtain a bus pass that means their companion/carer also has complimentary travel. There are many people with epilepsy that will be very relieved to have this happen. **LS**

Following on from this; Gravesham Council are no longer the body that issues bus passes. If your epilepsy is not controlled, meaning that you're unable to get a driving license, you may be eligible for a bus pass. You should go to Gravesend Central Library in Windmill Street with a number of items. 1) Proof of residence in Kent. 2) Recent passport type photo. 3) Letter confirming epilepsy, this historically has been from your GP, Epilepsy Nurse or Gravesend Epilepsy Network. The staff members dealing with this at the library are very experienced and kind and will go through everything with you. You will need to tell them if you need a bus pass with a carer or without. **LS**

The Committee, old and new, wish all Members and friends a happy, healthy 2014.

GRAVESEND EPILEPSY NETWORK

DATES FOR 2014

January

16th Coffee at JK's Riverview Park Gravesend 10.30
30th Coffee at RVP 10.30

February

13th Coffee at RVP 10.30
27th Bring & Buy Clarence Row 7pm

March

13th Coffee at RVP 10.30
27th Coffee at RVP 10.30

April

10th Coffee at RVP 10.30
25th Quiz night Invicta Club Windmill St Gravesend 7pm

May

8th Coffee at RVP 10.30
10th Flag Day Gravesend Town Centre
22nd Coffee at RVP 10.30

June

5th Coffee at RVP 10.30
20th Meal Venue TBA

July

3rd Coffee at RVP 10.30
17th Coffee at RVP 10.30
31st Ian Smith talking about RNLI 7pm

August

16th Sponsored Walk. See Katrina
28th Coffee at RVP 10.30

September

11th Coffee at RVP 10.30
25th Christoph Bull History Talk Clarence Row 7pm

October

10th Fancy Dress & Games Evening Invicta Club
23rd Coffee at RVP 10.30

November

6th Annual General Meeting Clarence Row 7pm
20th Coffee at RVP 10.30

December

4th Christmas Drinks & Eats Clarence Row 7pm
12th Christmas Meal Venue TBA
25th Have a rest!

GRAVESEND EPILEPSY NETWORK

Registered Charity Number 802373

Membership Form

I/We the undersigned wish to become members of the **Gravesend Epilepsy Network** for the year of 2014.

Attached is one year's membership fee of £5.00 per family for the year.
(Cheques made payable to Gravesend Epilepsy Network)

I/We would like to be reminded of social events and agree that my/our name(s) and telephone number(s) be given to the Events Organiser for this purpose. (Tick/delete as required)

Name/s _____

Address _____

_____ **Postcode** _____

Telephone Home _____ **Mobile** _____

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires us to inform you that information you have voluntarily given (ie. name, address & phone number) is stored in closed confidential paper files. There will be only limited access to these. The information held would not be sold or given to any other organisation.

Susan Griffin is our current Events Secretary. She will need to have your name & telephone number so that she can contact you about social events. Please mark above to give consent OR delete the sentence if you do not want that information given to her.

Please send completed form to:-
Lynn Savill MBE
13 St Georges Crescent
Gravesend Kent
DA12 4AR