

*Welcome to the Christmas Newsletter!*

# *Keeping Pace*

*would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!*

*It has been another fabulous year at Keeping Pace; we have grown in numbers and have expanded our meetings to four a month! As always, our heartfelt thanks go out to Norma and Joan for their continued support in running the group; without them we would not have this amazing opportunity to build strong new friendships and experience the unconditional acceptance and support that we all give one another. The coming year will no doubt bring its fair share of trials and tribulations but what I will be trying to focus on is enjoying the time I spend with the people I care about and remembering to appreciate all the good things that happen every day. Just leaves me a small space to thank you for being part of my pain journey; it makes it easier knowing you are there xxx*



**They weren't claggy!!** In fact, they were perfect!



*The winner of the  
savoury scone contest  
2016 is.....*

**JOAN!!**

Congratulations! We are really  
pleased for you!

**Our resident  
Thespian, Kevin  
Bowers is performing  
at The Nuffield Theatre from 31st January—4th February**



**2017, in Terry Pratchett's Monstrous Regiment. We would love to support Kevin and propose a group night out to the theatre on Thursday 2nd February for the 7.30pm show. Tickets (for groups of 8 or more) will cost £10 each and must be purchased through the group in advance. Please let Norma, Kevin or Tracey know if you would like to come or send us a message [www.facebook.com/keepingpacewithpain](http://www.facebook.com/keepingpacewithpain)**



**NEW—social media updates!** We have set up a group facebook page and twitter account so you can get in touch anytime. We intend to put up news, notices and reminders as they happen, so do connect with us.



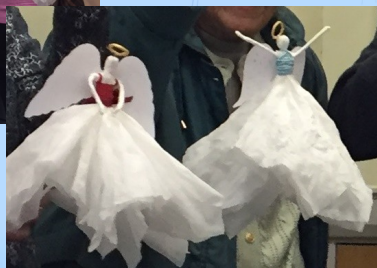
[www.facebook.com/keepingpacewithpain](http://www.facebook.com/keepingpacewithpain)



@keepingpace2016

**Look forward to keeping in touch with you!**

*Angels, fairies and ballerina's. Our craft group, which runs on the 2nd Tuesday of every month, have been using napkins to dress these beautiful wire dolls. The wire sculptures were handmade by one of our creative members, Sharon. Everyone really enjoyed the session and the dressed dolls looked so elegant and graceful! Join us next craft session (dates on back page) for some creative fun!*



***Recipes...** It's that time of year again when our bodies need comforting, nourishing food to see us through the winter. Home-made soups are a perfect meal, warming, full of fresh vegetables and vitamins. Easy to make and cost effective, you can make a big batch and put portions into zip lock freezer bags ready for lunch.*

**Nan  
McGregor's  
Tomato Soup**



My Nan always made us this and now I make it for my family. It is so simple and just a few ingredients required!

Large knob of butter (or oil)

3 onions sliced

3 potatoes peeled and thinly sliced

3 cartons passata

1/2 tube tomato puree

Melt the butter in a large saucepan then add the onions and potatoes. Cook for 10 minutes over a low heat, add a little water to stop them sticking. Add the passata, tomato puree and a large cup of water. Turn up the heat, stir well, bring to the boil then cover with a lid and turn the heat to low. Simmer for 30 minutes or until the potatoes are very soft. Blend until smooth and add salt to taste.

**Butternut  
Squash Soup**



1 butternut  
squash peeled  
and chopped

2 onions sliced

1 clove of garlic peeled and chopped

1 large potato peeled and sliced

3 carrots peeled and sliced

1 vegetable/chicken stock cube

Large knob of butter (or oil)

Nutmeg (optional)

Melt the butter in a large saucepan then add the onions, garlic and potatoes. Cook for 10 minutes over a low heat, add a little water to stop them sticking. Add all the other ingredients, cover with water then turn up the heat, stir well, bring to the boil cover with a lid and turn the heat to low. Simmer for 30 minutes or until the vegetables are very soft. Blend until smooth, season well and grate over a little fresh nutmeg (optional).

*Clear Out The Fridge Soup! Nan taught me that soup can be made with any veggies you happen to have, just start with a small amount of butter/oil, add onions and a starchy vegetable, then add any other vegetables you fancy along with stock. Always season well with salt and pepper. Experiment by adding spices, herbs and pulses. Serve whatever you conjure up with fresh crusty bread!*



1 tbsp coconut oil

2 onions, chopped

2 red/green peppers, deseeded and chopped

2 tbsp Thai red curry paste

1 tbsp minced/chopped fresh ginger

2 garlic cloves, chopped

1.5kg sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

1 tin coconut milk

Juice of a lime

## Thai Sweet Potato and Coconut Soup



In a large saucepan, heat the coconut oil. Add the onions and peppers and cook over a low heat for 10 minutes. Add the curry paste and cook for 2 minutes. Add the ginger and garlic then the sweet potatoes. Add just enough water to cover, bring to a boil then turn heat to low, put on a lid and simmer for 30 minutes until potatoes are soft. Turn off the heat, add in the coconut milk then blend until smooth. Add salt and pepper if needed and a squeeze of lime juice.

1.5 litres of vegetable stock

2 mugs of red lentils

3 large carrots, peeled and chopped

2 onions, roughly chopped

2 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 tin chopped tomatoes

1 red/green chilli (optional)

2 tbsp tomato puree

2 tsp each turmeric, ground cumin and ground coriander

2 tbsp coconut or olive oil

## Spiced Lentil Soup



Heat oil in a large saucepan. Add onions, garlic, carrots and chilli (if using), cook for a few minutes then add in the spices. Let the spices warm through for a minute then add all the other ingredients. Bring to the boil then turn down the heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Blitz the soup briefly so that it still remains slightly chunky. Season with salt and pepper and serve.



Every month at pain group I hear people mentioning some of the ailments that they endure. Sometimes though I don't really know what the condition actually means so I thought I would dedicate a page each newsletter to fact finding about a specific condition.

## Neuropathic (Nerve) Pain

**Neuropathic pain is caused by damage or injury to the nerves that transfer information between the brain and spinal cord from the skin, muscles and other parts of the body.**

There are many reasons that patients may develop neuropathic pain. However, on a cellular level, one explanation is that an increased release of certain neurotransmitters which signal pain, combined with an impaired ability of the nerves to regulate these signals leads to the sensation of pain originating from the affected region. Additionally, in the spinal cord, the area which interprets painful signals is rearranged, with corresponding changes in neurotransmitters and loss of normally-functioning cell bodies; these alterations result in the perception of pain even in the absence of external stimulation. In the brain, the ability to block pain can be lost following an injury or trauma. Over time, further cellular damage occurs and the sense of pain persists. The pain is usually described as a burning sensation and affected areas are often sensitive to the touch. Related to the pain there may also be:

**Allodynia**—This means that the pain comes on, or gets worse, with a touch or stimulus that would not normally cause pain. For example, a slight touch on the face may trigger pain if you have trigeminal neuralgia, or the pressure of the bedclothes may trigger pain if you have diabetic neuropathy.

**Hyperalgesia**—This means that you get severe pain from a stimulus or touch that would normally cause only slight discomfort. For example, a mild prod on the painful area may cause intense pain.

**Paraesthesia**—This means that you get unpleasant or painful feelings even when there is nothing touching you, and no stimulus. For example, you may have painful pins and needles, or electric shock-like sensations.



## Common causes include:

Nerve pressure or nerve damage after surgery or trauma

Viral infections

Cancer, vascular malformations

Alcoholism

Neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis

It may also be a side effect of certain medications

Trigeminal neuralgia

Pain following shingles (postherpetic neuralgia).

Phantom limb pain following an amputation

Sciatica. The sciatic nerve runs from your back to your feet.

Compression or damage of this nerve often causes pain to shoot down the leg on one side of the body

Bulging or slipped discs. Nerve compression in the spinal cord can cause local pain, or pain referred elsewhere along the nerve's path.

Diabetic neuropathy. Sensory nerve damage is a common side effect of diabetes. It can cause numbness or pain, most often in the hands or feet

Carpal tunnel syndrome. Swelling in the wrist tunnel irritates the median nerve. CTS causes tingling, numbness and pain over the thumb, first and middle fingers.

Occasionally no identifiable cause is found which can be distressing for the patient.

Try to describe the pain as it helps the doctor with diagnosis.

**BURNING**

**STABBING**

*THROBBING*

**SHOOTING**

**NUMBNESS**

**PINS AND NEEDLES**

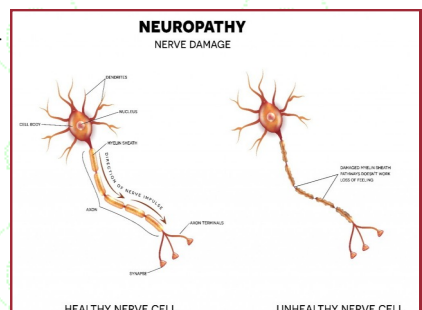
**ELECTRIC SHOCK**



**Treatments:** Traditional painkillers do not normally work for neuropathic pain but opioid drugs can be beneficial. Some antidepressants can ease neuropathic pain by interfering with the way nerve impulses are transmitted. Amitriptyline is the one most commonly used for neuralgic pain. Some anti-epileptic medicine such as Gabapentin or Pregabalin have also been found to ease nerve pain.

**Psychological treatment:** Pain can get worse with anxiety, stress and depression. The sensation of pain can modify depending on how a person reacts towards pain and circumstances. The treatment for anxiety and depression is helpful in preventing the pain and includes pain management programs, cognitive behavioural therapy, counselling and stress management.

**Physical treatments:** These treatments include acupuncture, physiotherapy, electrical nerve stimulation and nerve block injections.





## Sylvia's Travels


So where has our lovely globe trekker been this time? I met up with Sylvia to find out....

This time it was a five day trip to Bournemouth with Jan. There were twenty six in their group and they all stayed in a lovely hotel near the seafront. The weather was kind to them most days so they began each morning with a refreshing walk along the promenade before tucking into a delicious hotel breakfast. They had a wonderful time in Bournemouth wandering around the German style market and watching a spectacular surfing display. They popped along to Poole for a bit of shopping and were invited to an old friend of Sylvia's who made them afternoon cream tea and cakes. There was even a bit of hoo-ha with an extra visitor appearing into their bedroom after getting out of the lift on the wrong level! It was actually Jan's first time away by herself; she was very apprehensive before she went but said it was a wonderful experience and she absolutely loved it! Jan said it was so nice to have the company and will definitely be going away again.



*Last month one of our members, Hilary, left the group to begin a new chapter in her life. She left us a facebook message which I thought you'd all like to see. "Thank you to all at this wonderful group for your friendship and support over the last year. Presently Adrian and I are in the process of moving house to begin a new chapter in our lives in Somerset. Hopefully I may find a pain support group near my new home. If not perhaps I'll think about starting one. Special thanks to Norma and Joan for all your hard work which is so appreciated. Best wishes to everyone. Wishing you all happy pain managed days.*

*Hilary De La Ceaux. xx*







Kevin Bowers was recently asked to visit some 2nd year medical students to tell them what it is like living with chronic pain, here is his recount of the session:

“On the 4th of November I attended a pain symposium at the general hospital. I was offered the chance by Joan and met with the lecturer James Dillon and we discussed what the lecture would be about and what my personal experiences of living with pain was like.

On arrival at the hospital James met me and a lady called Dianne, someone he had used before and he walked us thorough to a waiting area outside of the lecture hall. Di and I chatted about pain and the usual small talk of families hobbies etc until James called us in. In the lecture hall were around 120 2nd year medical students and we were sat at the front and were asked questions by James and we discussed how our pain affects our life, our families, our friends and work and interests. After this the students were invited to ask questions.

I feel it was genuinely a benefit and while it may not directly help me or anyone currently in the medical system, it will definitely help future patients. It could give them a voice and may trigger a memory from one of the students and allow them to see how the patient is suffering”.

The links below are for 2 films that were shown to the students.

[http://www.ted.com/.../elliott\\_krane\\_the\\_mystery\\_of\\_chronic\\_pain.html](http://www.ted.com/.../elliott_krane_the_mystery_of_chronic_pain.html)

<http://www.paincommunitycentre.org/.../update-pain-mechanisms-tony-dickenson>

*Thank you Kevin for taking part in this, as giving first hand accounts of what our condition is like to live with will hopefully lead to greater understanding of the next generation of doctors.*

# *Doc's Ramblings...* A brief catch up of the last few meetings.

## September Ramblings from the "Doc"

*A beautiful September afternoon heralded this month's meeting. As the old adage goes "if you want something done, ask a busy person to do it" and Tracey fits the bill! The Jelly didn't set??, so Tracey being Tracey, she quickly improvised. Jelly printing developed into glass and leaf printing which is similar to mono printing. This technique followed a similar process to the using jelly. As you can see from the photos, some lovely works of art were produced.*

*Tracey also found the time to produce a beautiful gluten and dairy free banana cake, which was devoured quickly. And she also produced the latest edition of the newsletter. Phew, it's exhausting just writing about it! Thank you Tracey. Many thanks also to Kevin our unsung hero, for printing the newsletter. Our first social evening will be held at the Trago Lounge, 192 Portswood Road, Portswood on Friday September 23rd at 7pm. If you are free, why not come along and enjoy a chat, or even something to eat or all!*

*Don't forget to bring your £5 deposit to the October meeting for the Christmas lunch on Thursday December 1st. Kevin B was proud to share the news of his wife Karen's forth coming "head shave" on Friday September 23rd, to raise money for the Piam Brown ward at the general hospital. If you would like to support Karen have a look at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Karen-Bowers1>*

*And finally, we missed you Norma, get well soon.*



## October Ramblings from the “Doc”

Doctor Dominic Aldington, a consultant who specialises in pain medicine, gave us a very helpful explanation and review of the current thinking in pain management. He reminded us of the physical, social and mental consequences of living with pain. All of these are familiar to the group and it was good to hear them verbalised and acknowledged. He talked about treatment options and how poorly current medication deals with the issues. He emphasised the importance of self management and how necessary support is to those who live with pain. I felt this to be a confirmation of the vital role that Keeping Pace with all its wonderful members has in coping with this rotten condition. Don't forget to get baking those savoury scones for our November meeting. Will Sylvia maintain her crown?



## November Ramblings from the “Doc”

We shared a really useful time with Sally Ann Belward, a physio who specialises in Falls. She explained at great depth the causes and consequences of falls. This was followed by lots of constructive advice on how best to minimise and avoid trip hazards. She spoke so much common sense. We learnt that we all could, and should, do many simple things to minimise the risks. Next month is our Christmas party. Please remember your Secret Santa present, to the value of £1, labelled suitable for male, female or either. We would also be grateful for food contributions. There will be the usual quiz.

The worthy winner of the annual savoury scone contest was our lovely Joan who couldn't quite believe her ears when her name was called out!

**And the winner  
is...JOAN!!**





## Dates for your diary January—March 2017



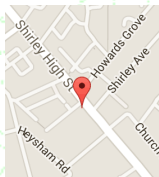
### 1st Monday of each month

Coffee Morning, 11am at Coffee#1,  
1A High Street, Shirley, Southampton,  
SO15 3LQ

January 2nd

February 6th

March 6th



### 2nd Tuesday of each month

Craft Club 1-3pm at St.Andrews  
Church, The Avenue, Southampton,  
SO17 1XQ

January 10th

February 14th

March 14th



### 3rd Thursday of each month

Chronic Pain Support Group Meet-  
ing, 1-3pm at St.Andrews Church,  
The Avenue, Southampton, SO17  
1XQ

January 19th

February 16th

March 16th

**Laughter.**  
**Friendship.**  
**Support.**  
*Understanding.*



### 4th Friday of each month

Social Evening, 7.30pm at Trago  
Lounge, Portswood Road,  
Southampton, SO17 2LB

January 27th

February 24th

March 24th



**KEEPING PACE WITH PAIN**

**www.keepingpace.co.uk**

There are many useful  
websites such as :

[www.painconcern.org.uk](http://www.painconcern.org.uk)

[www.paintoolkit.org](http://www.paintoolkit.org)

[www.tamethepain.co.uk](http://www.tamethepain.co.uk)

[www.painsupport.co.uk](http://www.painsupport.co.uk)



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We welcome contributions to  
the magazine from any mem-  
ber of the group. If you would  
like to submit something  
please speak to Tracey at the  
meetings or email Kevin:

[kevin@keepingpace.co.uk](mailto:kevin@keepingpace.co.uk)

Tel: 02380 465019

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