



ISSUE 11



Season's Greetings

KEEPING PACE

DECEMBER 2008



KEEPING PACE WITH PAIN SOUTHAMPTON BASED CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUP

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I cannot make any excuses, well I could but you wouldn't believe them. I can only apologise to all those that may look forward to the newsletter (all two of you) coming out, I am I admit a little late - and this first page has changed more that the weather. I started putting this issue together in April, not sure what happened then - 7 months went by and here we are, in late November. (all previous typing has gone in the recycle bin as it's not now relevant). Perhaps some of you could help me - did we have a summer because I can't remember, it was cold and wet, now it's cold and wet (well it is today) so has anything happened in between?

It's been a year of activities for KPWP, we have had our third birthday (gosh it doesn't seem that long) in March with another lovely cake from Norma (our rambler, see pages 2 & 3) and some hot cross buns and samples from Mr Cotton.

We've had countless animals visit, well a few; there's Yogi of course, then in March we had Andy's canaries, bats in April, (there's a joke there somewhere), that's not many I know but how many other support groups do you know that's had even those?

Unfortunately because of my failure to notice the year go by, I haven't the room in this issue to report on the fantastic talk we had from Norma's husband David, but there were some more animals there, a shark, penguin and mag-gots, now beat that!!

In June we had the opening of our very own Library, opened by Lise who raised the money to get the library established (see Newsletter No. 10). Reminder: the library is open at the end of our meetings. Don't forget, if there are any

books that you would like to see in the library please mention it at one of the meetings.

Now what else has happened, it's difficult to remember it all, Oh yes, do you remember Dr Monkhouse visiting us in July looking for volunteers for a discussion group to be filmed and then presented to medical students (medics to their friends) to help them understand about chronic pain and the impact it has on our lives. Well, I can report that I somehow was one of those involved along with Kay, Chris, Steve and Kath. It was weird talking about one's problems in front of others and of all things, a camera, but it was an experience.

The next thing to come out of this was the presentation to the students on the 6th November. Again I didn't remember volunteering but there I was, I wasn't nervous, (oh yeah!) but when I heard there would be around 200 hundred students, panic! what would our future doctors and surgeons be like, how would they treat us, visions of being bombarded with all sorts of food and drink cartons came to mind. Kay and I arrived at the University and had to fight our way through the hoards of students coming out for lunch. God! I felt old. We were greeted by Dr Monkhouse at the front and then Dr Curtis in the hall. This is when it hits you, I had a cursory look round and up, I repeat "up" at the seating, there were two or three students just settling down, I thought that's not too bad, then they started coming in - it was scary!! It was at this point I turned around and saw massive, I mean massive screens, two of them, Oh no! me on a 6ft screen, Ha!

I won't go on about it, just to say that there were a few students on the day that were very complimentary, which made it all worthwhile. It was a brilliant experience, I'd definitely do it again, if I was asked.

In August we were very fortunate to have the lovely Tracey Spice visit us again with brushes and flower pots at the ready. Some managed to do some lovely designs on the flower pots, and the rest of us did some psychoanalysis, using card and flicking paint onto it ,then create whatever you see into a picture. Hey man!! This is all in "Docs Ramblings", but in more detail, but I must say a big thank you to Ken Stevens who came in September with his accordions. Now I must admit when I saw this on the list I thought of a chap with an accordion playing Russian and Gypsy folk music . Very nice too, but what we got was a fantastic hour or so of what can only be described as a brilliant session, he took us through the life of farmers in years gone by, with some of the old songs, the dialect of the different counties, and poems from that time. Before this we had a talk on mindfulness from Matt Mawer which was another brilliant talk with a bit of practice thrown in.

Buddhists believe that over 2500 years ago, Buddha provided a guide on establishing mindfulness. Right mindfulness (often also termed Right meditation) involves bringing one's awareness back (i.e. from the past or the future) into the present moment. By residing more frequently in the present moment, practitioners begin to see both inner and outer aspects of reality.(From Wikipedia)

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Doc's Ramblings - Pages 2 & 3
- Lise's Art - Page 3
- Driving with Jessica- Page 4





February

We had a packed programme today. We were pleased to meet Richard Beale, lovely (and equally tall!) son of Steve and Chris Beale. He told us all about China, a place he has come to love during his frequent visits there as a tour guide. We heard all about their food, customs and diverse scenery. He brought miniature models of some of the warriors from the Terracotta Army to show us. He introduced us to his Chinese girlfriend Selena and she was able to explain how the variations in their armour and head wear indicated the rank of the soldier. We also had a talk from two NHS Health Trainers. These people are funded by the Primary Care Trust and their job is to offer support to people who have identified life style changes that they would like to achieve but for which they would like some ongoing help. These could be good intentions such as losing weight, getting back to exercise or quitting smoking. The team can be contacted on 023 80515222. They have on offer up to 6 sessions of one to one support and advice, completely free and confidential.

March

Well we certainly celebrated our 3rd birthday in style. The meeting began with a fascinating talk from Mr Cotton, a baker from Bitterne. Several years ago he became interested in food additives and the effect that they can have on health. His son had health issues at a young age and Mr Cotton believes that minimising the additives his son had in his diet played a significant role in improving his problems. He did lots of research into health enhancing foods and now combines this knowledge with his bakery skills. One product of this is his "Wellbeing" loaf which he sells in his shop. It is full of healthy grains and seeds and is additive free. It consequently has a short shelf life but he has allowed for this by selling the loaf packaged into 2 slice sections so that they can be frozen and used as required. He brought us samples of this loaf and it is delicious. I for one will be frequenting his shop to buy more. He continues this unique approach to bakery by developing new recipes for people with special diets including diabetics and those with gluten sensitivity. He also brought us hot cross buns to sample- both standard ones and the special diabetic versions. It was a real treat not only to hear him speak, but also sample his wares.

Andy, one of our members, then talked to us about his hobby. He breeds and shows canaries. He brought in 8 to show us. They were beautiful! And what pampered lives they lead! They are fed and watered twice a day with a special, carefully balanced diet, they have daily baths and even get a full manicure consisting of nail clipping and foot massage with a special cream to remove scale. I'm sure none of us humans is that well treated at home! It was good of Andy to share with us the details of keeping such special pets and they were a credit to his care and attention.

April

We had an interesting talk from members of the Hampshire Bat Group.

It was made even more special because they brought in 2 rescued bats to show us. Most of us had never seen a bat so close up before and it was amazing. They are so often associated with scary horror movies that we can easily get the wrong impression of them. They are actually lovely and need all the help they can get as their numbers are declining. This is due to the loss of their natural habitats through building developments and a decrease in their source of food secondary to pesticide use. They are now legally protected from harm, injury and disturbance. If you wish to learn more, or even help their plight, you can join the voluntary organisation known as Hampshire Bat Group. Contact details can be obtained from Chris and Mike Pawling 023 8061 7551.

Emma, the Southampton Pain Clinic Pharmacist, and kind supporter of Keeping Pace, then gave us a brief update on developments in pain medication and answered questions from the group. As always, an extremely helpful session.

May

This month's meeting welcomed 7 new faces. Many had come to hear our speaker Colin Beevor - Lead Nurse in the Musculoskeletal Out Patient Department at QAH & RHH, Portsmouth. - talk on Fibromyalgia. His talk was highly informative and provoked many questions from the group. Colin emphasized the values of a healthy diet, regular exercise, good sleep hygiene and the benefits of being part of a support group (one box ticked!). He came armed with a box full of literature which was snaffled up very quickly! Colin is hoping to establish a Fibromyalgia support group in Portsmouth later this year.

At the next meeting which was on June 19th we had the Grand Opening of Lise's Library. The library is stocked with books on all aspects of chronic pain and will be available for loan to group members. In order to borrow a book we will ask for a £5 deposit, refunded to you on the safe return of the book to the library. Upon completion of the book it would be great if you were able to share your thoughts with the group - no pressure and no obligation either!

June

Debbie Harrison kindly came along to speak to the group this month. She kept the audience spellbound. I've never heard everyone so quiet. She told us all about the fact that she suffers from chronic back pain and that it was this that first led her to take up yoga. She has found it to be hugely beneficial, not just the exercise aspect of it but also the underpinning philosophy which allowed her to accept her pain and learn to live with it. She went on to study Tai massage, Swedish massage, Indian Head massage and Reflexology. During her talk she showed us how to do a simple self treatment using hand reflexology and also some breathing techniques useful for relaxation. To read more about her and her Yoga Sanctuary, visit their website on <http://yogasanctuary.co.uk>

Our library was officially opened by Lise Marron. It was her fund raising which raised the money to get the library established. So a big thanks to Lise. The library will open for lending to members of Keeping Pace at the end of each of our monthly meetings. Details of the books available can be seen on this website.





“DOC’S RAMBLINGS” continued

July

This month’s meeting had two Pain Clinic doctors requesting the group’s help on two projects. Dr Marilyn Monkhouse took the floor first, wearing her Honorary Lecturer hat, from the Medical School at Southampton University. She was making an educational plea for 6-8 volunteers to take part in a discussion group, on Friday September 12th, 1-5pm, at the Avenue St Andrew United Reformed Church. This will be professionally filmed, edited and presented to medical students in order to teach them about chronic pain and how it impacts on lives and relationships. The resulting film will be edited to create a manageable time frame to show to medical students at their teaching symposium on ‘Neurophysiology’ in November. The group will have the opportunity to see the finished article prior to it being shown to the students. High tea will be served at the end of filming! Several group members have already come forward to participate in this session. If you are interested in taking part please contact Kevin –Kevin@keepingpace.co.uk

Our second visitor was Dr Delia Hopkins, who came to the meeting asking the group members to proof read a Patient Information Leaflet for the Pain Clinic, which she has created. They were given the opportunity to take home the draft copy, to proof read, make changes, additions, suggestions etc with a red pen! Then to return the draft copy to Delia in the SAE provided. She will return at a later date to show the group the finished leaflet.

To meet with the need for more frequent meetings, the group has decided that on the first Monday of each month there will be an informal gathering at a venue which will be decided monthly at the preceding formal meeting.

August

We had an opportunity for our creativity to be unleashed under the enthusiastic encouragement of Tracey Spice. This was her third visit to our group and she had us painting designs on flower pots and creating pictures out of ink spots on paper that had a water colour wash put on it (and no, we didn’t psychoanalyse them as was suggested by one of our members!) It was such a lovely opportunity to sit around chatting while producing our masterpieces. Thank you to all those who supplied the cream tea - can you believe we got through over 3 dozen scones, 2 pots of jam and 3 tubs of cream!

If you wish to see some of Tracey’s art then visit her web site <http://www.spiceartstudios.co.uk>. One of our members, Lise Marron, had a piece of her art on display at Tracey’s art gallery in Bitterne Triangle - see below.

September

We had a packed programme this month. The meeting started with a taster of Mindfulness from Matt Mawer. This is a technique based on the principles of meditation which is gaining in popularity as a useful self management tool for folks with chronic medical conditions. These include chronic pain, heart problems, asthma etc. He gave us the opportunity to give some Mindfulness exercises a go which demonstrated how difficult we all find it to stay with the present moment and not to let our thoughts wander off. There is so much to learn about Mindfulness that this session could only touch on some brief basics. However, for those who missed it and those who want to hear more, Matt would be willing to come back and tell us more about this fascinating topic. We were then entertained by Ken Stephens and his accordions. He treated us to songs, poetry and stories about the life of farmers in this country in days gone by. It seemed to involve an awful lot of cider drinking! But it was very interesting to hear about all the ancient customs and traditions.

October

Following requests from several group members for a speaker to be found on the subject of Osteoporosis, Nick Harvey, Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Rheumatologist from Southampton University, came to our rescue. His talk was very informative with some surprising statistics such as 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over the age of 50 will break a bone, mainly because of osteoporosis. He also gave advice on maintaining a well balanced diet, rich in calcium and Vitamin D and also exercise. Leading an active lifestyle will ensure you have good balance and co-ordination and will also help to develop muscle strength. Swimming, gardening, walking, golf and Tai Chi exercises can help reduce your risk of falling and breaking a bone. Visit the National Osteoporosis Society web site www.nos.org.uk for more information.

Lise’s Scalding Spike Prickly

Title - Scalding Spike Prickly by Lise Marron

Materials - papier-mâché, acrylics, glue, enamel paints



How Piece Relates to my Pain

‘Scalding Spike Prickly’ is a representation of part of my nerve pain, which I see as a parasite in the form of a solid metal ball with molten lava outer-layers. It is attached, via a scalding chain, to my right hip, continuously striking against my right buttock – stabbing, spiking, scalding and melting into it, whilst pulling on my lower back causing it to throb and pull my body downwards. Often Spikey is so furious, it swings with such vigour that it bashes into the entire right side of my back and shoulder-blade, causing the same torment as it does to my buttock, before it smashes back into my buttock once more. Because the chain is so short I can never rest its weight upon the ground, so I carry the full brunt. When I sit or lie, Scalding Spike sits directly under my right buttock - scalding spiking, stabbing and melting into my skin, ever of the more.





KEEPING PACE WITH PAIN

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JOKES

What did the guest sing at the Eskimo's Christmas party?

Freeze a jolly fellow!

Whats happens if you eat the Christmas decorations?

You get tinsel-itus!

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?

It's Christmas, Eve!

Why do birds fly south for the winter?

Because it's too far to walk.

Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

Because he had low elf esteem.

Why is Christmas just like a day at the office?

You do all the work and the fat guy with the suit gets all the credit.

What do you call a group of chess fanatics bragging about their games in a hotel lobby?

Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer!

What do you call a reindeer wearing ear muffs?

Anything you want. He can't hear you!

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: Peace on Earth, Goodwill to men, and Batteries not included.

Good King Wenceslas phoned for a pizza. The salesgirl asked him, 'Do you want your usual? Deep pan, crisp and even?'

How do you know Santa has to be a man?

No woman is going to wear the same outfit year after year.

QUOTES: Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love! ~Hamilton Wright Mabie

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"
~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



"God gave us our memories so that we might have roses in December."
~ J. M. Barrie

Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas." ~ Peg Bracken.



(trying to talk & smile)
Oj you! get out of guy gitcher I'n trying not to look too engar-rissed!!



Forthcoming dates for your diary - Time 1 to 3pm unless otherwise stated.



REMEMBER OUR START TIME IS BACK TO 1 PM

December 18th 2008 - Christmas Party – Don't forget your £1 Secret Santa Gift!

January 15th 2009 – Explain Pain – Dr Sally Curtis

February 19th 2009 – Medication with Emma



New Series - Chapter two



Driving with Jessica (you know who!)

I had had my car a little while and still my driving had not improved. It was parking that was the worst thing. I used to get to work in the morning and pray there was someone from work in the car park who could park my car for me. If not I would try my best and maybe, if I was lucky, within 5-6 tries in a few different places I would be in a bay!! There used to be a man sitting in his car every morning reading his paper. He would see my "spacious" fiesta come into the car park and the paper would go down. And he would sit and laugh his socks off at me trying to park. When I was finally in the bay and out of the car, the paper would go back up. Every day this would happen, every day, and he never got bored!! At least he started his day with a smile!!

My great auntie was in hospital at the General. I said to dad, I'll drive us up there. "Ok" he said. My dad must have nerves of steel (remember the tree incident), either that or he had a death wish if he was willing to get into my missile with me again!! So we get to the car park (just before you get a ticket) and I start ranting and raving about what a stupid place for a speed bump.

Dad sat there and listened letting me get it off my chest before saying "it's not a speed bump you're on the kerb" oops!! Mum had an "incident" in the car with me as well (how could I leave her out, she missed the tree!!). It was the day I first injured my wrist, too bad to drive she offered to come and meet me and drive my car home. We had just got outside the car park and the thing just stopped. Nothing we could do would get the thing started again. As luck would have it though a policeman pulled up behind us and managed to get it going. Mum said I would have to try and drive as I was more used to the car and we didn't want it to break down again. So into the drivers seat I got and the policeman told me quite clearly "don't stop, go straight home" and that's what I intended to do. We drove along and nearly took the skin off some pedestrians crossing the road. Then I was approaching crossroads and that's when I really started to panic. "Oh no what shall I do" I screamed at mum, panic rising rapidly. "What do you mean" she said "start slowing down" panic in her voice "but the policeman told me go straight home" I said "he didn't mean it literally" mum said. Lucky she was there, I wasn't going to stop for anyone, he should have realised I was a blonde and chosen his words more carefully!! Mum never got in my car again.



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