

**EAST OF SCOTLAND BRANCH OF ATAXIA UK
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT LASSWADE
HIGH SCHOOL CENTRE ON SATURDAY 6 MAY 2006
Branch Website: <http://www.ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk>**

Present: Asantwaa Brenya (Ataxia UK), Penny Gardner, Derek Main (Chairman), John Reid, Peter Smeaton, Alan Smith, Richard, Anne-Marie & Selina Thomson and Frances Wright.

Apologies: Andrea Bothwell, Sarah Boyack, Rhona Brankin, Arthur Davis, Anne Green, Liz Griffin, John Hunter, Eileen Steele & Alastair Macdougall (Ataxia UK)

1. Introductions

Derek welcomed everyone to the 2006 AGM.

Everyone then introduced themselves: Derek is Chairman and has had CA for 48 years, Asantwaa (Santy) came on behalf of Alastair Macdougall as they felt it really important for someone from Ataxia UK to come. Frances has been Treasurer for 11 years and has many friends with CA. Richard & Anne-Marie had a son diagnosed (wrongly) with Ataxia and they have been supporters ever since. Alan Smith from Kirkcaldy has a form of CA; his mother has recently been in hospital & diagnosed with ataxia too. Peter Smeaton was born in Scotland in 1938 & has had ataxia since the 1960s – he's one of the Scottish diaspora. Penny has been Branch Secretary for 10 years. John Reid has been in the group since it started and has FA – he has one brother left, his other brother sadly died in April.

2. Reports of Meetings

The report of last year's AGM (Saturday 14 May 2005) was approved. The report of the Meeting on 11 March 2006 was also approved. Derek reminded members that he has collecting cans, wheelchair stickers and car stickers, just contact him on CelticDerek@blueyonder.co.uk or telephone him on **0131 477 4371**.

3. Chairman's Report

Derek welcomed everyone to the AGM and commented that the year had been rather eventful and the committee wish to thank the members for their support. In reverse order (easier this way!) he summarised the year's activities:

1st April we had a joint meeting with the West of Scotland Branch at the Alona Hotel, Strathclyde Country Park. Four of our members attended plus a large contingent from the West. We were treated to afternoon tea and had a lovely time with our sister branch – the start of many more?

11th March Branch Meeting we were delighted to have Dr Paul de Sousa of Edinburgh University talk to us on embryonic stem cell research.

21st January Branch Meeting. Although a very low turnout due to sickness etc, we were extremely pleased to have Rhona Brankin MSP address us on 'what your MSP can do for you as a disabled person'. Rhona is the MSP for Midlothian so many of our members are her constituents. This was our Robbie Burns event as well and we enjoyed a nice plateful of haggis, neeps and tatties, provided by the canteen.

4th December was the Branch Christmas meal at an Edinburgh hotel and although we enjoyed socialising, the meal was extremely poor and disabled toilet facilities were not available as promised. We have written twice to the Manager without any response. We shall not be returning, indeed will be putting in a complaint to the Disabled Rights Commission.

12th November: We did not have speaker at this branch meeting but nevertheless enjoyed socialising and discussing our problems with ataxia, fund raising ideas etc.

3rd September Branch Meeting. We were delighted to have Jack Blaik, Senior Social Worker with City of Edinburgh council address us on the Direct Payments Scheme and the Independent Living Fund. Jack had many useful tips on how to get ones rights as a disabled person and to be able to achieve a god quality of life.

Reports from each of these meetings have been sent out by our meticulous (but sometimes very slow!) secretary and a vote of thanks is due to her for helping to hold our branch together.

Derek then handed over to Frances, the Treasurer, for her report and comments on the income statement for the year and the balance sheet.

4. Treasurer's report

Frances reported that she and Penny had got the accounts to balance in record time this year and that the statutory Branch information requested had been sent to Ataxia UK. The 2006 accounts are attached.

The most recent statement (received that morning) showed a balance of £1,585.10 although a cheque for £678.06 hasn't come off yet and will take the balance to below £1,000. Our position is better than last year when the conference had taken funds, leaving only £500. In June 2005 we paid out £293 for the Great Scottish Walk for eligibility as sponsors and listing on the GSW website. Also In June 2005, Derek's brother did a run which

raised £443 for the branch (an equal amount going to the Sick Kids Hospital). Regular monthly donations have been made by Mr and Mrs Smith and income was received from collecting cans, Anne-Marie's knitting and various donations. Sadly, Andrea's Dad passed away at the end of March and she kindly donated the collection of £345.62 to the Branch.

Towards the end of the financial year (March 2006) we changed to the Charities Foundation Bank (from HBOS) and should be receiving a higher rate of interest on this account – although only credited annually we have already earned more in three months than the whole year previously.

Branch costs included the usual expenses of copying and posting reports of meetings and website maintenance, plus a small deficit on the Christmas meal incurred when some people were unable to attend due to traffic hold ups and illness.

Future fund raising events: Frances will be walking a 50 mile section of the West Highland Way in May and Richard plans to do a 10k cross country run in August.

5. Election of Committee

The existing committee members were re-elected, unopposed. Committee members for 2006/2007 are:

Chairman	Derek Main
Secretary and Vice-Chair	Penny Gardner
Treasurer	Frances Wright
Web Master and Committee Member	John Reid
Committee Member	Liz Dalby
Email committee Member	Susan McPheat

The new committee was proposed by Peter and seconded by Richard.

6. Asantwaa's update on Ataxia UK

Asantwaa apologised on behalf of Alastair Macdougall who had hoped to attend but was unable to come. She explained that there are currently 10 Branches and Ataxia UK is hoping for lottery money to set up another 10 UK wide. Self help groups have different rules under Charity Law and it is beneficial to have Branches rather than informal groups – for Ataxia UK and for the members in terms of support offered. There may be some changes coming to charity law which affect Scotland and as we are part of a cross border charity this should happen automatically – but if there are any problems, the Head Office of Ataxia UK will handle it.

Tina Thatcher is the new Branch Support & Development Officer funded by lottery money; she is going to try and visit all the Branches and hopes to come to the next meeting. Asantwaa then answered several questions

from members and chatted during the tea break. Her visit was much appreciated by all of us and she enjoyed meeting everyone.

7. Peter Smeaton's Talk

Peter is a retired vet. One of his lecturers from his student days at Glasgow University was the late Seamus O'Neill who fostered the Old College of Piping and pioneered the new one. He did much to make the highland bagpipe acceptable to the serious music world, in particular he endeavoured successfully to get the pibroch recognised as a classical music form.

Peter gave an interesting talk about the benefits of exercise, including a definition of physical exercise, its advantages and disadvantages, in particular how it can act as a natural painkiller. If you are careful not to exceed a safe heart rate, exercise can result in eating and sleeping better, feeling better and tiring less easily. Peter carries out his daily exercise routine while he's having his bath – and gets so involved with it that he sometimes forgets to wash himself!

We will be preparing a leaflet of Peter's exercise information, suggestions, hints and tips at a small charge which will go towards Branch funds – there will be more news on this at the next Branch meeting.

8. Social Events

Frances is organising a trip to the **Falkirk Wheel trip** with the Seagull Trust later on in the summer, probably August.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next Branch meeting is set for **Saturday 9 September** at Lasswade. We usually have meetings in November, January, March and May as well. Suggestions for speakers were Professor Bob Will and Frances's friend who practices Reiki healing. If anyone else has ideas for **future speakers**, please let us know. If anyone is willing to help out on the **committee**, please let Derek know.

Branch Contacts are:

Derek Main (Chairman) 0131 477 4371 CelticDerek@blueyonder.co.uk
or **Penny Gardner (Secretary)** on pennyjgardner@btinternet.com

USEFUL WEB LINKS

If there are any suggested additions to this list please let us know

www.ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk: Our Branch website

www.ohbother.co.uk: by an Ataxian and full of very useful information.

www.bbc.co.uk/ouch for an inside view on disability news.

www.evoc.org.uk: for local disability information in Edinburgh.

www.digg.org.uk: Glasgow's online resource for disability information.

www.matchinghouses.com: re: accessible holiday house swaps.

www.ataxia.org.uk the Ataxia UK website, has many good links.

www.skill.org.uk information & advice for disabled students

E MAILED REPORTS

If you would prefer an e mail instead of a hard copy, please let us know your e mail address:

Name _____ Telephone No. (optional) _____

E Mail address _____

Please post to the Secretary, Penny Gardner, at 3 Craigleith Gardens, Edinburgh EH4 3JW or e mail pennyjgardner@btinternet.com

✂

MEMBERS VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Please send a contribution if you can - £5 per household is suggested,

Please send a cheque, payable to East of Scotland Branch of Ataxia UK to: Frances Wright, Flat 8, 25 Queen Charlotte Street, Edinburgh EH6 6AX

**EAST OF SCOTLAND BRANCH OF ATAXIA UK
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31ST MARCH 2006**

INCOME		£	£	£
Donations - general		180.00		
Sale of goods				
Bank interest		7.06		
Social income		6.00		
Members voluntary subs		<u>155.00</u>	348.06	
Fundraising:				
General	Individuals	630.00		
	Collecting tins	178.06		
	Sale of cans	<u>27.09</u>	<u>835.15</u>	1,183.21
EXPENDITURE				
Postages & office supplies		221.68		
Web Site		85.49		
Subs to organisations		10.00		
Meetings		61.30		
Travel expenses				
Welfare		15.00		
Sundries	social expenses flowers etc	24.35 <u>35.00</u>		<u>452.82</u>
Surplus of income over expenditure				730.39
Sent to HQ				<u>730.39</u>
Increase in bank balance				730.39
Bank b/f				<u>390.66</u> at HBOS
Bank c/f				<u><u>1,121.05</u></u> at CAF Bank
Balance as per bank statement 31 March 2006				1,068.12
less unrepresented cheques				-96.10
add unrecorded pay ins				<u>149.03</u>
Bank balance c/f				<u><u>1,121.05</u></u>

..... Frances Wright, Treasurer
 Derek Main, Chairman
 Penny Gardner, Secretary

Date: 6 April 2006