Features

• Cathy Peattie MSP: “I was in denial.” Page 4

• Campaign for more specialist nurses Page 5

• Research shows ketogenic diet can be as good as drugs Page 9

Lifeline surgery in London Page 8
Co-operation brings success

The recurring theme in this Epilepsy News is co-operation. I was delighted when our campaigning further improved the way people with epilepsy access concessionary travel cards. The intervention of many, including epilepsy specialist nurses, means the eligibility form can now be signed by specialist nurses, GPs and consultants. I know this is great news for many of you without a consultant.

As you can see from this edition, anyone can develop epilepsy; it’s no respecter of who we are. I was touched to read MSP Cathy Peatitle’s story and so glad she feels able to share it with us. Real life stories are so inspiring and can help us feel less isolated. This type of co-operation helps challenge the stigma still associated with epilepsy today.

Partnerships with key funders are critical to our work. This year we have benefited from grants from Lloyds TSB and Muir Maxwell Trust in relation to our merger with Enlighten – Tackling Epilepsy. The Scottish Government funded us to coordinate the development of a good practice guide on epilepsy in later life. Mansell made Epilepsy Scotland their charity of the year. Without these and our many more supporters, we can’t achieve our goals so a huge thanks to all you generous people!

And last but not least, two pieces of recent Epilepsy Scotland news. Our Community Support Service had yet another rave report from the Care Commission. We also have a new User Involvement Officer, Craig Blair. His here to ensure we all work together by making Scotland a better place for people living with epilepsy.

So there you have it – wide ranging co-operation making Scotland a better place for people living with epilepsy. He’s here to ensure we all work together by making Scotland a better place for people living with epilepsy.

Join us

Hi! I’m Craig Blair, the new User Involvement Officer. My role is mainly to support people who want to be involved with Epilepsy Scotland and its work. This means I’m keen to hear and share your experiences and opinions of living with epilepsy. I’ll pull this information together and feed it back to the organisation. Your views will be heard, and more importantly, you will be helping us to shape future services.

Another part of my work is to support, involve, develop and represent the members of Epilepsy Scotland. It matters that each and every single one of our members is able to express their thoughts. The more members we have, the stronger our voice!

I want to take part in developing new support groups across wider communities in Scotland. This includes encouraging new members from black and ethnic minority groups, young people and other isolated groups in our communities. All this provides a broader picture of people living with epilepsy. And it makes a stronger case for improving services. I will also be arranging information events throughout Scotland. There could be one coming near you soon!

Please contact me if you would like to be part of a focus group or become a member, or would just like information. Call 0141 427 4911 or email cblair@epilepsyscotland.org.uk

AGM bookings

This year’s AGM and members’ day is on Saturday 11 October in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange. The venue is central for train and bus services.

We are looking forward to seeing many of our members there. We have guest speakers, workshops and information on complementary therapies. This event is one you don’t want to miss!

For more details or to book your place, please call User Involvement Officer, Craig Blair.

Capital launch

Cabinet Secretary Nicola Sturgeon marked National Epilepsy Week by launching our Edinburgh office. The ambassador to the Slovenian Embassy was among 30 guests at this special occasion. They welcomed the Minister’s first visit to formally open Epilepsy Scotland’s premises in the New Town.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing praised the recent merger of Enlighten – Tackling Epilepsy with Epilepsy Scotland. She said even more would be achieved for people with epilepsy and gave her support to this work. The event included a short ‘Question Time’ session. After this the Minister met some service users.

Edinburgh services

Hundreds of people value the wide range of services offered in Edinburgh. The Choices project offers practical support. This scheme helps people between the age of 5 and 60 who have epilepsy and additional support needs. The service can be accessed through social work or through direct payments.

Individual information and advice is available for any age group. We offer appointments with qualified and trained staff who can give one to one support.

Young people

The Lighthouse youth project is for those aged 11-18. Friends and siblings are also welcome to attend.

Younger people with epilepsy can meet up with their peers. They may also take part in different activities run throughout the year. One to one support is available; so is help to link up with other services.

Our Transition group draws together young adults aged between 17-25. We provide information and advice on the difficulties people may have at this age. Common issues include how to manage epilepsy, finding and keeping a job, finding a place to stay, sex and sexuality.

New services

Because of the number of requests and the fantastic response of people involved in the Seizure Management project, we are looking to expand our training programme. This will be done in line with the recommendations of the Health and Social Care Standards Advisory Panel.

Stress and anxiety can affect seizure management. We offer complementary therapies to help people with epilepsy. It’s available for their carers too. Treatments include aromatherapy massage, Indian head massage, reflexology, reiki and hot stone massage. Each session costs £20 an hour. Please call Jacqui on 0131 226 5458 to make a booking.

We also run activities such as climbing, abseiling, go-karting and sailing along with residential activity weekends.

Parents

Members of the Parents group usually meet and have a meal in a restaurant on the last Wednesday of each month. This is a very sociable, supportive and informative group for mums and dads. There is a separate group for dads who get together on the second Thursday of each month.

Parenting classes take place in Edinburgh throughout the year. Each class runs for six weeks and is led by an experienced parent from the course and a social worker. The focus is to understand how epilepsy can affect children and their behaviour. It offers techniques to help parents cope. The next class starts late September. If you are interested in attending, please call Michael on 0131 226 5458 or email madair@epilepsyscotland.org.uk

AGM bookings

This year’s AGM and members’ day is on Saturday 11 October in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange. The venue is central for train and bus services.

We are looking forward to seeing many of our members there. We have guest speakers, workshops and information on complementary therapies. This event is one you don’t want to miss!

For more details or to book your place, please call User Involvement Officer, Craig Blair.

Edinburgh office staff

Chief Executive Susan Douglas-Scott with Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon and Directors Helen Carmichael and Richard Roberts

AGM bookings

This year’s AGM and members’ day is on Saturday 11 October in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange. The venue is central for train and bus services.

We are looking forward to seeing many of our members there. We have guest speakers, workshops and information on complementary therapies. This event is one you don’t want to miss!

For more details or to book your place, please call User Involvement Officer, Craig Blair.
I was in denial

Cathy Peattie has been an MSP since 1999. In this exclusive interview, she shares how being recently diagnosed with epilepsy has affected her life.

“My ‘funny feelings’ started three years ago and got worse. Last autumn, I was chairing the Cross Party Group for Asthma. I welcomed people but they were having the same funny feeling that I then stopped speaking. I’d this funny feeling that something was wrong.

“Actually, I am managing much better than I thought I would. ‘People ask me why I am getting the bus. I tell them I can’t drive just now and I hope to get my licence back in a year. One woman said: ‘Oh, that’s quick!’ So I told her about having epilepsy. But it didn’t mean anything to her as she was convinced it was drunk driving. One of my daughters said: ‘Mum, you are going to have to tell folks! They’ll think you have been at the drink or driving recklessly!’ I guess people with epilepsy have had to deal with this reaction for a long time.”

Epilepsy and families

“Do you know the strangest thing? Since the diagnosis, so many people have spoken to me and said someone in my family had this issue.” Some expect me to have a seizure in front of them! But the majority of people I talk to will say ‘I know someone with epilepsy’ or they are surprised and ask me what it is.

“I started my medication and it was really awful the first day or so. I have to tell you that since the medication has built up, I’ve been fine. My doctor said I’d had such a personally stressful time that it triggered my seizures. I’m glad it’s over. I wasn’t aware of epilepsy in my family but my brother reminded me that our youngest cousin, who became a lumberjack, had epilepsy as a teenager.

Driving

“I’m the only one who drives in my family and I chauffeur everybody else around. I cover a fairly wide constituency with big towns and many villages. I do lots of surgeries and home visits. My committee work also takes me out and about. So I thought am I going to be able to do my work?”

“In one way it was a relief when it was epilepsy because I was thinking something more was wrong.

“First I used buses. I now have a notebook for conversations I am having with constituents while we travel. One member of staff takes me to home visits. Another MSP gives me a lift home on Thursday nights. I was told the Scottish Parliament has a disability allowance which helps to pay for a driver for my car.”

Support

“My family were worried but they are incredibly supportive. My daughters said I had to raise awareness so that other people would be more understanding. If the public is not aware of people with epilepsy, or not aware of what it is, they always think the worst of everything.

“I can get on with my life and I just happen to have epilepsy. But there are times when I really need to do anything I used to do, except drive. “I was impressed with the care I had from the health service. Both the consultant and epilepsy specialist nurse were very, very helpful. They spent time explaining what I wouldn’t want to do and what I should be doing. For example, I enjoy swimming so I can do this if someone is with me.”

Cathy Peattie, MSP
I got to ride in an ambulance

In this school essay extract, Beth Mackie aged 14 describes her very first seizure.

“It was 7:30am, time to get up for school. Once I was ready I ran through the kitchen listening to my mum’s attempts to make me eat breakfast. “In class, I kept feeling my eyes closing. I felt half the room go dark.” I left English and was walking along the corridor when everything started to go blurry. Everything I could hear went more quiet, like someone was slowly turning down the volume. My legs started to feel very shaky and then, suddenly nothing. Everything went black and I was gone. Just a few seconds before that I had felt so terrified; my heart was hammering out of my chest.

“I could hear voices. I couldn’t see anything. I wanted to answer the person calling my name. “I could smell a strong perfume as if someone was hammering out of my chest. I found this the right thing to do. I was very worried.

“My hands started to shake as I saw the school nurse leaning very close to me, with two green paramedics and a teacher talking to my mum!”

“Once I was awake, the paramedic started to ask me lots of questions like “what’s your name?” and “do you know where you are?” They seemed like stupid questions but they were harder to answer than I thought.

“They got me to my feet and took me downstairs to the ambulance. By now I was really worried. In the ambulance (which I must admit was pretty cool because it’s not every day you get to ride in a fast, noisy car – a bit of a childish fantasy) the paramedic was talking away to me. Just when we were getting along, he picked up a piece of white plastic. He stapled it right through my finger. I didn’t know what had happened to me that had caused me to get into the ambulance but it wasn’t half as bad as this!

“At the hospital, the doctor explained to mum and me what had happened. I’d had a seizure. Back then I didn’t know what it was. He said he thought it was just a one-time thing. Even though he said this, I was scared and anxious. A while later I had two more seizures. I was put on medication which unfortunately meant more finger staplings. My seizures have stopped now and all I have to do is take two pills each day.”

Emergency plan

Here’s a question from our Training Manager, Lesslie Young. Who is responsible for ensuring the safety and well being of someone with epilepsy in an emergency situation?

Well, there’s a split responsibility. It’s important that people with epilepsy take ownership of their condition. This means having a care plan in place for any emergency situation like status or emergency admission to hospital. Those caring for people with more complicated needs must also know the plan’s contents.

The other burden of responsibility lies with the emergency services.

When dialing 999 we assume well-trained people will offer support. Where epilepsy is involved, call handlers for emergency services and ambulance control must know exactly what information to ask the caller.

Adequate training is important for different categories of ambulance staff. They administer treatment and if necessary take the person to hospital.

Crew members need a basic awareness of epilepsy and paramedics require training in managing difficult epilepsy.

There can be confusion about how to manage seizure activity in an emergency situation.

Sometimes this has led to unnecessary stress and anxiety as well as traged.

Epilepsy Scotland hopes to form a working group with the Scottish Ambulance Service and related agencies. Together we can propose an agreed protocol.

Check our training courses on www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk or call 0141 427 4911.

What’s ahead

Here are some events we are taking part in:

12 Sept – Headway Conference, Perth
17 Sept – Epilepsy in Later Life, Edinburgh
25 Sept – Cross-Party Group on Epilepsy, Edinburgh
5 Oct – Loch Ness Marathon
11 Oct – Our AGM, The Corn Exchange, Edinburgh
16 to 19 Oct – Exhibitor at the SNP Conference, Perth
20 Oct – Door to Door Donor Recruitment Campaign
18 Oct to 13 Dec – Annual Christmas Card Fair, Perth Library
Oc – Information Event, Galashiels (Tbc)

Working practice

People develop epilepsy at all ages. So it’s good to know the organisation you work for assists those with disability. Epilepsy Scotland offers two key incentives.

Firstly, every workplace can apply for a free epilepsy best practice certificate. Just tick and sign a simple checklist. This confirms your recruitment and employment procedures match the Disability Discrimination Act.

Also this autumn we want to honour Scottish employers who show outstanding support towards epilepsy. Our Employer of the Year Award is available to small and large sized organisations. Just tell us how you help an employee with epilepsy.

Company representatives and employees can nominate their workplace for the certificate and Award. Call 0808 800 2200 for details and a form or go online to: www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk

Web additions

We’ve added some new things to the website. There’s an A to Z of epilepsy which lets you check a whole host of topics quickly and easily. The new Google search engine is also making it faster and easier to find information on the site.

Future extras include a new blog. This is a social network, online community that allows users to share experiences.

Letters and comments

If you want to comment on anything in this issue of Epilepsy News, please contact Allana Parker, Communications Manager at Epilepsy Scotland, 48 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 1JH.
Tel: 0141 419 1701 Fax: 0141 419 1709 email: aparker@epilepsyscotland.org.uk

Update and events

12 Nov – Glasgow City Council Annual Charities Christmas Fair (10am – 4pm)
24 Nov – Art Event, Glasgow
27 Nov – Cross-Party Group on Epilepsy, Employer of the Year Award Launch, Edinburgh 2009
31 Jan – Closing date for Journalist of the Year Award entries
13 Feb – Vagal Nerve Stimulation (VNS) Conference, Glasgow
19 Mar – Edinburgh Wags Dinner

Tackling stigma

Teenager Jane Williams was upset that a BBC Eastenders character used the term ‘eppy’. She felt it was stigmatising and complained. The producer apologised for causing any offence but said this word was in common use.

Epilepsy Scotland also complained that the programme made no attempt to correct this misuse of language. Millions of viewers were left with the impression this is an acceptable label.

We will ask the regulator Ofcom to investigate this.

Cross-Party Group on Epilepsy co-convener Alasdair Allan asked YouTube to take off unauthorised clips of people having seizures. The MSP who has epilepsy was upset that this sensationalist material was on this website. These clips were removed.

Early feedback from users who are testing the blog is positive. We want to make the blog even more user friendly before it goes live online.

If you would like more information or give your feedback on the website please contact Web Information Officer, Claire Monaghan at cmonaghan@epilepsyscotland.org.uk or call 0141 427 4911.
Second chance

Mark and Kelly Mackenzie will soon take their five-year-old daughter Millie to London for brain surgery. In this interview, Kelly explains what led to this decision.

“When Millie was born I had this gut feeling something wasn’t quite right. She had this gagging reflex and her face wouldgrimace. At six weeks she took her first very big visible seizure. Our local Accident and Emergency unit thought everything was fine but I wouldn’t let them send her home. After Millie had seizures most of the night we were blue-lighted across to Edinburgh’s Royal Hospital for Sick Kids. They gave her every kind of test. When epilepsy was diagnosed it was heartbreaking to give her medicine. At that age you think twice about giving Calpol. Millie changed from a normal smiling baby into a floppy rag doll. We ended up with a little girl that did nothing but fit, take dexamzepam and go back to sleep again.

Treatment

Steroids stopped her seizures for five months. It bought some time for doctors to try and find medication that worked — but it never happened. We’ve tried massive drug combinations where the side-effects are sometimes worse than the epilepsy. Millie’s had rashes, severe vomiting and her face swelled up — it was horrific.

“Initially we were told surgery would never be an option. Then when Millie was three, consultant Paul Eunson used a state of the art MRI scanner with a SyScan to study her brain. I was in Asda when I received a call telling me the Edinburgh team agreed that surgery may be possible for Millie. Depending on further tests, London’s Great Ormond Street Hospital would do it.

Surgery

“Our first reaction was no way. Mark and I talked it over with Dr Eunson and he explained things. Afterwards we realised we were being selfish. We were trying to protect Millie so much that we were standing in the way. It’s taken at least two years to get to this stage preparing for Millie’s operation.

“The idea of surgery scared me at first as I have only ever known Millie with epilepsy. It is like they are taking part of my little girl away, to help her. I thought what if she comes out of this operation a different girl or if her personality changes? A million things run through your head but we have to give her this chance.

Tests

“We all went down to London. We met the psychologist, physiotherapist and OT and had a battery of tests while Millie had telemetry done. They said she could have a 60 per cent chance of not having another seizure. Since then, the team have decided to take a second look. This will give Millie a 30 per cent chance of seizure freedom. If the operation does not work, they will do a hemispherectomy – which means they remove a fairly large part of her brain.

Support

“We have never said ‘why us’. We’ve always said ‘why has this happened to Millie?’ You get thrown into a world where you think you can’t do this.

That first year I often phoned epilepsy specialist nurse Celia Brand. She never made me feel bad about not coping; she’s more like my best friend.

“Millie goes to a special school. Her sister Robyn hopes to work there. Calaiswood School is joined to Duloch Primary in Dunfermline. The support they give parents is second to none. Millie is now in mainstream class two mornings a week to be around her peers who are talking.

Raising awareness

“When I was growing up, if you saw a child with a learning disability you didn’t know what to do. Now when I take Millie to school there are little girls and boys coming over saying ‘Hi Millie, I drew you a picture last night!’. They are not intimidated by Millie’s wheelchair and they absolutely treat Millie as if she is one of them.

More importantly they are teaching their parents. To the children Millie is just a normal little girl. I’ve had parents when I’ve been out shopping saying ‘Hello, there’s a little girl in a wheelchair in other circumstances would avoid speaking to her. ‘Millie horse rides, she swims, she will do absolutely everything except for ballet and gymnastics because she is not mobile. But she will never use epilepsy as an excuse - we won’t let her. If surgery only partially helps Millie’s seizures then we have done all we can. We feel like Millie has been given a second chance at life.”

Support please

Daisy Johnson from Dundee was diagnosed with tuberous sclerosis at six months. Her parents Grant and Amanda share how the ketogenic diet has helped their child’s uncontrollable epilepsy and what more could be done.

“When Daisy was 18 months old she was having 50 to 60 seizures a day. We were aware of the ketogenic diet. Somehow we thought we’d never be desperate enough to try but in the end we were.

“A sympathetic consultant agreed to put Daisy forward. The problem was getting the funding to begin the diet, because you need specialist input from a dietician.

This took about three months. Daisy started the diet in December 2005. Within two weeks she was seizure free for nine whole days – which was a miracle! Then the seizures came back.

Diet works

Jan Chapple is an NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde dietician. She’s worked at Yorkhill for nine years and been involved with the Ketogenic Diet clinic for over three years. Here she explains some recent developments.

“The ketogenic diet is the main part of my job. I see children with uncontrolled seizures who follow a standardised diet and find it very high in fat and low in protein and carbohydrate. Changing the body’s metabolism can reduces seizure frequency.

We had a large waiting list and only allowed five patients on the diet at any one time. For two years the Muri Maxwell Trust funded more dietician and psychologist support. This is because each child needs a dedicated dietetic time. Patients are now seen soon after referral.

Adapting diets

We offer both the classical ketogenic diet and the MCT diet. We have recently started using a Modified Atkins diet. This still has a carbohydrate restriction but allows free intake of protein and total calories so it may be useful for older children. This is one of the newer developments from America.

“The ketogenic diet is probably one of the most intensive dietetic treatments. This is because each child’s diet is individually calculated. I have to assess normal height, weight and food intake to work out what their energy intake would normally be. I use this energy estimate as the base for my calculations.

“I select the appropriate diet and calculate how many calories of fat, carbohydrate and protein a child has in a day. Then I split it up into how many grams are in each meal and each snack. We try to mimic what the child normally eats.

New technology

“Computer developments are fantastic things. Users can type in the diet prescription and select foods from a large database. It works like a traffic lights system. Foods score red, amber or green depending on how close they match the values a child needs. It’s simple to use and much quicker than the handwritten variety. Parents accessing the computer programme can manipulate meals to make them more like family meals. Sometimes a child won’t like a particular recipe and then you have to think of other ideas. Parents are developing their own meals and sharing them with each other, which is fantastic.

Research

“Great Ormond Street Hospital in London held a randomised control trial with 150 of their patients on the ketogenic diet. Recent findings show the number of seizures fell by a third in children using this diet. These same children previously had daily seizures despite taking medication. Once this news gets into the mainstream we might have more parents requesting the diet.

“Three years ago we started the Scottish Dietsicians Ketogenic Action Group. We aim to ensure everyone across Scotland has the same treatment. We’re developing protocols to share UK-wide because this diet can have a life changing effect. Unfortunately some areas do not have dedicated dietetic time. We would benefit from having more dietetic time dedicated to the ketogenic diet throughout Scotland.”
Birth defects study

A recent small-scale study suggests that pregnant women taking topiramate (Topamax) may be facing a higher risk of birth defects. Topiramate is a widely prescribed anti-epileptic drug. It is also used to control migraines. Findings indicate the risk of birth defects increases when topiramate is combined with another anti-epileptic drug, sodium valproate (Epilim).

However, doctors are warning women not to make any rash decision and stop taking topiramate. They stress the risk of seizures damaging the unborn baby is potentially higher than being exposed to the drug. Some experts have also urged caution given that data from only 203 pregnant women was used.

New syringes

The company which produces Epistatus has redesigned the syringes in their packs. The calibrations are now on the syringe plunger. The syringe also has a locking mechanism so no more than 1ml (10mg dose) can be withdrawn. This makes drawing up the full dose easier. However, some carers mention they find it harder to draw up smaller doses because the calibrations appear up-side-down! If you have problems using the new syringe contact your epilepsy specialist nurse, practice nurse, GP or consultant.

Platinum volunteer

Falkirk’s Volunteer Centre has honoured our member Dene Ashberry. He drives a minibus and during 20 years he has transported thousands of people to and from community events. He regularly collected epilepsy supporters who attended the former Falkirk branch. Dene received his trophy and inscribed plaque at the Volunteer Awards Ceremony. This was for his valuable work for helping so many local groups. Dene said: “I knew I was nominated with 17 others but I didn’t think I would win. I’m delighted to win and very proud of the result.”

In 1989 Dene agreed to help the epilepsy group. He admitted: “I thought I would be driving a bus with people taking seizures. In all my years of driving it’s only happened once.” With sudden vacancies for office bearers, Dene was asked to be the Secretary for a short term. “I agreed because I thought I would be driving a bus with people taking seizures.”

Wonderful walkers

Helen Bell MBE organised 30 Jobcentre Plus staff to do a sponsored five-miles walk. The event in Eglinton Country Park was in memory of a colleague who died from an epileptic seizure. The walkers raised an amazing £1,732. We would like to thank Helen and everyone who took part.

Racing to help us

Many supporters ran in aid of Epilepsy Scotland this summer. They took part in the Glasgow Women’s 10k, the Edinburgh Marathon, Mintlaw 10k, the Great Edinburgh Run and Great Scottish Walk. Between them they have raised £3,900. And Claire Thomson from Inverness will run in the New York Marathon in November; she has already raised £800! Good luck to all our budding athletes who will take part in the Great Scottish Run and Loch Ness Marathon later this year.

Ladies lunch

Epilepsy Scotland held its first ever Ladies lunch this summer. The venue was in gorgeous surroundings at Guy’s Restaurant in Glasgow’s Merchant City. Special guest and host, Joyce Falconer from BBC Scotland’s River City performed her unique brand of poems, witty monologue and wonderful music. Some great prizes were donated for our auction. These ranged from Kylie concert tickets to stunning designer handbags filled with goodies. Overall the lunch raised a delightful £5,500!

In Memorium

As ever, we send our sincerest thanks to everyone who has donated in memory of a loved one including:

£300 from patrons of the Samuel Dow bar on Nithsdale Road, Glasgow in memory of Maria.
£212 from friends and family in memory of Mr John ‘Ian’ Sutherland Cairns of Golspie.
£200 from Mrs Shirley Gregory, Kirkintilloch, in memory of her son, Scott McRobbie.

£500 from Mrs Helen Whyte, in memory of her husband Alex Whyte and also their late son.
£200 from Dalnegh Spiritualist Centre in memory of John Craig MacLean, who died aged 19.
£200 from Mr Robin Tait, Glasgow, in memory of his brother Colin Tait and parents Duncan and Hazel Tait.

We also honour the memory of our member and volunteer Elizabeth (Liz) Collins of Clydebank. She gave longstanding and passionate support towards achieving change.
Winning Wags

The Marriott Hotel, Glasgow and Roxburghe Hotel, Edinburgh resounded with laughter during our Wags dinners earlier this year. 600 corporate guests attended the glitzy fundraising dinners and helped to raise a fantastic £64,200 for our vital work.

The Glasgow dinner was chaired by BBC and Deacon Blue star Dougie Vipond, who kindly stepped in at the last minute. Well-loved after-dinner speaker Bert Thomson scooped the ‘Glasgow Wag of the Year’ award, beating fellow speakers Denis McCann, Bev Schofield, Davy Wilson and John McPherson.

In Edinburgh, the audience voted Janey Godley their ‘Wag of the Year’ for her hilarious speech. Janey saw off some very stiff competition from Gordon Smith, Tommy Sheridan, Joyce Falconer and Kenny Harris. She was presented with her trophy by Scotsport star and chairperson Grant Stott.

Contributions come in all sizes from our wonderful supporters – and each is put to good use. Here is a small selection of recent donations:

- £470 from Mary Law of Cupar, a florist who staged an exhibition and gave donations to us.
- £200 from the CFSLA Payroll Lottery Committee, Alloa. They sent a donation after their accounts were audited by Jane Taylor who donated the fee to us.
- £400 from the Inner Wheel of Kirriemuir.
- £400 from the Ladies Section of the Douglas Park Golf Club at their recent bridge drive.
- £150 from members of Lochee Bowling Club Dundee through money raised from loose change.
- £415 from the Cornbank St James School Fund, raised through Primary Three’s sponsored obstacle run.
- £1,000 from the Blairgowrie Rotary Club Benevolent Fund.
- £35 from the Red Triangle Snooker Club and £47 from the Kingfisher Pub in Cumbernauld.

Get in touch!

If you would like to fundraise for Epilepsy Scotland we would love to hear from you. We can help with ideas and give you sponsorship forms that make it easier to raise funds.

Simply call 0141 419 1707 or email: fundraising@epilepsyscotland.org.uk or visit the fundraising pages on our website www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk

Watt a hero

Eleven-year-old Josh Watt has been nominated for a Bighearted Scotland Award. He decided to raise funds in memory of his mother who died suddenly from an epileptic seizure at Easter time. He’s raised over £1,000 so far for Epilepsy Scotland through holding special events at Mile End Primary, Aberdeen.

City councillor Bob Cormie collected the cheque on our behalf. We are very grateful to Josh for his fantastic fundraising at such a difficult time.

Bighearted youngsters

Another award nominee is Chelsea Cameron aged nine. For the past three years Chelsea has helped to care for her mum Christine who has uncontrolled epilepsy. In April this year, Chelsea saved her mum’s life during a severe seizure.

Thank You

Contributions come in all sizes from our wonderful supporters – and each is put to good use. Here is a small selection of recent donations:

- £470 from Mary Law of Cupar, a florist who staged an exhibition and gave donations to us.
- £200 from the CFSLA Payroll Lottery Committee, Alloa. They sent a donation after their accounts were audited by Jane Taylor who donated the fee to us.
- £400 from the Inner Wheel of Kirriemuir.
- £400 from the Ladies Section of the Douglas Park Golf Club at their recent bridge drive.
- £150 from members of Lochee Bowling Club Dundee through money raised from loose change.
- £415 from the Cornbank St James School Fund, raised through Primary Three’s sponsored obstacle run.
- £1,000 from the Blairgowrie Rotary Club Benevolent Fund.
- £35 from the Red Triangle Snooker Club and £47 from the Kingfisher Pub in Cumbernauld.