

### Our third meeting – held on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December at Exhall Old School Community Centre



About 15 people came along to our third meeting. A few people had to pull out, including Lorraine, Emily and Robin – we all wish you loads of luck for the big day. We met in Exhall Old School Community Centre this time and it was a really cosy place – many thanks to Sue for the suggestion. We had use of a kitchen for hot drinks and nibbles and the adjoining room where everybody mingled even had a full-sized wheelchair-accessible snooker table. Everybody loved our new home!

Everybody was quick to mingle and catch up – we have a really warm and friendly group. I bought my “Gorilla Pod” along, as suggested by James at our last meeting, to show off. It’s a

camera tripod which has bendy feet and it sits snugly on the arm rest of my wheelchair – see <http://joby.com/gorillapod>. I’m so impressed – my Gorilla Pod will be dead handy on holiday.

Speaking of which, as travel came up so much at our last meeting I invited my friend Matthew Law along. Matthew has Friedreich’s Ataxia and has travelled all over the world. He spoke a bit about his own ataxia, and how soon after he was diagnosed he became a wheelchair user. Far from holding him back his wheelchair empowered him and enabled him to travel. His first travels were with organised groups of disabled people/carers but Matthew now receives Direct Payments which allow him to employ his own PAs to travel with. Be sure to have a look at his website, <http://matthewlaw.co.uk/>.

Matthew also said how impressed he was with his recent trip on the Eurostar – see <http://matthewlaw.co.uk/genkfootytrip.htm>. We discussed trains which are really wheelchair-friendly these days, although assistance must be booked at least 24 hours before travel by phone the relevant train company.

Money wise we still have £110 in the pot as the cost of room hire and refreshments was donated by Sue – thanks again Sue!

### Looking for a disabled friendly holiday in Spain?

Matthew has a villa there which has been modified by two people with ataxia who have a combined experience of over 40 years of living life from a wheelchair. I’ve been there twice myself and would recommend it to anyone looking for a laid-back holiday in the sun. The villa itself has been so well thought out for a wheelchair user/someone with ataxia that it takes away the stresses of staying in standard accessible places. See <http://www.wheelchairfriendlyholiday.co.uk/> for more.

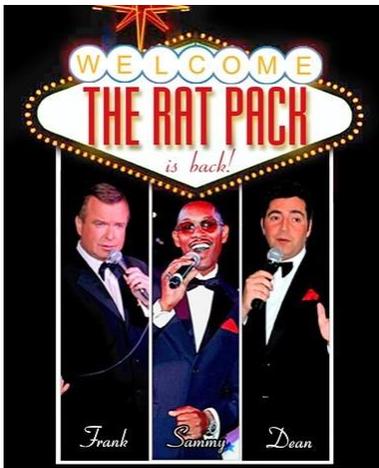
## Our next meeting and our first event!

Sue (Kieran's mum) has booked a room for our next meeting so please put it in your diaries now – it would be great to see you there!

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 2 – 4pm**  
**Exhall Old School Community Centre,**  
**Exhall Green, Exhall CV7 9GL**

This is off School Lane in Bedworth. Type the post code into Google for a map (see enclosed map if you received this newsletter in the post). Buses 20 and 48 go here – get off at the Baylon Road stop.

## Our first event!



**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 at 7:45pm**  
**Belgrade Theatre, Coventry**  
<http://www.belgrade.co.uk/>

After being asked at our last meeting to find some things for the group to do, I looked at what was on at the local theatre in Coventry and I have since booked The Rat Pack. So far 11 of us are going – I am so pleased that I've had such a brilliant response. If anyone else would like to come please let me know!

Could anyone who hasn't paid for their tickets (£17 per ticket) please get it to me ASAP.

## Posters

I have designed some posters for brightening up notice boards in doctor/hospital/physio waiting rooms and advertising our group. If you would like some I can send a copy to your email so you can print it yourself or I can send you a hard copy through the post. I have sent a copy with this newsletter. Please let me know if you would like anymore.

## Contact list

I would like to draw up a contact list that can be shared amongst members so you can keep in touch with each other between meetings. If you're interested please get in touch - I can't share your contact info without your permission. Also tell me what to share, i.e. your email or/and phone number. A couple of you responded to this appeal last month – thanks very much – but I need a couple more before I can call it a list!

***Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!***

As Bev warned the group on Facebook, "Don't get too drunk as no one will notice!" ☺

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*I'd welcome any suggestions of anything specific you'd like to see in future newsletters and meetings – please get in touch! I hope to see as many of you as possible on February 19<sup>th</sup>!*

**Who I am and how to contact me:**

*I am Katie Henderson (you can find out more about me at <http://ohbother.co.uk>) and I am the named contact for the group. You can contact me by e-mailing [katie@ohbother.co.uk](mailto:katie@ohbother.co.uk) or phoning 07565 247 183. I am also on Facebook and so is the group; search for "Ataxia UK Coventry".*