

MERSEY REGION EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION

50TH ANNUAL REPORT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED
30 SEPTEMBER 2006**

MERSEY REGION EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION
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MERSEY REGION EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION

**Mersey Region Epilepsy Association
is an independent charity providing support and
information to people with epilepsy across Merseyside and Cheshire.**

President: Professor David Chadwick OBE DM FRCP

Vice Presidents: Ken Dodd OBE
Professor Gus Baker
Professor Michael Orme

HONORARY OFFICERS

Chair: Peter Rogan MBE JP

Vice-Chair/Secretary: David Renison LLB

Treasurer: Derek Shanks ACIB

STAFF

Fieldworker: Christine Seddon

Administrator: Anne Inman

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Group Liaison Officer: Jean Norton

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Dr Richard Appleton	Consultant Paediatric Neurologist
Mr Mike Cain	Service User Representative
Mr Bryan Cartwright	Service User Representative
Mr David Cutts	Service User Representative
Mr Paul Eldridge	Consultant Neurosurgeon
Mr Paul James	Service User Representative
	Mental Health Nurse
Dr Tony Marson	Consultant Neurologist
Mr Paul May	Consultant Neurosurgeon
Mr Tony McClure	Employment Specialist
Mrs Jean Norton	Service User Representative
Mrs Anne Sweeney	Epilepsy Specialist Nurse
Dr Udo Wiesmann	Consultant Neurologist
Dr Ian Williams	Consultant Neurologist
Mr Ron Williams	Service User Representative

Supporting people with epilepsy across Merseyside and Cheshire

OUR ROLE

We provide support and information to people with epilepsy and their families/friends on a localised basis. Our services take place across a variety of settings:

- Our telephone help line operates from our base at the Neurosupport Centre, in Liverpool's city centre. People can contact us for information or advice, and they can also access our other services.
- We travel across the region into people's houses for home visits. This service is particularly valuable when people find it difficult to get to us.
- At the Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery, we are in attendance on Epilepsy Clinic days to answer people's questions, provide literature and refer to other services.
- Out in the community, we are proud of our affiliated support groups and clubs, which provide a social outlet and offer education and support for people with epilepsy.

MERSEY REGION EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year has been as busy as ever and thankfully we have been able to meet the demands on our services, albeit that there has been no facility, due to financial pressures, for any form of expansion in our activities.

My personal thanks and those on behalf of the full membership are offered to our two members of staff, Anne and Christine, without whom activity would grind to a halt. Both Anne and Chris have worked diligently throughout the year and feedback from clients indicates that a high level of professionalism has been exercised in all aspects of their work.

The Association does not provide medical advice to clients but through our close association with the Walton Centre for Neurology & Neurosurgery and Alder Hey Children's Hospital we are able to liaise closely with clinicians in the knowledge that those who need medical help get the best that is available in the UK.

In a fast changing world electronic communication has become the norm and so a decision was taken to update and upgrade the Association's website. All our literature can now be downloaded from our site and useful links are provided to make other organisations' information available to those visiting our site. The address of the website remains unaltered - www.epilepsymersey.org.uk. It is visited on a regular basis and is now firmly established as a creditable source of information attracting visitors from all five continents.

The Association continues to play an active role in the affairs of the Joint Epilepsy Council of the UK and Ireland. Representatives have attended the JEC annual conference and continuous contact is maintained with the General Secretary, Sharon Harvey.

The annual accounts make dismal reading and once again show that we are spending more than we are earning. The Officers are well aware of this problem and will be directing their efforts towards generating more income and at the same time rationalising expenditure. This exercise will be against a background of preserving the levels of service, which will be difficult, but I am confident that it is by no means impossible.

The role of Chairman would be extremely difficult without the support of my fellow officers and members of the Executive Committee and so I offer them my most sincere thanks for all their efforts throughout the years.

Peter Rogan
Chair

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ACTIVITIES

Fieldwork

Chris Seddon has had a busy and successful year making direct contact with people who have asked for varying degrees of help. In all, she met 55 people on a one to one basis, usually in their own homes, to resolve difficulties ranging from housing problems to the completion of Disability Living Allowance forms. She has been particularly successful in representing people making an appeal against refusal to grant DLA, resulting in 100% success rate in having the original decision to refuse DLA reversed.

Telephone Help Line

Our Call Log for the year shows that we dealt with 1,020 specific enquiries. 844 of these calls came in from the general public of which 73 related to Disability Living Allowance. 227 calls were taken from professionals working in social care or education. In response to these calls 254 packs of literature were sent out from the office.

Talks and Courses

Our team of speakers were called on to deliver courses to a wide variety of organisations. The amount of work done in this sphere is somewhat limited by the number of authorised speakers we have at our disposal. Nevertheless, the Association delivered 25 training courses throughout the year.

External Relations

- Chris Seddon and Jean Norton attend the Epilepsy Clinics each Tuesday afternoon at the Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery.
- Chris Seddon and Anne Inman attend regular meetings of the Mersey Neurological Alliance and Chris attended meetings of the Glaxo Centre/Walton Centre Liaison Committee.
- Chris and Anne represented the Association at the JEC Annual Conference.
- Jean Norton organised the Charities Annual Christmas Card sale in Heswall.
- With the aid of a grant from BBC Children In Need, Anne Sweeney and Anne Inman organised fun days for teenagers, disabled children and their families and children aged 9-13, where they were able to meet and interact with other youngsters who have epilepsy.

Affiliated Groups

The Association maintains contact with affiliated groups and clubs. Full details of venues and times of meetings are published on the Association website www.epilepsymersey.org.uk. They are also available from Anne at the office.

200 Club

The Club has functioned well throughout the year and our thanks go to Caroline Healey for all her hard work. The winners were as follows:

Oct '05	Mr & Mrs Flynn	17	Apr '06	RE & GJ Hughes	39
Nov '05	H B Cartwright	69	May '06	John Milns	27
Dec '05	Joan Clay	179	Jun '06	Mary Farmer	83
Jan '06	Helen Mackinson	67	Jul '06	Caroline Healey	24
Feb '06	Mrs C McCallum	188	Aug '06	Mark Graylish	161
Mar '06	Mrs P J Martin	93	Sept '06	Mrs Byrne	16

Why not buy a number, for just £12 per year. Simply contact the office for details.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Once again, I have to report a shortfall of income to cover expenses for the Association, a fact in which I take no comfort. In this past year we have sustained a deficit of £10,447. Admittedly this is an improvement on 2005 when our loss was £13,000 and 2004 when it was over £14,500.

A careful monitoring of outgoings, by all concerned, has reduced expenses by nearly £3,000, making a reduction of £8,000 in two years. This has meant more demands on the office staff, which they have coped with very well.

Income was only very marginally up on 2005 at £32,600, largely reflecting flat income from donations of £24,344. Of some comfort however has been the support received by way of subscriptions, which have increased from just under £1,000 last year to more than £1,600. This shows that our members and supporters have great faith in what we are doing. There is a modest tax recovery claim yet to be submitted.

The net result is that our resources have shrunk to £27,616, being less than a year's expenses, which has always been one of our main strategies.

At this point can I reiterate what all the committee says each year - that is to thank each and every one of you who have supported MREA during 2006.

Derek Shanks
Honorary Treasurer