



KEEPING PACE

MARCH 2009

KEEPING PACE WITH PAIN SOUTHAMPTON BASED CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUP

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Do you ever have problems trying to start off a piece of writing? Well I do, you have in your mind what things you want to talk about, but they never quite come out the way you think. Well this is our 12th Newsletter and as you have probably worked out for yourselves by now, my writing skills are not particularly good, but I try. Well that's got me started. The last NL came out in December last year and since then in January we had a fantastic talk from Sally Curtis, a lecturer in Neurophysiology at the University of Southampton. As you will read in Doc's Ramblings, this kept all of us riveted to our seats for something like two hours, with a short break for tea.. February and March meetings went well, with Richard Beal (Steve & Chris's son) giving us a talk in February and our 4th Birthday celebrations in March, with cake lovingly baked by our very own Norma, she is so good to us. We also had a talk from Ita Berry on servicing, you can read more about that and all of our meetings on page 2.

For those of you who were at the March meeting you will remember that Norma read out a piece from the 2008 Chief Medical Officer's report. As a reminder and for those not at the meeting I have tried to outline some of basics below:

Paragraphs in " " are extracts taken from the CMO's website and the report itself.

"The Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2008 draws attention to major health challenges requiring immediate action, and details progress made in key areas identified in previous annual reports." One chapter, enti-

tled 'Pain: Breaking Through The Barrier' highlights the extent of chronic pain and it is a very interesting read. For those of you that cannot access the www I have printed out a few copies and they will be in the library for you to access.

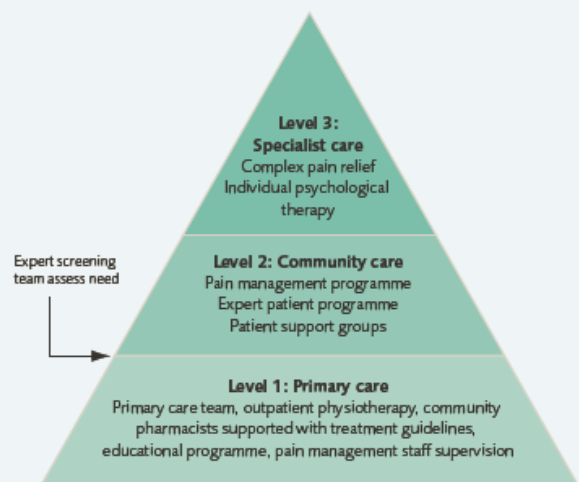
More from the report: "Each year over 5 million people in the United Kingdom develop chronic pain, but only two-thirds will recover. Much more needs to be done to improve outcomes for patients." (I bet we all agree there)

Extract from page 38 of the report:-
"Firstly, the range of approaches to pain is wider, including techniques such as cognitive therapy. Secondly, there is a strong focus on the impact of pain more widely, rather than purely on the pain itself. Here, the effect on daily functioning and overall health – mobility, sleep and depression, and the ability to work

and interact socially – are very significant in successful treatment and rehabilitation. Thirdly, today's services are multidisciplinary, which seems to be the most significant step forwards in treatment. Many specialist professions, not just doctors, have an important role to play. It is also important to integrate the approach to pain services across primary and secondary care. The service model in **Southampton** (see Figure 1) is one way in which a local health service has delivered a more patient-focused approach. Other areas have used different models and different ways of integrating healthcare and community services. Unfortunately, a shortage of resources can limit the achievement of this ideal, and non-integrated care may persist in many areas."

This is brilliant news for us, our Pain Support Group is making a difference and we and other groups have an important part to play.

Figure 1: Management of chronic pain in Southampton



Source: Price, 2006

**“DOC’S RAMBLINGS”****November**

This was probably our most unusual talk to date. David Barlow, a local special effects film maker (who just happens also to be my husband), came to talk to us about his work. He showed a variety of clips from TV programmes he has worked on which included the current Channel Four "Animals in the Womb" series. He then let us into some of his tricks of the trade such as using glitter and black velvet for solar systems and garden shovels of salt thrown onto dolls house furniture to mimic the destructive force of an avalanche. We also had the chance to handle some of the silicone models used in the filming of In the Womb, a ten times larger than life penguin foetus to name but one. It all goes to show that the camera actually does lie after all!

December

December is party month and that we did! It was a lovely occasion with lots of laughter and needless to say food! Following last year's Christmas quiz, Jess complained that it wasn't suitable for young people like herself! Thus the gauntlet was thrown and Jess had the challenge of producing a quiz suitable for all ages! Did she succeed? Yes! So much so that people were taking copies home for their own parties. Well Done Jess! This was followed with our traditional Carol singing, with Jim on the piano and his able assistant Ken at his side. The afternoon concluded with our £1 secret Santa, which went down a treat. So another successful year ended for Keeping Pace.

January

Anybody chancing on this month's meeting could have been forgiven for thinking that we were sitting in an adult education tutorial! We were being talked to by Sally Curtis, a lecturer in Neurophysiology at the University of Southampton Medical School. What was so lovely was that Sally has such a wonderful way of describing things that we were all gripped by what she was saying and the majority of us understood some, if not all, of what she was telling us. We heard all about nerve cells, their nucleuses, branches, dendrites etc and the fact that, unlike for example liver cells, they cannot reproduce themselves. We learnt that the nervous system is divided by its structure into central and peripheral parts, and, further, by its function into sensory and motor divisions. She touched a little on the nature of chronic pain and tried to explain some aspects of it using the physiology she was describing. It was also made clear that many aspects of chronic pain are still not easily explained by physiology alone. So much depends on the person's own experiences, their circumstances and their general health status. She directed us to a useful web site, <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/introb.html> for those who wish to learn more. She has also promised to come back. So if you have any particular questions in mind, give them to Joan who will forward them to Sally so she can prepare her talk accordingly.

February

We had a good turnout on what was actually a lovely spring afternoon. We were entertained by Richard Beal - this was a return visit, by popular request. He gave us further, fascinating insights into the way of life in China. You may recall that he works there as a tour guide. One of the most interesting topics he covered was the honourable citizens' (senior citizens to us but it is thought very rude to imply that folks are "old" in China) penchant for keeping crickets as pets. They think that the sound and presence of crickets brings a touch of the countryside into their town dwellings. They have specially designed, pottery cricket houses equipped with a bed and feeding bowl. Some are so preoccupied with their pet that they carry them around outside the house in small boxes and to keep them warm, tuck them into especially stitched little pockets under the arms of their shirts. Such dedication! Imagine the looks you'd get in the supermarket here if your armpit started chirruping!

March

It was lovely to see so many faces, new and old, at this our 49th meeting! It was our 4th birthday. We celebrated with cake and took a commemorative group photo. (See opposite)

Our speaker this time was Ita Berry, a psychologist currently working in the Southampton Pain Clinic. Her talk was entitled "Servicing." We are all used to the idea of servicing our cars or boilers, but Ita wanted to stress the importance of servicing our minds and bodies. In using the word "mind" she was particularly referring to our sense of self. As part of our servicing she recommended that we took regular breaks, making sure we had switch off times. We could try to develop peaceful environments that we could escape to in our heads, maybe using music or our imaginations. She thought we should spend time raising ourselves and our achievements, using self affirming statements, much in the way that a good parent might. We should develop positive mantras. She concluded by saying that "self service" is an important part of self esteem and we should treat ourselves kindly and demonstrate to others that we are worthy of love.

She left us with lots to think about and ideas to try to put into practice. Some of the members felt that this might be easier said than done and yet the thought remained that the more you practiced the better you might get at it.

Next month we hope to welcome back Emma to talk to the group about medication.





4th Birthday Group Photo

Driving with Jessica - Chapter Three

Still I wasn't that great at driving. I had realised you are either a natural or you are meant to be driven and I was defiantly the latter, but I wasn't going to let that stop me!!

I had never been all that good at what I like to call "sneaking". You know getting the clutch just right so you can ease forward carefully and slowly. However with practise I was getting better. Or so I thought. I had gone to the petrol station and managed to fill up all by myself - I managed to miss the pumps and everything (bonus!). Anyway someone had decided the pavement would be a good place to put a sign advertising the garage special offers. I knew some serious sneaking was needed to see around the sign before I pulled onto Hill Lane; So I started creeping forward not fast, nice and controlled then, bang, my foot slipped and me and my (brave for getting in the car) brother went zooming out into the middle of Hill Lane whoops- now that was a scary moment!!

Another tough lesson I learnt was that waving to someone is never an appropriate form of apology after carving (albeit accidentally) somebody up. I was approaching a roundabout (I hate roundabouts by the way) and I made a simple mistake. I thought it was one of those 2 lane ones where 2 cars go around it at the same time - wrong. I waited patiently in the left hand lane before seizing my chance and taking off round the roundabout in the right hand lane. Bad mistake I know. Unfortunately for me another car also chose this as his moment to go in the right hand lane. He didn't waste any time and got straight on the horn. Me? I realised my mistake so by way of saying sorry waved at him to which I got shown the finger!! Lesson learnt!!

My drive home from work had been uneventful. Then I got home and had to try to park. I tried my usual spot but parking wasn't going well so I thought I would drive around the block and approach it again. Something I had to do on more than one occasion. I had got as far as my neighbour's house when a learner came along, there wasn't room for both cars to get through so I pulled in. I didn't leave enough space for the learner to get through and I got myself stuck in between 2 cars. I looked at the learner the learner looked at me, in one of those awkward moments where no one knows what to do. I got shooed back by the driving instructor but couldn't manage the manoeuvre. Panic rising I got my phone out to ring my mum (just inside the house for some assistance!). Learner and instructor looked at me must have been thinking what is the blonde doing, then it clicked, they realised I was stuck and instead of helping a damsel in distress both laughed at me (how rude). Luckily I am not easily fazed and maintained my composure, while on the phone to mum. As it was the learner did manage to squeeze by, instructor eyeballing me all the way. Then my neighbour wondering what was happening, came out the same time as my mum, they both laughed before I got out of the car and let my neighbour park it for me!! To this day they still cannot understand how I got my car in between 2 the way I did, it was almost like the car was bent, almost banana shape. Just lucky I guess (or not)!!



OK, the mouse is back, this time a lot braver - he even posed for this picture, can you believe it? It's time for some action I think, one of us has got to go. I know he lives in the garage so he's not exactly causing a problem but is he alone?? Did you know a lady mouse can have between 4 to 16 little mice in a litter, depending on food availability etc. That's not all, she can have 7 to 8 litters per year, some have been known to have 10. Now that's scary. I don't know about you guys, but me, I don't like the idea of killing or trapping them anymore, I've gone soft over the years, ahh. I've just found a website that deals in everything to do with rodents and other nuisance animals, so I'm just about to order some deterrents, we will see who wins!!



KEEPING PACE WITH PAIN

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

April 16th - Medication Q & A Session with Emma, Specialist Pain Pharmacist

May 21st - Alexander Technique & more with Ian Traynor, Osteopath

June 18th - Further Pain Physiology with Sally Curtis, Lecturer, Southampton School of Medicine

July 16th - Open Session - your opportunity to share with the group your passion!

August 20th - Cream Teas and Music



Romanian Pottery

For sale - a selection of Romanian pottery will be offered to members at the June Meeting.



One of our coffee mornings

JOKES:

Q: What do you call a camel that has three humps?
A: Humphrey

A man walks into a bar with a roll of Tarmac under his arm and says: "Pint, please, and one for the road..."

A sandwich walks into a bar. The barman says: "Sorry, we don't serve food in here."

My friend drowned in a bowl of muesli. He was pulled in by a strong currant.

True bravery is arriving home late after a boys night out, being assaulted by your wife with a broom, and still having the guts to ask, "Are you cleaning, or were you flying somewhere?"

A man went to his local gym to ask about yoga classes for beginners. The instructor asked, "How flexible are you?" "Well," replied the man, "I can't do Wednesdays..."

"Doctor, Doctor, You've got to help me - I just can't stop my hands shaking!" "Do you drink a lot?" "Not really - I spill most of it!"

A man speaks frantically into the phone, "My wife is pregnant, and her contractions are only two minutes apart!" "Is this her first child?" the doctor queries. "No, you idiot!" the man shouts. "This is her husband!"

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day. One remarked to the other, 'Windy, isn't it?' 'No,' the second man replied, 'it's Thursday.' The third man chimed in, 'So am I. Let's have a beer.'

Patient: It's been one month since my last visit and I still feel miserable. Doctor: Did you follow the instructions on the medicine I gave you? Patient: I sure did - the bottle said 'keep tightly closed.'

QUOTES:

"Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune - without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me."
~ Emily Dickinson, "Hope"

Yesterday the twig was brown and bare;
To-day the glint of green is there;
Tomorrow will be leaflets spare;
I know no thing so wondrous fair,
No miracle so strangely rare.
I wonder what will next be there!
~L.H. Bailey

"Spring is nature's way of saying let's party!" ~Robin Williams

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things. ~Robert Brault

We plant seeds that will flower as results in our lives, so best to remove the weeds of anger, avarice, envy and doubt... ~Dorothy Day

A loyal friend laughs at your jokes when they're not so good, and sympathizes with your problems when they're not so bad. ~Arnold H. Glasgow

For I remember it is Easter morn,
And life and love and peace are all new born. ~Alice Freeman Palme

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless. ~Sherry Anderson (this is so true of Norma & Joan)



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