



# WRSG Newsletter

WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

Charity No. 1041181

CARING IS SHARING

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## Reminder

### Subscriptions

**£5**

The WRSG yearly subscriptions were due in June. Committee have agreed to keep the charge at £5 per person and £8 per couple. If you became a member of the WRSG in 2007 your subscriptions are not due until June 2008.

Remittance advice slips were enclosed with the June newsletter for members whose payment is now due. Thank you to members who have paid. If you are paying this month please make cheques payable to the WRSG and send them direct to our Treasurer:

## Reminder - West Midland Safari Park

Sheila Fardoe is organising a trip to the West Midland Safari Park on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August. We leave Falkland Street Coach Station at 9.30 a.m. and leave the Safari Park at approximately 4.00p.m. The charge is £10.00 per adult which includes the coach fare and entry and £5 per child for entry with the WRSG paying the coach fare for the children. Wrist bands for the rides and food on the day will have to be provided by members themselves as usual.

## Droitwich Spar Brine Baths

We haven't had a particularly good response to the idea of members paying to go to Droitwich Spa brine baths even though this was requested. We worked out that we can do the trip for £13 per person. The coach costs £220 and the admission to the pool £100 for the maximum 24 people. Sheila will organise a trip if enough people are interested but we need 24 to make the trip financially viable.

## Challenging Arthritis Course

The next Challenging Arthritis course has been booked for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at Bantock House, Wolverhampton. The course runs one afternoon a week for 6 weeks from 2.00 to 4.30 p.m. and is free.

For further information contact Liz Walker on 01902 563751

### Carver Wolverhampton City Marathon

We have a young man running the Half Marathon for the WRSG. Chris Dodd is the nephew of Caroline, my next door neighbour. Chris says:

My name is Chris Dodd and I am planning to run the Wolverhampton Half Marathon on 2nd September. I have always been interested in running ever since I started secondary school in which I used to compete in cross country runs for Wednesfield High School. I always used to get involved with the yearly sports day and run anything from 400m or more. I have always enjoyed running even though some people do say it is boring and can't understand why I do it. After not running for a few years after I left school I decided to start training for a 5 mile run for Action Heart at Russell's Hall Hospital, which I completed in February and raised £160 and finished in a time of 40min 40sec. The London Marathon has always been an ambition of mine so by starting with shorter races and working myself up I can hopefully complete the marathon in a few years.

I am currently finishing the third year of my apprenticeship with BT, which at the moment is going really well and I am enjoying it. Work colleagues are really supportive of me with the races I do and I have had an article about me in the BT Today newspaper for my involvement with the race and other involvements with my local school. I am hoping to complete the half marathon in a reasonable time and then move onto doing the full marathon next year. By doing the marathon I am hoping to raise money for the WRSG and would be grateful if you could help this cause by sponsoring me in this event.

Thanks, *Chris Dodd*

I enclose a sponsorship form with each newsletter. Thank you in anticipation.

From my write up about the group in the Adnews and the Express & Star we also received an anonymous donation and it all helps with the running of the group.

*Dorothy*

### London Eye Outing



What an experience!

On 12<sup>th</sup> June about forty of us set off for the London Eye. The event was organised by Joyce Knibbs so we knew it would be good! The weather was glorious. We had warm sunshine and clear blue skies which was just what we needed for the view from the Eye.

We arrived at the Eye leaving the coach at 1.15 p.m. ready for our pre-booked, fast tracked trip at 2.00 p.m. (This meant we didn't have to queue to pay and that we shared two "Pods" between our members). The actual ride on the Eye lasted 40 minutes and it went round so slowly that you didn't realise you were moving.

When we came off the Eye we had time for a snack and a drink before embarking on the London Eye River Cruise. Again Joyce had pre-booked and we just walked down onto the boat without having to queue. The river cruise lasted forty minutes and had an excellent running commentary on the London landmarks. Our driver made his way out of London via Whitehall, passing the Cenotaph and Downing Street and other London landmarks.

This was a really lovely day out and was superbly planned by Joyce.

THANK YOU SO MUCH JOYCE

*Dorothy*

If you receive e-mails you will know that stories etc do the rounds. Pauline Callaghan forwarded this one to me and we thought you may enjoy it.

“This is a beautiful story and I wanted to share it with you. Scott Fore

### RED MARBLES

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas. I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"Hello, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank you. I am just admiring them peas. They sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine getting stronger all the time"

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Just admiring them peas"

"Would you like to take some home?"

asked Mr. Miller.

"No, Sir. Got nothing to pay for 'em with"

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got is my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it" said Miller.

"Here it is. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmmmmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red.

Do you have a red one like this at home?" the store owner asked.

"Not exactly, but almost"

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble" Mr. Miller told the boy.

"Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said,

"There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas apples and tomatoes or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends

them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store."

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could. Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts...all very Professional looking, They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket. "Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim "traded" them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size....they came to pay their debt." "We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho" With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

The Moral: We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds.

Life is not measured by the breaths we take,  
but by the moments that take our breath.  
Today I wish you a day of ordinary  
miracles ~

A fresh pot of coffee you didn't make  
yourself.

An unexpected phone call from an old  
friend

The fastest queue at the supermarket  
A good sing-along song on the radio  
Your keys found right where you left them.

Send this to the people you'll never forget. I  
just did. If you don't send it to anyone, it  
means you are in way too much of a hurry  
to even notice the ordinary miracles when  
they occur.

**IT'S NOT WHAT YOU GATHER, BUT  
WHAT YOU SCATTER THAT TELLS  
WHAT KIND OF LIFE YOU HAVE  
LIVED!"**

#### Made to feel guilty

Well I do not smoke. I do not drink. I do  
care about the environment. I have a  
garden pond and I feed the birds.  
I am on a water meter. I recycle my papers  
and glass and my garden rubbish.

What do I feel guilty about – Plastic bags!!  
When I go to the supermarket I ask the  
check out assistants if they will pack my  
bags for me. I also have to say “Can you not  
make them heavy please?” The assistants  
understand because they can see my hands  
but it means I have about six or seven bags  
in my trolley. If the bags are heavy I cannot  
get them from the car into my house. I do  
use the plastic bags for my household  
rubbish. Yes, we used to take our own bags  
to the shops before the days of  
supermarkets and we had pushchairs and  
children and buses to manage. (I didn't  
learn to drive until I was 46) I didn't ask  
them to bring in plastic bags but now every  
time you put on the TV there is some  
campaign to make us feel guilty. My  
shopping would fit into two of the bags  
Sainsbury's were giving away but I  
wouldn't be able to lift them. I could shop  
on the internet and have the shopping  
delivered. I shall continue going shopping  
and continue to feel guilty and if they decide  
to charge us for the plastic bags I shall pay  
for them!

*Dorothy*

#### Surviving the Loss of Oneself My Personal Arthritis Story From Carol & Richard Eustice,

"God grant me the serenity to accept the  
things I cannot change.....The courage to  
change the things I can.....And the wisdom  
to know the difference."

I was almost 19 years old, a college student,  
filled with ambition and dreams. I  
remember exiting the Science Building at  
the university after one of my classes, on  
one particular day. My legs, especially my  
right knee, felt uncharacteristically weak  
and painful as I descended the stairs. This  
was the first day of a life-altering condition.

The problem with my knee persisted over  
the next few weeks. I began my search for  
answers and medical care with my family  
Doctor. He did the basic tests and  
diagnostics he could do then fast-forwarded  
me to an Orthopaedic Surgeon for a  
consultation. I had the doctors perplexed.

I was seemingly too young to have arthritis,  
though my x-rays showed significant  
changes in my knee joints. My laboratory  
blood tests did not confirm rheumatoid  
arthritis. The thought at first was that I  
must have a sports injury. I was sent home  
and told to take 8 aspirins a day. With each  
pill I swallowed I also swallowed some hope  
that this would end soon.

The end never came. Instead of  
experiencing an end to the pain in my knee,  
I experienced a gradual shifting of the pain  
to my hip. From my left side it travelled to  
my right. It felt like something was taking a  
journey through my body. It made the  
journey, making stops along the way at  
each of my joints. It spent enough time at  
each stop to do some damage and then  
move on to the next stop. The extensive  
damage was enough to cement the diagnosis  
of rheumatoid arthritis.

I battled back against the arthritis in typical  
fashion by listening to doctor's advice and  
consuming everything they prescribed for  
me. I made every effort to interrupt the  
journey of the arthritis through my body.

At times it felt like I was winning, and more often it felt like the arthritis was winning. As years passed, I experienced gradual destruction of my joints. I experienced limitations imposed by the disease. I experienced loss.

The loss was slow, just like the progression of the disease. Aspects of my life that I had carved out for years were being taken away from me. There seemed to be a slow erosion of my life taking place directly proportional to the erosion of my joints. Changes and limitations mounted over time and the loss I was experiencing, though gradual, seemed overwhelming at times.

There are many ways to react to loss, especially the loss of oneself. The physical changes in me were making me into someone different than I had been. I determined that I needed the mental changes to correlate with the physical changes. I needed not to view the changes in me as a "loss" but rather as a "transformation". I really wasn't "disappearing", but I was "changing". It became clear to me over time that the changes in me physically were beyond my control. I made every effort to counteract the changes with excellent medical care, but the changes were still occurring.

It was obvious to me that I had some choices to make within myself. I could allow the physical decline to negatively impact my life, or I could alter my life in ways to better coincide with my physical condition. It gradually became as much a mental battle as it had been a physical battle. Arthritis had not destroyed my life, but it had changed it. The focus had to shift from what I had lost to what I still had.

I had to learn to live within this new body which was limited in movement and uncomfortable. I had to learn to be myself again and forget what I could no longer be or do. Never losing sight of opportunities to regain function or reduce the discomfort of the disease, I continued to try all the new medications and had several joint replacement surgeries.

An attitude of acceptance combined with perseverance seemed appropriate. With an attitude of acceptance, I realized that I could no longer reach the top shelf, nor could I pick up everything from the floor. My plane of existence was now somewhere in the middle of that and I had to review, refocus, and adapt to that. With an attitude of determination, I made the necessary adjustments.

The adjustments were diverse. Some were simple, such as lowering things from that top shelf making them reachable once again. Some adjustments were more complicated, such as finding a balance between independence lost and dependence. It became as much a learning experience as it had been a battle. Learning to adapt, to find new ways, easier ways accessible ways I had to learn to live "with" the arthritis and forget that it had stolen much from me.

The person that I was before rheumatoid arthritis affected me became a cherished memory, almost like a lost love or lost pet, always a part of you and yet gone. There was now a new life I was living and though it was bound by limitations it was not a bad life, just different.

There was a need to alter certain goals and dreams and develop new ones. There was a need to revise and change and adapt daily routines and long term plans. I have concluded that there still is much pleasure and happiness to be squeezed out of life. The loss of oneself is really just a rebirth, a chance to refocus, to begin anew and do things differently.

#### Have a laugh

A minister was planning a wedding at the close of the Sunday morning service. After the benediction he had planned to call the couple down to be married for a brief ceremony before the congregation. For the life of him, he couldn't think of the names of those who were to be married. "Will those wanting to get married please come to the front?" he requested. Immediately, nine single ladies, six widows and two single men stepped to the front.

## Tasty Curry Might Have a Fringe Benefit By Kathleen Fackelmann

Five years ago Darci Jayne hardly ever touched a vegetable and pretty much lived on pizza, pasta and fast food.

That diet led to weight gain and health problems, including severe joint pain.

"I was close to 200 pounds and getting scared," she says.

By cutting portion sizes she lost 50 pounds but always felt as if she were on a diet.

Then Jayne took an Indian cooking class that emphasized fresh vegetables and curry spices. She began to whip up an Indian dinner once or twice a week -- and soon she noticed she wasn't always looking for a late-night snack. And the curry in the food offered her a bonus: It seemed to ease the pain and swelling in her joints.

"I have arthritis," says Jayne, 55. "But I'm moving better now."

Preliminary research suggests Jayne may be right. A study in the November issue of *Arthritis & Rheumatism* suggests turmeric, one component of curry spice, almost completely prevented joint swelling in rats with arthritis. Eating more Indian food has worked for Jayne, who lives with her family in a small town outside Milwaukee. A family physician who recently retired because of disabling arthritis pain, Jayne says she knows there's no hard evidence of curry's health benefits. But that won't stop her from enjoying a lunch of tuna masala or an Indian stir-fry for dinner. She says the food seems to warm her joints and helps keep her in a size 8 dress.

"You can't argue with success," she says.

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Well I am not very keen on curry but I am a real coffee addict and I was interested to read the following article on the Internet.

### Caffeinated drinks - Alyson Greenhalgh

Many of our favourite tipples contain the stimulant caffeine. It has often had a bad press, but what effects does it really have and are there any health benefits to be had from our daily cuppas?

## The effects of caffeine, coffee, Tea and Green tea

### The effects of caffeine

Caffeine acts as a stimulant to the heart and central nervous system, and is also known to increase blood pressure in the short term, although there is no conclusive evidence of long-term effects on blood pressure.

The effects on blood pressure are most likely when caffeine is taken in excessive quantities or by highly sensitive people. In particular, people who are hypertensive (have habitual high blood pressure), are advised to avoid caffeinated drinks, while pregnant women are advised to limit their intake of caffeinated drinks to less than 300mg per day.

### Coffee

In the UK, 80 per cent of adults drink coffee every week. It's not the only beverage to contain caffeine, but it does contain the most. Coffee has been linked with a number of the risk factors for coronary heart disease, including increased blood pressure and high blood cholesterol levels. However, no relationship has been found between coffee drinkers and the likelihood of developing coronary heart disease.

Coffee may be beneficial in some areas of health. Research has found that coffee may reduce the risk of developing gallstones, kidney stones and colorectal cancer.

It's difficult to suggest a safe limit for coffee intake because of the huge variation in caffeine content of different brands and an individual's sensitivity to the drug. People with high blood pressure and pregnant women are advised to limit their caffeine consumption. For the rest of the population, there's no evidence coffee does any long-term harm. Caffeine does have a very mild diuretic effect, however, so try to include plenty of non-caffeinated drinks throughout the day as well.

### Tea

An estimated 196,000,000 cups of tea are drunk every day in the UK, and it's thought the average person in the UK will consume 80,000 cups of tea during their life. These figures are pretty spectacular, so what can tea do for us?

Tea does contribute slightly to our intakes of minerals, and it certainly helps to replace lost fluids, but the health interest in tea at the moment surrounds its potential role in lowering the risk of coronary heart disease and some cancers.

Tea contains antioxidant substances called flavonoids. These have been shown to help slow or inhibit the chemical reactions thought to take place during the development of coronary heart disease. So sup up.

#### Green tea

There's also been a lot of interest in the health advantages of green tea, with claims it can reduce blood cholesterol levels. Scientific studies investigating green tea's effects on blood cholesterol levels are divided: some have found no effect at all, while others have found low cholesterol levels in people who consume large quantities.

It can't be ruled out that the reason for these lower cholesterol levels is simply that people who drink green tea tend to have healthier diets generally.

This article was last medically reviewed by Dr Rob Hicks in September 2005.  
First published in March 2001.

#### Have another laugh

Two gas company servicemen, a senior training supervisor and a young trainee, were out checking meters in a quiet neighbourhood. They parked their van at the end of the street and worked their way to the other end. At the last house a woman looking out of her kitchen window watched the two men as they checked her gas meter. Finishing the meter check, the supervisor challenged his co-worker to a foot race down back to the van. As they came running up to the van, they realized the lady from that last house was huffing and puffing right behind them. They stopped and asked her what was wrong.

Gasping for breath, she replied, "When I see two gas men running as hard as you two were, I figured I'd better run too!"

I was watching the programme on TV "Power to the People" about the "Zimmers" (40 eighty year olds) launching their CD "Talking about my generation" The circumstances in which some of those people were living were really upsetting and it made me feel that we are not a very caring country when it comes to our old people.

#### The Dignity in care campaign

On 14 November 2006, the Minister for Care Services, Ivan Lewis MP launched the first ever dignity in care campaign. The campaign aims to stimulate a national debate around dignity in care and create a care system where there is zero tolerance of abuse and disrespect of older people. Health and social care services have made great strides in recent years in driving down waiting lists and improving access to services. However, this emphasis on throughput has at times been at the expense of the quality of care experience. The Dignity in care campaign aims to re-dress that balance and to put dignity at the heart of care.

Over the past nine months, we have heard from a wide range of people about what dignity means and it is clear from that listening exercise that dignity matters a lot to people. It is also clear that many people do not know what they should expect from a service that respects dignity.

#### £67 million pledged to improve care homes for older people

A national campaign to place dignity and respect at the heart of caring for older people, backed by a £67 million grant to improve the environment of care homes across the country has been unveiled. The Government is committing itself to providing leadership, but dignity and respect is a shared challenge and responsibility with those who provide and commission services.

The Dignity Challenge - a 10 point plan that lays out the national expectations of what constitutes a service that respects dignity.

A new network of local champions of dignity - an army of volunteers working to raise the profile of dignity in care locally; The Dignity in Care Practice Guide designed to help support people, front-line workers, practitioners, managers, commissioners as well as older people themselves and their carers to take up the Dignity Challenge;

On 8 November the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act received Royal Assent. The Act lays the foundation for a new vetting and barring scheme which will be phased in from autumn 2008.

Gordon Lishman, Director General of Age Concern, said: "We warmly welcome the Government's announcement - dignified and respectful treatment has to be at the centre of all care for older people.

"The Government is right - too often older people's rights and feelings are trampled on because of other priorities. We hope this campaign brings to an end undignified and uncaring services that older people have too often had to endure."

"The human rights and the needs of every individual needs to be put at the centre of their care. We urge all care commissioners and providers to fully embrace providing services that put older people at the heart of their priorities."

Paul Cann, Director of Policy at Help the Aged said:

"Dignity and respect for the individual ought to be at the heart of the way we care for older people, but all too often services fall short of achieving this.

We hope that by launching this campaign, and signaling new leadership in this area the Government will be able to drive change in the way older people are treated - making dignity and respect absolutely central to all care services.

Ultimately this is about more than practice and procedure - it's about how individuals relate to each other.

We hope that the Government will see this as much more than a short-term initiative - we are looking for a long-term commitment to changing not just care practice, but the whole culture of our care services so that individual older people receive the respect and dignity they deserve."

I had an e-mail from one of my colleagues, Karen Ryder from One Voice a Disability Group. Karen said she had just been reading our newsletters on the Internet and that the "magazine" should be called "The Dorothy Darby Mishaps"

That made me think I shouldn't keep writing about all the mishaps I have: BUT:

At the beginning of June Tricia the lady who does my housework for me came downstairs and said that my bath buddy didn't look right. It looked as if more air than usual had come out of it. I said it was supposed to go flat and I took no notice. The next morning when I went into the bathroom I realised that Tricia was correct I was a little cautious and I went down and unlocked the front door and the porch and I took my phone into the bathroom with me.

I pumped up the bath buddy and put in my lovely foam bath and the water. I went to get the towels and when I came back I could see that some of the air had gone out of it again. I pumped it up again and it exploded. It went with such a bang I was standing there covered in foam, I was lucky that I wasn't trying to come up out of the bath when it exploded!

I ordered a new one which arrived within a week and I am happy again.

These gadgets are not for the faint-hearted.

*Dorothy*



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