



KEEPING PACE

MARCH 2010

KEEPING PACE WITH PAIN SOUTHAMPTON BASED CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUP

Inside this issue:



Page 2
Docs Ramblings



Page 3
Jessica's Stories



Page 4
Quotes & Jokes



Page 4
Dates for Diary

There is a saying that 'time just flies by when you're having fun'. Is that true I wonder - there was a study done in 2004 by the French Laboratory of Neurobiology and Cognition some years ago. It was thought that if the brain focused on many aspects of a task then it has to spread its resources thinly and would pay less attention to time passing. Well my brain can only think of one aspect and that's enough, and yet time really does go quickly - I wonder. That same year it was reported by a University in Germany, that "Juggling can boost brain power", I wonder if I started juggling with one hand I could increase at least half of my brain power, that could be interesting.

Right that's enough of that, all I was trying to say was that it's been a long time since the last newsletter in August and I don't know where the time has gone. I think I say that all the time. The group is really coming on isn't it? We've had more members joining and a lot of brilliant speakers over the last few months, we even had Dr Paul Schofield, the Medical Director at Napp, who obviously has a very busy schedule, and yet still found the time to come down and give us a brilliant talk (see page 2). During the talk he told us about his passion for bee keeping, (see picture on page 2), let's hope he can find the time to come down again and give us a full talk on that fascinating subject, and I'm sure I would not be the only one who would look forward to that.

You will be glad I haven't got any more room to chat longer, so I will see all you lovely people at the Birthday Bash and don't for-

get your clogs - except for them, I haven't got a clue what to bring, so if any of you have two ideas perhaps I could pinch one. Austin has a good idea, now why didn't I think of it?

Kay's Holiday Tips

In Sept 09 I had a trip of a lifetime to Hawaii via San Francisco & returning through New York. I was asked to talk to the group about my experiences & share information.

1. Plan Ahead or Plan to Fail!!

Be realistic about your abilities & choose your destination accordingly. Sadly my mountaineering days are over so I chose places where I could walk or use public transport. Use your travel agent/company unashamedly & do your homework.

2. Insurance: shop around but be honest. The internet is very useful (free in all Hants libraries)

3. Visa & Inoculations: a lot of long haul destinations need injections, most have to be paid for. STA travel in Civic Centre Rd has excellent clinic & good VISA info.

4. Medication: ensure you order enough for trip, few spares & when you get home. Carry all meds in hand luggage, get covering letter from GP (££) for customs & copy of your prescription in with valuables. Remember to take meds at regular times. Always carry bottled water.

5. Baggage: pack, take out 1/2 & you'll still have too much! Pack light, dress in light layers & wear sensible footwear for the airport/travelling. As well as pull along bags, glide along are available. Consider just taking hand luggage if it's sunshine holiday. For valuables use a

bum bag or neck wallet which can be hidden under clothes. 6. Money: this trip I used the Post Office Money card. You load the card with an amount you decide. You can use it as a Visa card or AB card. It was in dollars so no charge to change. If stolen it isn't attached to any account..

7. Airport Assistance: Swallow your pride & take advantage of the service. You & yours get through security quickly. You arrive at the right gate & you haven't had to march 5miles to get there. I was met at every airport off the plane, whisked through customs to the awaiting taxi. Also be first to board, a walking stick is a useful visual aid, to remind people that you are disabled.

8. Back Friend: a wonderful aid that I cannot travel without (& tea-bags!). It's a folding, portable seat which fits on any chair & provides you with support & comfort.

9. Be Early: so you've time to organise yourself.

10. On the Flight: make friends with your steward/ess, just in case you need anything. Set your watch at the time of your destination & try to do what they are doing i.e. sleeping. Have plenty of water & exercise. Take meds & don't be too proud to accept help - especially with overhead lockers.

11. Book Transfers: so that you aren't worrying about the next journey when tired.

12. Enjoy Your Holiday!! Mobility problems - does hotel have a lift?? If not book ground floor. Use porter/bell hop. On excursions make sure you can get into vehicle, again ask the concierge.

Rest, try new things, meet new people & take time to 'stand & stare'

Plan ahead to enjoy the holiday

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Page 1 - Kay's hols
- Page 2 - Doc rambling
- Page 3 - When Bailey met Tia
- Page 4 - Joan and the shy horse
- Page 4 - Quotes & Jokes





“DOC’S RAMBLINGS”



September

From the nurses kardex –

This month at short notice, Emma, the support group’s resident pharmacist, took to the floor to face a Q & A session. Questions ranged from medication & time contingency, Paracetamol, Swine Flu to finally questions on the recent E coli outbreak! Emma took all these questions in her stride and then later was on hand to talk on a 1:1 with individuals regarding personal medication queries. Thanks Emma! Debbie Harrison has kindly rescheduled her relaxation session for the January 2010 meeting.

The September meeting also saw the inaugural outing of the “Megamouth” Microphone and speaker. Kevin had fun putting the microphone through its paces, with a compliment from Elizabeth that he sounded just like Richard Burton!!!

For the October meeting Chris and Steve will do a presentation on Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. We’ll also find out how Yogi fared in the Rescue Dog of the year competition.

October



We had an open meeting this month at which we invited members of the group to speak. Steve and Chris Beale kicked off with a fascinating and heart warming talk about hearing dogs for the deaf and what a life transforming effect Yogi has had on them. I had never fully appreciated quite what a special dog Yogi was. No wonder he was nominated for the rescue dog of the year award. We, of course, reckon he should have come first as he has certainly won the hearts of our Keeping Pace group.

Kay then gave us a helpful talk about her experiences of travelling during her trip of a lifetime to Hawaii. The most important messages to take home were: how vital good planning is to the success of a trip when you have health issues to contend with and to take advantage of all the assistance offered, even if it involves swallowing a bit of pride to admit you need help.

In November we have been fortunate to secure the time of Dr Paul Schofield to talk about advances in pharmacological approaches to pain management. It would be great if as many as possible attend for what is bound to be an interesting and relevant session.

November

Everyone sat spellbound whilst Dr Paul Schofield, medical director of NAPP, talked. His passion for educating the medical profession about effective pain treatments and giving patients informed choices as to what is available to them was so evident. He talked about the financial and political restrictions that pharmaceutical companies face when deciding to develop and bring to market new drugs. He explained that this is one of the reasons that much of the current focus is on improving existing medications in both their side effect profile and their delivery systems. For example, the use of patches as a method of administering drugs is increasingly popular but sometimes limited by patients becoming allergic to the glues and preservatives in the patches and so hypoallergenic versions are being sought. Nanotechnology is another exciting possibility, where the under surfaces of the patches are covered in minute needles, smaller than the human hair, that push aside rather than pierce the skin cells to deliver the drug molecules.

I know that Paul would not forgive me if I didn't mention bees. He even sent a photo for you all to see. He is equally passionate about bee keeping and has two hives. When asked about the pain relieving properties of bee venom, he said he wasn't sure but could find out. I reckon that was an offer to return to talk again- don't you?



Dr Paul Schofield with his bees

Next month is our Christmas party. Don't forget to come prepared with your wrapped Secret Santa gift to the value of £1, your contribution to the food and your brain cells tuned ready for Jessica's quiz.

December

The Christmas party was a very enjoyable event. Thanks to everyone who contributed food. It was a bountiful and delicious spread. The quiz went down well. This time it was done in teams around tables which I think made it more fun. It certainly helped to spread the pressure but I'm not sure that it improved the scores! We are grateful to both Jessica and Kevin for their hard work in compiling the questions and producing the quiz sheets! We rounded the afternoon off with a few carols accompanied by the skilful playing of Jim - thanks to Jim and Jessie for supplying the music and carol sheets once again.



Joshua, Maria and Jessica



One of the tables at the Christmas Party





January

We are very grateful to Fran Hodgson who agreed to talk to the group at short notice as our planned speaker was unable to come. Fran has the most beautiful smile and managed to encourage us all to join in yoga exercises, some of which involved making sounds and chanting. I don't think I ever thought I'd see the group so relaxed in each others company and so willing to participate in something a bit strange and new to many of them. She also took us through several exercises including meditation and relaxation. The movements were so accessible and adaptable that they are suitable for people to attempt even with pain or physical problems. Some of our members have told me that they have already gone on to use them. Fran has kindly written a sheet of instructions for those who were at the meeting to help remind them of what she covered. For those of you who were unable to attend, don't worry! Fran has kindly agreed to return later on this year for a further session.



February

We welcomed our friend Rich Beale back to the group for a further episode of his experiences during his work as a tour guide in China. This time he shared his newly acquired love of Tibet. What always strikes me when I hear him talk is how he just loves getting to know and interacting with the locals wherever his travels take him. This is why he is so able to get across to his audience the nuances of life in these far flung places and not just what tourist sights are on offer. He showed us some lovely pictures of Tibet and the faces of some of the friends he had made, some of the art work that he had been given and even a mug that had survived being taken on, "The Long March" and that he had felt honoured to have been given. Can't wait for the next instalment - where to now Rich?

March is our 5th birthday! Apparently the fifth anniversary should be celebrated with wood and so we have set a challenge to our members to bring along something wooden that is relevant to Keeping Pace. I have already thought of a 12 inch wooden ruler. (A foot! Get it?) Oh, and a chocolate log birthday cake! So now it's your turn!



The Tale of Two Kitties - by Jessica Barrow



Now I have left you all wondering why I was ever given a driving licence (I myself have questioned this!) I thought I would share some funny tales about my cats with you!

Most of you who know me will know that I am what is known as "a mad cat lady". I'm a little young to be classed as one I know but as they say practice makes purr..fect and by the time I'm older I will have it down to a fine art!!

I am currently owned by 2 British Shorthair cats Bailey (a 4yr old blue colour point) and Tia Maria (a 2yr old lilac self).

When Bailey Met Tia.....

At the age of 2 we thought that maybe the time had come to get Bailey a little sister for company. So off we went to look for a suitable companion. It didn't take us long to decide we had found the perfect kitten, a little lilac girl. For us it was love at first sight, she was beautiful at only 6 weeks old she was tiny, playing with her brother and sisters in a box!! The 7 weeks we had to wait to bring her home could not pass quick enough!!

So on a late July afternoon we made our journey to pick up the new family addition, Tia Maria. We had everything ready for her arrival. We had set up a cage in the lounge so that they could meet and she would be safe until they got used to each other's smells. Once we had picked her up and returned home we set things up for the first meeting. Bailey was enjoying the sun in his purpose built cat run unaware of the new arrival inside. We let Tia out to explore her new surroundings and after she had settled in we went to get Bailey in. I felt like such a traitor as I brought him in from the garden and for the first time had nerves- Had we done the right thing? What would he think of his new sister? What if he doesn't like her? He will won't he? We were about to find out....

He came in as normal, stopped in the kitchen for a drink and some meat then made his way past the lounge to bed. Then he clocked her. He stopped dead and looked at the cage. You could read his mind "have I come into the wrong house, are my eyes deceiving me? That looks remarkably like a kitten in that cage? Surely not!" Then, and I am rather ashamed to say, he completely embarrassed himself. He approached the cage moaning and groaning, the air turned blue around him with the language he was using! Not a good way to make a first impression. All the while Tia just stared at him as if to say "Oh for goodness sake have you never seen a kitten before?"

Lucky for us Tia soon got over his verbal abuse and the 2 became friends. They have a love/hate relationship and it's all or nothing. Most of the time they are partners in crime and enjoying playing together. But on the odd occasion when it all kicks off it kicks off big time!! Usually over something small, like who is going to sit on the carrier bag we have just emptied from shopping or, more recently, who is going to have ownership of a box my dad brought them home from work? This one I'm afraid is still undecided.

As a special treat each day the cats get a piece of wafer thin chicken. They are addicted to it and need to get a daily hit!! No matter where they are in the house asleep, awake, playing or having a fuss. If somebody lets up the cry of "would anyone like something from the fridge?" They are there in a heartbeat. The noise they make running through the house is unbelievable. If you didn't know any better you would think we owned a pair of Alsations!! Who would have thought 2 cats could make so much noise!!

More To Come Next Time.....





KEEPING PACE WITH PAIN

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JOKES:

Why did the chewing gum cross the road?
It was stuck to the leg of a chicken !!!



Smart Student: I'm taking French, Spanish, and Algebra this year.

Less Smart Student: Okay. Let me hear you say "good evening" in Algebra

If April showers bring May flowers then what do May flowers bring?
Pilgrims!

Why did the baker stop making donuts?
He got sick of the hole business

What do you call a mosquito with a tin suit?
A bite in shining armour

What goes tick, tick, woof, woof?
A watch dog

What do you call shoes made from banana skin?
Slippers!

Why did the boy throw butter out the window?
He wanted to see a butterfly.

What's grey has big ears and a trunk?
A mouse on vacation.

How do you catch a squirrel?
Climb up a tree and act like a nut.

Why did the spider cross the road?
To get to another web site.



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

- ☞ March 18th – KPWP 5th Birthday Celebrations! Also Stages of Grief and Chronic Pain with Dr Sally Curtis
- ☞ April 15th – TBC
- ☞ May 20th – TBC
- ☞ June 17th – More Yoga with Fran Hodgson!
- ☞ July 15th – How to enjoy a Safari with Malcolm Corbett and A Helpful Hints/Tips Open Session
- ☞ August 19th – Cream Teas!!!
- ☞ September 16th – Pain Psychology Revisited with Dr Andy Jenkins

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Ok, where is that women with the camera, Oh! blast she got me, I hope she realises that she has violated my horsey rights - did I give my permission - Neigh!

This picture along with most of the other photos was taken by our resident photographer - Joan

QUOTES & POEMS:

"The air is like a butterfly
With frail blue wings.
The happy earth looks at the sky
And sings."
- Joyce Kilmer, *Spring*

"The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven -
All's right with the world!"
- Robert Browning

"The March wind roars
Like a lion in the sky,
And makes us shiver
As he passes by.
When winds are soft,
And the days are warm and clear,
Just like a gentle lamb,
Then spring is here."
- Author Unknown

"To love oneself is the beginning
of a lifelong romance." by Oscar Wilde

"A child smiles and so do I. A bird
sings and my heart is lighter. A
friend gives me a hug and I warm
with pleasure." Author unknown

Spring,
"Come, gentle Spring, ethereal Mildness,
come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a flower

Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.
O Hartford, fitted or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation join'd
In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
Which thy own Season paints: when Nature all
Is blooming and benevolent, like thee..." *
- James Thomson

"Today is the day when bold kites fly,
When cumulus clouds roar across the sky.
When robins return, when children cheer,
When light rain beckons spring to appear.
Today is the day when daffodils bloom,
Which children pick to fill the room,
Today is the day when grasses green,
When leaves burst forth for spring to be seen."
- Robert McCracken, *Spring*

"Each leaf,
each blade of grass
vies for attention.
Even weeds
carry tiny blossoms
to astonish us."
- Marianne Poloskey, *Sunday in Spring*



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