



KEEPING PACE



CHRISTMAS 2005

SOUTHAMPTON CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUP

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Welcome to our Christmas Special

To start with I would like to wish all our members and friends a very Happy Christmas and a trouble free New Year to follow.

Well, it's nearly turkey and the famous Brussels sprouts time again, did you know Brussels are named after the capital of Belgium (hence the capital "B" and the "s"), where it is believed to have been first harvested centuries ago. Much maligned and often misunderstood, well I certainly misunderstood them when I was a child, they were awful, disgusting little cabbages, that tasted so bad you had a job to swallow and the smell, we won't go into that, but now, years later, like so many of us, I love 'em!!

Anyway I digress, it's unbelievable that this year has nearly

gone and in a few weeks we will be welcoming in 2006. Those of you that have been with us from the beginning will remember our first meeting on the 17th March 2005 and the introduction of our Newsletter shortly after that.

Ian Semmons, Chairman of AOP, came along to our first meeting to introduce Action on Pain, (for those reading this NL for the first time, we are the Southampton branch of this charity), we had a group discussion led by Jan Walker, a senior lecturer at the University of Southampton, on coping with pain. This got everyone talking about how they cope with their own pain and the different strategies they had developed.

We have had 8 meetings since then, with talks on; Physiotherapy, Medication, The Bowen Technique, Aromatherapy, Acupuncture, Exercise on Pre-

scription, (there's a joke there somewhere), 'Medication and Driving' (by the Police) and the last one in November being a less formal one, giving the chance for some of our members to give their own 20 minute talks - (see page 2 for October & November's "Docs Ramblings").

Action on Pain continues to grow with recent branches opening in Derby, Doncaster, and our own offshoot in the New Forest. There are plans to open three more branches in early 2006, these are in Brighton, Barnstable and Dewsbury.

To conclude, I hope you will all join me in thanking Norma and Joan, who not only give up their spare time for us, but also organize the meetings, speakers and all sorts, and wishing them both a very Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2006.

FUNNIEST CAPTION COMPETITION (see back page)



QUOTES:

"The cold was our pride, the snow was our beauty. It fell and fell, lacing day and night together in a milky haze, making everything quieter as it fell, so that winter seemed to partake of religion in a way no other season did, hushed, solemn" ~ Patricia Hampl

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

"Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect" ~ Oren Arnold





"DOC'S RAMBLINGS"

OCTOBER SESSION

We had a good turnout today. We were rewarded with an excellent talk from Nick Ellcome, a policeman from the Hampshire Constabulary who was responsible for the setting up of the Impaired Driver Unit. He was well qualified to do this as he was a paramedic in the RAF before joining the police force 14 years ago. He has also spent time with drug squads in California. This unit was set up last year as a direct result of the concern about the increasing drug related road traffic accidents. A recent 10 year study found that one in four fatalities on the roads was caused by drug taking. All the 220 police traffic officers in Hampshire are trained to carry out impairment testing which, like the breath test, is now obligatory.

We all know about the dangers of drinking and driving and there are established blood alcohol levels leading to prosecution. The problem with drugs and impaired driving is that there are no such clear guidelines. Nick talked a lot about illegal drugs but the concern of our members was our fitness to drive with the variety of legitimate drugs many of us take for our chronic pain. These could include prescribed drugs and over the counter medications (100 or so of which are known to cause impairment of judgement). Chronic pain itself and consequent alterations in mood and concentration can also have an effect on our capability to drive.

The conclusion which was reached at the end of the afternoon was that it is important to take advice from our doctors and specialists but ultimately it is our own individual, moral obligation to make sure we are fit when we drive. We were left with lots more that we wanted to know and, having all really enjoyed listening to Nick, it was decided to try and compile some more specific questions and invite him back next year. If you read this Nick - be prepared!!

NOVEMBER SESSION

We changed the format for this month's meeting. We tried a less formal approach and asked some of our members to give small 20 minute talks. We heard from Joan Bamforth who described the Bowen Technique. This was a refresher for those who heard her in June and new for our more recent members. We also had a fascinating talk from John Earls about The Alexander Technique, Tai Chi and meditation. He told us how he used these three disciplines to develop his own approach. He explained how most of the time we do not use our conscious brain to control movements. The body therefore has fixed patterns of how it carries out everyday actions. These patterns are not necessarily the best way of carrying out a movement but because they are the way we have always done things, they are habits that are hard to break.

The Alexander Technique teaches you better, more efficient ways of performing movements. For example, muscles are most efficient when they are at their maximum length. If they are stiff, tense and contracted then they are weaker and require more physical effort to complete a task. So, The Alexander Technique teaches how to prepare the body for movement in such a way that you let your body perform the movement with minimum effort. The disadvantage is that it can only be taught efficiently on a one to one basis with a skilled teacher. A fascinating topic which John only brushed the surface of in such a short space of time.

"Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childhood days, recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and transport the traveler back to his own fireside and quiet home!"

~ Charles Dickens



Some of our members enjoying the carols whilst others use threatening behaviour to keep hold of their grapes.



Jim with Eddie, his surprise guest.





"Love came down at Christmas;
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Stars and angels gave the sign" ~ *Christina Rossetti*



This is a story, which, I must admit, I had never heard before, so I thought I would share it -

The Christmas Rose is from a charming tale of a little shepherd girl who stood weeping outside the stable where Jesus was born because she had no gift for him. A watching Angel caused the snow at the little girl's feet to disappear, revealing the Christmas Rose which was formed by the angels from each tear of the little shepherdess; a lovely gift for the baby Jesus.



The Christmas rose should be planted by the door to welcome Christ into the house. The rose is also associated with Saint Agnes, the patroness of purity, whose feast day is 21 January. She was only 13 when she suffered martyrdom for the Faith in Rome in 303.

(There were so many different versions of the above story, I thought this was the best)

The Christmas Rose is not actually a rose at all but a perennial herb with lobed leaves and a white five petalled flower. Because it blooms in the middle of winter, it is often called the Christmas Rose. (*helleborus niger*)

I'm going to astound you now, did you know:~

The first recognised commercial Christmas card was produced in England in 1843 by Henry Cole, the founder of the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was a hand coloured print showing a family scene flanked by scenes of Christmas charity. This was inscribed with the words: "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You" with space at the top to put the name of the recipient and at the bottom for the name of the sender.



However, it was not until the 1860's that the Christmas card as we know it came into being. Initially these were small cards with a simple greeting set within an embossed border. However, as the demand for Christmas cards grew, the cards became larger and more elaborate. Folded sheets of white paper were ornamented with borders of overlapping lace that lifted to form a raised framework for a central picture and turkeys, fireside scenes, plum puddings etc became popular themes.

(I'm a mine of information.....)

And another one (I'm on a roll now)

The name 'Christmas' comes from the Mass of Christ (or Jesus). A Mass service (it is sometimes called Communion or Eucharist) is where Christians remember that Jesus died for us and then came back to life. The 'Christ-Mass' service was the only one that was allowed to take place after sunset, so people had it at Midnight! So we get the name Christ-Mass, shortened to Christmas.



Christmas is also sometimes called Xmas. Some people don't think it's correct to call Christmas 'Xmas' as that takes the 'Christ' (Jesus) out of Christmas. But that is not quite right! In the Greek language and alphabet, the letter that looks like an X is pronounced 'Christos' and means 'Christ'!



Dennis our comedian for the afternoon, and very good he was.



Steve, the winner of our Christmas quiz.



Katie, Chris and Euan - our youngest members.



We are on the Web

www.action-on-pain.co.uk

Action on
pain!



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NEXT INFORMAL TALK ON 19TH JANUARY 2006

Our speaker will be talking to us on Welfare Rights and Benefits, e.g. Incapacity Benefit.

Date for Next Meeting

Thursday 19th January 2006

Time

1 - 3 pm

Venue

St. Andrews United Reformed Church
The Avenue, Southampton SO17 1XQ

ACTION ON PAIN'S PHONE LINE

The dedicated telephone help-line, manned by people with chronic pain, provides expert advice and support based around their own experience.

Confidential and informal, **Pain Line** has gained a reputation for providing a quality service to their callers.

Call on: **0845 6031593**

(lo-call rate)

As the call staff are all volunteers there may be times when the line is not manned, Please leave a message and they will get back to you.

The **Pain Line** is open from 0900 hrs to 2100 hrs Monday to Friday

Answer phone out of hours.

N.B. The **Pain Line** staff are not qualified to give medical advice, however the advice given is based around their day-to-day living with chronic pain.



CHRISTMAS CRACKER JOKES

Doctor, Doctor, I keep thinking I'm a Christmas bell!
Just take these pills - and, if they don't work, give me a ring!

What do you get if you cross an apple with a Christmas tree?
A pineapple!

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?
It's Christmas, Eve!

Whats happens if you eat the Christmas decorations?
You get tinsel-itus!

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?"
The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"

What's the most popular wine at Christmas?
"Do I have to eat my Brussels sprouts?"

If athletes get athletes foot, what do astronauts get?
Missile toe!

What is small, red and whispers?
A hoarse radish.

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?
Claustrophobic.

'It was a cold and misty Christmas morning in the very depth of Winter after a heavy fall of snow and only one farmer and the minister managed to arrive at the church for the morning service. 'Well' said the clergyman 'I guess there's no point in having a service today.' 'Well that's not how I see it. said the farmer. If only one cow turns up at feeding time, I still feed it.'

'A woman went into a post office to buy some stamps for her Christmas cards. What denomination do you want? asked the lady at the counter. 'Good God!' she replied, Has it come to this? I suppose you'd better give me twenty Catholic and twenty Presbyterian. '

"T'was the night before Christmas and all through the house, Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care. They'd been worn all week and needed the air".

Caption Competition;

Who is saying what to whom?

The one we think is the funniest wins!
Bring your answers to the next meeting, winner will be announced in the January/February Newsletter

A bottle of wine for the winner, (donated by cps ltd).

Disclaimer

Any opinions or recommendations expressed in this newsletter are the views of the individual concerned and are not necessarily those of the Newsletter Team. The Newsletter Team make no representations about the suitability, reliability, availability, timeliness and accuracy of the information, products or services contained in this newsletter.

Newsletter produced by Kevin Clark, a member of AOP Southampton.