

### Our forth meeting – held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at Exhall Old School Community Centre



About 18 people came along to our forth meeting, including about half-a-dozen new faces. For me at least our meetings just get better and better! Our meeting don't have agendas, they're just a really easy-going time for people who have ataxia and their friends, carers and relatives to chat and compare notes whilst hot drinks and nibbles flow from the kitchen next door – it always amazes me how quickly the two hours passes!

We met at our “new home” again – the meeting room we use is really homely and welcoming. It's large enough for us all to mingle and it even has a full-sized wheelchair-accessible snooker table. This proved very popular; see the picture below!



Amongst the group we had a wide range of ages – come to think of it, the age-range was about 20 to 86!! Some had FA, some CA and some had other types of ataxia. It's great to learn how other people's ataxia affects them; the different stories of how people were diagnosed and how they live with their ataxia now.

Money wise we have £96 in the pot after spending £14 on room hire for this month's meeting. This money has been very gratefully donated by our members – thank you very much!



### Our next meeting

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 at 2 – 4pm**  
**Exhall Old School Community Centre,**  
**Exhall Green, Exhall CV7 9GL**

Please put this date in your diaries now – it would be great to see you there! The community Centre 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 – The Rat Pack at Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012



Eleven members of our group went to our first event. I met Catherine, one of the 11, for coffee the week before and we said we'd meet at 6.30pm in the bar before the show (which started at 7.45pm). I then phoned/text/emailed the others inviting them to join us. I was so happy when EVERYONE turned up early - we had a lovely mingle before the show and had time to take this photo (see left)...

In the theatre there were four of us in the box at the back of the stalls (two wheelchair-users and two carers) and the remaining seven took up the entire row just in front. The show started and everyone really enjoyed the first half. As we were all sitting together it was easy to chat in the break.

Then the second half started and it came to audience participation time. Sammy Davis Jr. came down the aisle and into the audience - he came to the back row - our row - and he chose the person on the end of the row. When they stood up I saw it was Lorraine (who has CA, an unsteady walk and uses a cane). At first I was a bit worried how she would manage down the aisle, up the stairs and on stage in front of all those people - but Lorraine must be far braver than I am!!!! Sammy Davis Jr. linked her arm and with her cane in the other hand she walked proudly up the aisle and steps. Frank Sinatra pulled up a chair for Lorraine to sit on and she introduced herself and said she was part of Ataxia UK Coventry - how's that for raising awareness?! The members of our group gave a little cheer at this and then Lorraine and Frank sang a duet of "Something Stupid"! I still am a bit in awe that this happened - I felt very proud of our group and a bit emotional at the time; it was a brilliant moment!

When the show ended those of us who had time to stop for a bit decided to get a photo with the stars of the show who were signing programs. We all posed for a photo (see right) and they signed my program - at everyone else's request - "thanks for getting everyone together". Well I can truly say it was absolutely my pleasure - the first of many great events!!



## Future events

Catherine (one of our members) and I meet for coffee every few weeks or so. We've set a date for a future "coffee morning" and we've agreed to announce it here in case anyone wants to join us. We will be meeting at Esquires Coffee Shop in Coventry's Transport museum on **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 10.30am**.

**Our next "official" event:** I have booked a table at Mount Pleasant – Hungry Horse, Hinckley Road, Walsgrave, Coventry CV2 2EU on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April at 2pm**. There is room for wheelchairs, disabled facilities and I have warned them that there may be a number of wheelchair users in our party. I've booked us a table in one of their little side rooms. I need no money up front but if you're interested please let know as I need to confirm numbers with the pub (my contact details are below).

See <http://www.hungryhorse.co.uk/index.php/pub-finder/details/mount-pleasant-coventry> for more info on the venue.



1 - 3 May 2012  
NEC, BIRMINGHAM

**INSPIRATION FOR  
INDEPENDENT LIVING**

I've been going to Naidex every year for about 6 years. I have always found it a brilliant way of finding out what's out there to help disabled people – it's a real eye-opener event. I'll be going on either May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> between 10am and 5pm by train. I would really like to turn my visit into a bit of a "group event" as I think any disabled person would find it really useful. PLEASE get in touch (contact info at the end of this newsletter) if you're interested and put forward a preference for a date and time. See <http://www.naidex.co.uk> for more info.

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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 April 1<sup>st</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".*