

KEEPING PACE

MARCH 2006

SOUTHAMPTON CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUP



Welcome to our 5th newsletter, and Happy Birthday to us all, as you can see our birthday celebration was eating, drinking, (well one of us, see below) and we did a lot of talking. See "The Doc's Ramblings" over. We have had a lot of new friends join us over our first year let us hope that the coming year will be similar and we get even more.

I cannot believe it's spring with Easter on the horizon, it seemed only last week I was digressing with Brussels Sprouts, but that was nearly four months ago when it was cold, damp and miserable. Not much has changed, but what a beautiful time of the year spring is, flowers and trees starting to bud, birds singing happily and the lighter evenings are on their way. Spring starts around 20/21 March, the Vernal Equinox, when the days become longer, the air warmer and, once again, life begins to return to the land. Twice a year, day and night become equal in length. The main symbols for Easter are the egg for new life, beginnings and the hare or rabbit for fertility. Did you know, Easter is the principal feast of the ecclesiastical year. Leo 1 (Sermo xlvii in Exodum) calls it the greatest feast (*festum festorum*), and says that Christmas is celebrated only in preparation for Easter.



One year on, it's fantastic, this is only a small collection of our members, these are the only ones that Joan (our official photographer) could get out into the cold - brave lot.



Cutting the cake, now you've never seen such a gargantuan mixture of cake mix, I think "she" mixed two packs together, (only joking). It was beautiful, thanks to Norma for her wonderful culinary wizardry.



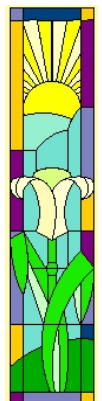
I don't think there's much to say about Chris and Tiny here enjoying the fare, but guess who was first to the table?



"come on it's cold out here, have you got film in that camera, what do you mean digital, I don't dig it all at all"

Easter

Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the most important Christian festival, and the one celebrated with the greatest joy. Even though Easter is associated with Spring here in England, it is not so in countries in the southern hemisphere. In these countries Easter falls near the end of autumn. However, throughout the world Easter is felt to be a time of new life and new beginnings because of Jesus' rebirth.



1st Birthday Celebrations



Doc's Ramblings



Lise's Findings



Quotes and Jokes



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Pace-egggers
- Summary of Lise's findings from survey
- Austin's Story - page 3
- DAIN page 3
- Alexander experience - page 4

Pace - we all know this from our regular visits to the pain clinic, we've even named our newsletter 'Keeping Pace' but did you know that there is an old Lancashire custom known as Pace-egging. Pace-eggs were eaten for breakfast on Easter Sunday, used as ornaments or for games, or handed out to pace-egggers. Pace-egggers were fantastically dressed mummers, complete with blackened faces wearing animal skins and festooned with ribbons and streamers. At Burscough near Ormskirk the Pace-egger's procession survived until quite recently, and was quite an occasion! The procession included various characters... the Noble Youth, the Lady Gay, the Soldier Brave and the Old Toss-Pot! The Old Toss-Pot was a drunken buffoon who wore a long straw tail stuffed with pins. It was not wise to grab the Old Toss-Pots tail. (I'm just full of useless information)



JANUARY SESSION

“DOC’S RAMBLINGS”

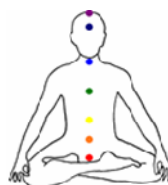
Well what a great start to 2006. We had one of our best turnouts in terms of numbers and we had at least 3 new members. We were very lucky to have Paul come and talk to us from the New Forest Disability Information Service (NFDIS). (Our thanks also go to Bill who was kind enough to drive him up from New Milton.) This service's mission statement is: "To empower people living with disability in the New Forest and its surroundings area to enable them to lead active and fulfilling lives integrated in society." They can be contacted via their helpline 01425 628750. Paul went through some of the difficulties people have in understanding and filling in the new Disability Living Allowance form especially since the recent changes in legislation. Our group members really valued the opportunity for open discussion with Paul and found it helpful to air their frustrations. There just wasn't enough time in our short session to cover everyone's individual needs and so Paul has kindly said that he is willing to come back on some of the Thursdays that we run our group sessions. He is happy to find a quiet corner and go through issues individually with those who need help. If you feel you would like to meet with him, let us know so that we can contact Paul and organise a convenient Thursday. NFDIS can also be contacted at their offices in New Milton, Ringwood and Hythe. We have their leaflet which gives more details about the services they offer and their contact details, and can give one to you at the support group meetings. Lise went on to tell us about a questionnaire she has developed to find out what our members think about their support group. We will have been meeting for 1 year in March 2006 and want to check that we are heading in the right direction. She has asked us to fill it in and return it to her. The group agreed to post out questionnaires plus return stamped addressed envelopes to those members who weren't at the meeting. Lise has kindly volunteered to analyse the results and plans, her health allowing, to get the results ready for our "1st Birthday" meeting in March. Do try to come to that meeting on March 16th as we really feel we should celebrate our group and new friendships.

FEBRUARY SESSION

“DOC’S STAND-IN’S RAMBLINGS”

Hello, this is not going to be easy to follow “The Doc” but here goes:

We had a very good turnout for our February meeting. Three Reiki Masters came to give us an introduction into this very unusual practice. Debbie, Clare and Jackie are all Reiki Masters. Reiki (pronounced Ray-Key) is a method of natural healing based on the application of *Universal Life Force Energy* (the name literally means *Universal Life Force Energy*). Reiki was first started at the turn of the century by Dr. Mikao Usui, a Japanese doctor. Dr Usui developed his healing system from Buddhist teachings and as a result of extensive travels, research and meditation. We were told of the 7 energy centres called chakras. The seven chakras are generally thought of as being centres of energy within the human body, aligned with the spine, which correspond to our feelings, and emotional and behavioural characteristics. Each chakra is also commonly associated with an organ and bodily function, and is usually represented by a colour, and a 1-7 numbering system. During a Reiki treatment, which normally last around 50 minutes, patients lie on a massage table to assist in their relaxation then the practitioner's hands rest lightly in a sequence of positions on their fully clothed body. There are seven classic positions where generally the practitioner will place their hands on or over the recipient. These positions equate to the seven main 'chakra' areas of the body, which feature in various Eastern mind-and-body and spiritual concepts. Feelings experienced by the recipient during Reiki treatment vary between individuals, and also from session to session. We were lucky to have two volunteers and the feedback from them was - "uplifting, feeling energised, peaceful, took away the pain, very effective". There was a varied response to our session, but I think most of us found it all very interesting (as a fan of Reiki I certainly did). Thank you to our "Masters".



Seven Chakras

MARCH SESSION

Well what a fantastic first birthday celebration!

We had a splendid turn out and everyone was very enthusiastic about the way in which the support group had developed over its first year. Many talked about the benefits they had got from the new friendships they had formed. Lise gave us feed back on the questionnaire she had designed and sent to all members. Most of the responses were very positive with some suggestions for the future. One problem which was identified was transport and the difficulty some members experience when trying to get to the group meetings. This was discussed and a suggestion made to produce an address book for members. It would then be easy to see who lives close to who and who might be able to offer a lift. We then had Birthday Cake - a 10 egg Victoria Sponge with jam and butter icing! Tiny blew out the one candle and John did the cake cutting honours. Joan B. also made a lovely fruit cake, the recipe of which she would be happy to explain to you all. Thanks also go to Austin, Joan A. and Kevin for supplying drinks and snacks. Most of the time was happily taken up with socialising, a slight change from our usual routine but one which seemed to meet with the members approval. We did spend a little time reviewing the group's Ground Rules but the general feeling was that they were still appropriate and so remained unchanged. There was a brief 10 minutes at the end when the subject of Paracetamol, its use and safety record, was discussed. We may repeat this idea of taking and discussing one type of medication if the members find it helpful. (Norma would be grateful for a month's notice to prepare for such an event as the questions you chaps think up can be quite tough!!)

Summary of Findings from Survey carried out as a mini annual review for March 2005 to March 2006.

Since the response rate was a limited 30% it was not possible to draw any firm conclusions from findings. However, findings suggest that most people heard about the Southampton Branch of Action on Pain at the Chronic Pain Clinic or in the Daily Echo, the local newspaper. It was also apparent that the major reason for non-attendance or difficulty in attending meetings resulted from a lack of transport. There was a great sense from members that they would appreciate having speakers less often at meetings, with someone suggesting every second month. Instead members would like to use meetings to socialise and get to know other members better and enjoy each others company. Members would also like to see a more interactive format to meetings, having activities such as gentle exercise, relaxation and games/hobbies etc. Findings also highlight that members would appreciate having speakers come to discuss Alternative Therapies including a Chiropractor and an Osteopath. Having input from a Physiotherapist who specialises in Chronic Pain was also a popular request. There was also a great sense that members would be extremely interested in forming a Social Group, arranging activities outside the usual monthly meetings. This suggests that this a matter that needs further discussion to establish those members willing to set up and coordinate such a group and take responsibility for arranging activities etc. Finally, some other things members would like to see put in place include a voting system and making wearing name badges compulsory. In fact these were agreed upon and wearing names being made compulsory was voted in by members at the last meeting, 16th March 2006. So guys, don't forget to put on those badges at the next meeting and there after!

A Personal View ~ Austin Fitzpatrick



I wanted to write something about ACTION ON PAIN – but to do so I have to put myself into perspective. I think of our group very much as the picture on the left – we are many different types and forms – varieties of vegetables, if you like – different value, different prices, different sizes, different beliefs. I feel that pictures offer an idea or a view and can help us, so when I saw this picture in a shop window in Lyndhurst, I couldn't help taking it.

So, what about me? I sometimes stand and feel that my ribs are pulling my body away from the vital 'me'. I straighten up and the dagger moves round to shoulder. The shoulder is the last place the sharp attacks have reached – started in the elbow and moved through the knees. It's only half an hour to the next 'death to pain' tablets. The chest pain is not heart, they say. It presently moves up and down the ribs and feels a bit like a pleura in protest or someone playing the xylophone on them. Hell, why won't it give in. Let me just sit for an evening in front of the TV and *enjoy* a programme without an interruption from this irritating child – pain! Trying to explain this to a hospital consultant is not easy when they smile (maybe patronisingly) at you. "Why don't you go to the new group called 'Action on Pain', I think you will find it useful" said another consultant. I *can* manage my pain, you know. I heard myself wanting to say. I couldn't and I did not want to talk about myself. To live with this iniquitous¹ constancy, this pain, for nearly three years is becoming a habit now.

Because my clerical vocation is such, when that trial, marked by a four letter word, emits its reminder that it is still there, I know jolly well that managing the **pain** is not that easy. "Hell," I shout to my inner self, "if there is a hell, it is this and at the end there must surely be something better.." Mood swings from malevolence and depression to being silly and happier. I hear myself saying. "Elucidate, John," I respond in my pain, unable to make clear what I want to say in words of one syllable. Did poor old Roget have this problem when he compiled his Thesaurus (or Glossary of Words)? Elucidate: *Make clear, Reveal, Illuminate, Expound, Explain, Clarify, Expose.*

Bishop of Truro, Rt. Rev. Bill Ind, in BBC 2's "The Seaside Parish", expected one of his young priests, Rev. Chris McQuillan Wright, to make a difference. He also expected parishioners to report the young priest to him (the bishop) for the startling ways Chris used to draw attention to the Christian duty to care for all. He wanted Chris to remind people that Christianity does not walk by on the other side. Despite my ever greying hair, I still try to be that young priest. My term as a "bishop"² was not marked by the wisdom of Bishop Ind, but that of his down-to-earth curate. This has been my pain – everyone in my churches have always been older and wiser than me and I have never commanded! I have never matured, that has been my own pain! Though I have tried to bring people's eyes to the real problem, like the pain, it was oft hid from their eyes. The only way I could often see to open their eyes was through parable. When Jesus cured the man who was blind, he was opening his eyes to all the possibilities ahead of him. We need parables to help us to understand but they have to be understandable. Some of those by Jesus needed a little thought and people ignored them because the pain in thinking through them was too much.

On the second day into 2003 when I bent low to empty the jammed Church post box my back went into spasm. I got home somehow and finished up at the surgery where my insightful GP sorted me out. With regular blood tests she ensured that the tablets she was giving me were not affecting the liver and other essential body parts. I spend one evening a week sorting the tablets out into slots for the week ahead – I'll wager many of the readers of this do too. When the cupboard is empty I know to ask for more. I have had this pain for at least 30 years but never has it crippled (am I allowed to use that word?) me so. My pain is different for me, just as it is different for Dorothy, for Joan, for Michael, for anyone in the group. Not one of us is the same. We cannot bear each other's pain, let alone feel how it is for the other. But we can understand and relate to it through our own pain. It's not only pain that's the problem – or the side effects of the drugs, it's something else that lies alongside and also has its own treatment. It's the loneliness that the pain has brought about; the inability to do the things I used to do without a moment's thought. The one that immediately comes to mind is to just travel up to London, *by myself*, by train. I have stopped doing it. I need to regain confidence. I remember David Arthur – I have known him for over 40 years – talking me through being sponsored to walk there and back over the Humber Bridge. For the first half, David talked me over and held my arm. The second half I walked by myself. He had given me the confidence. I raised a lot of money for Romania (my favourite charity). I would never have admitted that David Arthur, nor a group like AoP could have helped me. It has. I haven't made it to London alone yet but I will.

AoP is a place to come to share and engender in each of us the opportunity to share something of ourselves. There are some who cannot make it to a meeting and *they are missed*, so keep in touch – tell us if you feel not right, or if you need a lift, for we need you in the group, to give you the chance to put in your own two penno'rth, or putting out your tongue – if you do, we know you're OK. AoP has made a difference to me and I hope that it can do with you too. *Austin Fitzpatrick*

¹ Sorry for the big words – but they are the only ones I know that actually tell the story as it is.

² President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches 2003-4.

Following our meeting in January re. Benefits, Steve Beal thought that other members may wish to know that there is an organisation called "DAIN", which stands for Disability and Information Network, in Southampton. They will help and assist people who are having problems with filling in Government forms for benefits etc. They will even come to the house if you have difficulty getting to their office. Steve has had several dealings with them in the past few years and has found them to be nothing other than kind, helpful and able to give the correct advice. You may have to wait a little while for an appointment as they do get very busy but in the long run it's worth the wait. They can be reached at their offices at the Bradberry Centre, Coxford Road, Lordshill, Southampton, Telephone number: 023 8033 5473

For those with transport problems, here are a few contacts/volunteers who may be able to help.

Southampton Test Side: Austin Fitzpatrick 0780 848 0561
 Water Side Area: Joan Bamford 023 8084 6441
 Bitterne Area: Steve & Chris Beal 023 8046 5019





20 Necton Road
Little Dunham
Norfolk
PE32 2DN
Tel/Fax: 01760 725993

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.



STOP PRESS

Steve phoned today to say that they have secured a £500 grant from SVS for the hearing loop!! Cheque handing over ceremony at SVS Wed 29th March 11.30-1pm. What great news eh??

John Eayrs who regularly attends our meetings has over 30 years experience in the Alexander Technique and is offering to give some Alexander experience to anyone who is interested at the meetings

NEXT MEETING

APRIL 20TH 2006 - 1PM TO 3PM
AVENUE ST. ANDREWS
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
THE AVENUE
SOUTHAMPTON



Dick Cheney and George W. Bush were having breakfast at the White House. The attractive waitress asks Cheney what he would like, and he replies, "I'd like a bowl of oatmeal and some Fruit."

"And what can I get for you, Mr. President?" George W. replies with his trademark wink and slight grin, "How about a quickie this morning?" "Why, Mr. President!" the waitress exclaims "How rude! You're starting to act like Mr. Clinton, and you've only been in your second term of office for a year! "

As the waitress storms away, Cheney leans over to Bush and whispers.....

..."It's pronounced quiche'."

News Just in - Marie (Katie's mum) gave birth to a wee boy on March 27th - 4lbs 2oz

QUOTES AND JOKES



Pacing

A Minute: They say it takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them, but then an entire life to forget them.

So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then when we summon the will they soon become inevitable (*Christopher Reeves*)

One of the best parts of growing older? You can flirt all you like since you've become harmless. (*columnist Liz Smith*)

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales
and hills,
When all at once I saw a
crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils.
- William Wordsworth*



"So I got home and the phone was ringing. I picked it up and said "who's speaking please?" And a voice said "You are"

"So I rang up my local swimming baths. I said "Is that the local swimming baths?" He said "It depends where you're calling from"

"So I rang up a local building firm and said "I want a skip outside my house" he said "I'm not stopping you"

A herbaceous border is a lodger who is fond of greens.

~ from Jessie

Why did a fellow rabbit say that the Easter Bunny was self-centered?

Because he was eggo-centric!



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