



Newsletter

In this issue:

- **Virgin London Marathon place**
- **IET Connect Trustees and Local Representative vacancies**
- **How we have helped**

What's it all about?

IET Connect offers advice and support directly to individuals and families faced with worries or pressures, perhaps as a result of job loss, relationship breakdown, personal or family concerns, disability, low income or money problems.

A huge range of information and support is available including referral to debt help and legal advice, benefits advice, counselling, employment support (outplacement courses) and financial assistance.

If you are something that's causing you concern, then give us a ring and we'll do our best to help.

Get your kit on for the Virgin London Marathon in 2010!

IET Connect is looking for a runner to take our Silver Bond place in the Virgin London Marathon 2010.

If you are an IET member and would like to run to raise money for your benevolent fund, we urge you to apply immediately for our Silver Bond place!

<http://www.ietconnect.org/documents/VirginLondonMarathon2010ApplicationForm.pdf>

IET Connect needs You

Have you thought about donating a small amount of your time to your charity? IET Connect offers information, advice, and financial help to IET members and their dependants. We are committed to ensuring that all members know the services on offer and how to access them.

We rely on members who are willing to give some of their free time and we have vacancies for the following voluntary posts:

Board of Trustees

We are looking to recruit a Trustee to add to our committed and enthusiastic board. We are particularly keen to achieve more diversity and would welcome applications from all IET Membership sectors. Trustees must be prepared to take on the legal responsibilities required by the Trustee Act.

Local Representatives (LR) for Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, London and Solent areas

If you're interested in helping others through personal contact, then being a LR could be for you. Initial and ongoing training and support is provided for this rewarding role.

Case Committee

If you would like to be part of the team that helps to decide on how best to support people applying for financial assistance, then the Case Committee has vacancies from time to time.

For more info visit <http://www.ietconnect.org/volunteers.html> or email ietconnect@theiet.org

How we helped – a case study

In times of need, it's not just IET members who can ask for help from IET Connect, as Gwyneth Derbyshire found out when her husband became ill.

Electrical engineer Dennis Derbyshire has been a member of the IEE (now the IET) since the 1970s. Having graduated from Salford University in 1972, he and his wife, Gwyneth, spent a few years in Zambia, where he worked as a mining engineer, before returning to the UK. In 1987, he joined a company called Improcom where he became principal consultant.

While he was working at Improcom, Dennis was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Although benign, the tumour needed to be taken out because of its size and position. An operation in 2005 successfully removed most of the tumour and, following his recuperation, Dennis went back to work for one day a week.

In September 2006, Dennis underwent a second operation to remove the remainder of the tumour. This time he was not so lucky. He developed hydrocephalus (water on the brain) and caught an infection via the tubes which were draining the water. The infection led to Dennis contracting two different types of meningitis.

Dennis was in intensive care for ten days and, at one point, was on a life-support machine. This was followed by a long spell in a high-dependency unit. To make matters worse, he also caught blood infections and pneumonia. Dennis was in

hospital for a total of 13 months, after which he was moved to a nursing home where he is still undergoing rehabilitation.

The infections have left Dennis severely debilitated. His brain was damaged to the extent that it has difficulty sending messages to his muscles and each movement requires immense concentration. He is confined to a wheelchair, is prone to infections, suffers from epilepsy and is blind in one eye. He has also been left with cognitive impairment which means he cannot communicate as well as he used to. His long-term memory remains unaffected, but his short-term memory has deteriorated. With the help of his carers and Gwyneth, this is slowly improving.

Before Dennis's second operation, Gwyneth was working at a garden nursery. Once Dennis entered a nursing home, Gwyneth broke down: "I felt as though I'd failed him. I wanted him home but was told that I wouldn't be able to cope."

Gwyneth started getting pains in her joints and was diagnosed with osteoarthritis. She could hardly walk and found it much harder to lift things. It was obvious that she could no longer carry on working. "I also felt that my place was with Dennis. I spend six to eight hours with him every day. I read to him and massage him, and we play games to try to improve his cognitive functions.

"Dennis comes home twice a week for the day if he's well enough, but he can't stay the night, much as I'd like him to, because we don't have the facilities to get him in and out of bed."

When Dennis' sick pay stopped, the couple had to rely on incapacity benefit. When Gwyneth also became ill, she had to apply for income support and started cutting back drastically on her outgoings.

It was at this time that Gwyneth rang the IET to explain the couple's situation and ask if Dennis' membership payments could be reduced. The IET suggested that she speak to IET Connect, the IET's Benevolent Fund and, soon afterwards, an advisor came to visit her at home.

The Local Representative carried out an audit of the couple's finances and not long afterwards Gwyneth started receiving a monthly grant to help with everyday costs such as newspapers, telephone bills and the television licence. Gwyneth is also hoping to take Dennis on holiday to the seaside once she has found somewhere with the necessary facilities for them to stay. IET Connect will help with the costs.

Dennis' illness has had a profound and devastating effect on their lives. Gwyneth hopes that he will come home to live one day but she has no idea if, or when, this might happen.

Admits Gwyneth: "I couldn't have coped without IET Connect. Without its financial help we would have been forced to sell the house, but its emotional support has been just as valuable. The people we speak to are friendly and always want to help.

It gives me peace of mind to know that if any big or unexpected expenses crop up, such as equipment for Dennis, I've got IET Connect to fall back on. My future is uncertain and I have to live with the possibility that Dennis might never come home, but at least I know that I've got IET Connect behind me."

Fundraising

A big thank you to the Teesside Network for its donation of £630 raised through the Tombola at its Annual Dinner and Reunion.

Almost £250 was raised, through members purchasing books from the former IIE's library.

The Retired Professional Engineers' Club in Bristol donated £1000 in honour of Michael Clinch's retirement as President of the Club. A big thank you to Michael and everyone who donated.



Chris Oxland, IET Connect's CEO, receives the cheque from Olly Wells, Chairman of IET Bristol Network.

IET Connect Donations

Look out for the new IET Connect contact cards which are included in the IET Subs mailing for 2010. Keep the card handy so that you can contact us when you need to. Thanks to everyone who has agreed to pay the recommended donation of £7 or over. This is the first rise in donation for 10 years and will help members in times of need.

