



WRSG Newsletter

WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

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CARING IS SHARING

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Contents:

- Announcements
- Features
- Poems

WRSG Annual General Meeting

The WRSG AGM is on the evening of the 10th September at the Holly Bush Inn, 494 Penn Road, Penn Wolverhampton at 7.00 for 7.30 p.m.

Madam Mayor, Cllr. Trudy Bowen and Dr. Paul Newton have agreed to attend as guest speakers and we hope that Dr. Ali will also speak.

We will be providing a buffet and there is no charge for the event. The AGM will close at approximately 9.45 p.m.

The purpose of the AGM is to elect/re-elect the committee and to receive the Annual Accounts and the Chair/Secretary's report.

Admission tickets are enclosed with this newsletter for members who have booked places.

Carver Wolverhampton City Marathon

The event is on Sunday 2nd September.

We are having a table in West Park with a collecting tin and giving out our leaflets to advertise the group.

Iris Kruczek and Reg Jones are doing a Tombola stall.

When Chris Dodd has completed his Half Marathon we will arrange for a cheque presentation in Rheumatology.

Thank you

I would like to thank the members who rang with their condolences on the sudden death of our committee member Anne Green. Anne rang me on the Friday before she died and we chatted for over an hour. Anne had particularly enjoyed the trip to the London Eye and going for a drink with Liz and Julie before getting back on the coach. We have some nice memories.

Patient requests

Margaret Wall wrote to me saying she wished there were chairs along the main hospital corridor at New Cross hospital. I have passed this on and have now been told that the chairs have been delivered and are being installed. Margaret put forward some other suggestions which I have also passed on.

West Midland Safari Park

36 adults and children went on the trip to the West Midlands Safari Park. Our coach took us on the tour to see the animals. We then made our way round the attractions. We did a bit of walking and a lot of sitting and it was very hot!

Thanks Sheila for organising the outing.

Dorothy

Our feet are so important

I really think that the ability to keep mobile is what gives us our independence. I have been involved in many “causes” over the years. When I was elected to the Community Health Council the first triumph we achieved was saving Penn Hospital from closure. I got quite involved with Iris Swain of the Osteoporosis Society in helping to get the DEXA bone density scanner in Wolverhampton. I played a part in getting our third Rheumatology Consultant post.

If I could achieve another goal it would be to improve foot health in Wolverhampton.

Many years ago I did an article for a fundraising campaign. It was entitled “Dorothy’s Story – Walking on marbles” and it raised over £65,000 for Arthritis Care. My feet felt as if I was walking on marbles but I suppose it was the bones in the bottom of my feet I could feel.

In 1999 and 2000 I was lucky enough to have surgery on my feet performed by Mr. Tandon. I could then wear normal Elmdale shoes and I didn’t need insoles.

Two years ago a problem with my ankle re-occurred and Dr. Newton referred me to Orthotics once again. I was given a pair of very heavy shoes with a leg brace (a calliper with two metal bars up my leg and a strap beneath the knee. I have a scarred leg from the bone graft following the road accident and scarring from the knee replacement and I couldn’t manage this brace. It bruised my leg and I had the brace taken off but the shoes were still very heavy and I called them my diving boots!

In February this year I tripped and broke my thumb. In March I asked for a replacement pair of shoes which I received in July. They are as big and heavy as the previous pair. I weigh eight stone and cannot pick my feet up in them.

When members ring me on the helpline before saying why they have rung they usually ask how I am. I have been saying “I am o.k. apart from my feet” and the reaction is nearly always the same. “I am having the same problem.”

We have many members who cannot wear the shoes provided on the NHS. I jokingly said that if I was to have an orthopaedic shoe amnesty the shoes would arrive in droves!

For three years I was on the Foot Health Steering Group hoping to improve the waiting time for chiropody appointments. I would really like to think that in Wolverhampton we could have a Foot Health Service which would give frequent enough appointments for chiropody and nail cutting and provide insoles and shoes where necessary to enable us to keep mobile. I think it would be cost effective in the long run to keep people independent.

I am having some meetings with staff from the Primary Care Trust and the Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Trust (New Cross) at the moment to see if anything can be done to improve the services for all patients including children.

I have to say that everyone involved are being very co-operative and I really think that they all have the patients’ best interest at heart if it can all come together.

I have been asking if the Biomechanics Department at Landport Road and Orthotics at New Cross can work together to help each other to help the patients.

I really need the NHS for this service. I have been to several shops but it is not easy to buy what we need. I want to be able to walk when we go to Malta in October and I really need to find some shoes suitable for Ashley and Alison’s wedding next May. I went on the Internet and typed in “Orthopaedic Shoes” and found several “sites.” I have the “Hotter,” “Cosyfeet” and “Flyflot” catalogues.

I have also been told of a company who just make Orthotics (Insoles etc) they are called Parish & Bell. They telephoned me explaining that you take your own comfortable shoes there and they make the Orthotics to suit you. I wouldn’t have minded trying that but they are in Surrey and I am not confident to drive that far. They charge between £250 and £700 for purpose made Orthotics (shoe insoles) made in the USA. They use lasers to work out what you require and they say they last for life!

I also found and contacted a company called Franklin Bespoke Shoe Makers and I think you will be amazed at the letter I received from them as follows. I couldn't believe the price of their shoes. Bespoke means they are made to fit your feet. I think they probably supplied the Queen mom but I am certainly not in that league!

“Dear Mrs Dorothy Darby
Thank you for your recent enquiry. Each pair of our fully bespoke footwear is designed specifically for each individual client, the cost of this service ranges from £1100.00. Bespoke lasts (the form the footwear is made on) are £180.00 for shoe lasts and £240.00 for boot lasts, this is a once only charge as the lasts would be used for any subsequent pairs of footwear. The average time from initial consultation until first fitting is twelve weeks. Appointments should be made by telephone for either location, the measuring process and consultation takes approximately one hour. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any further assistance.
Yours sincerely
Franklin Bespoke Shoe Makers 851 High Road, North Finchley, London, and 48 Spencer Street, St. James, Northampton,

If you have any views on foot health I would like to hear from you.

Dorothy

Continuing the theme of feet

The Healing Art of Reflexology

What is reflexology?

Whilst the art of reflexology dates back to Ancient Egypt, India and China, it wasn't until 1913 that Dr William Fitzgerald introduced this therapy to the West as 'zone therapy'. He noted that reflex areas on the feet and hands were linked to other areas and organs of the body within the same zone. In the 1930's Eunice Ingham further developed this zone theory into what is now known as reflexology. She observed that congestion or tension in any part of the foot is mirrored in the corresponding part of the body. Reflexology is a complementary therapy, which works on the feet to help heal the whole person not just the prevailing symptoms.

How can reflexology help me?

Reflexology can be used to help restore and maintain the body's natural equilibrium. This gentle therapy encourages the body to work naturally to restore its own healthy balance. Reflexology has been shown to be effective for: Back Pain, Migraine, Infertility, Arthritis, Sleep disorders, Hormonal imbalances, Sports injuries, Digestive Disorders and Stress-related conditions. Reflexology does not claim to cure, diagnose or prescribe.

Who can benefit from reflexology?

Reflexology is suitable for all ages and may bring relief from a wide range of acute and chronic conditions. After you have completed a course of reflexology treatment for a specific condition, many people find it beneficial to continue with regular treatments in order to maintain health and well-being.

While many people use reflexology as a way of relaxing the mind and body and counteracting stress, at the same time many doctors, consultants and other health care professionals recognise reflexology as a well established, respected and effective therapy. With ever increasing levels of stress, it is important people take more responsibility for their own health care needs. Reflexology helps us to cope on a physical, mental and emotional level thereby encouraging us to heal and maintain health in all areas of our lives.

What happens when I go for treatment?

On the first visit, the reflexology practitioner will have a preliminary talk with you to determine your present and past health and lifestyle.

The Reflexologist will then use their hands to apply pressure to the feet. The application and the effect of the therapy are unique to each person.

A professionally trained Reflexologist can detect subtle changes in specific points on the feet, and by working on these points may affect the corresponding organ or system of the body.

A treatment session usually lasts for about one hour. A course of treatment may be recommended depending on your body's needs.

How will I feel after a reflexology treatment?

After one or two treatments your body may respond in a very definite way. Most people note a sense of well-being and relaxation; sometimes people report feeling lethargic, nauseous or tearful, but this is transitory and is a part of the healing process.

This is vital information to feed back to the Reflexologist as it shows how your body is responding to treatment. This will help the Reflexologist to tailor a treatment plan specific to your needs.

The Association of Reflexologists

The Association was founded in 1984. It arose from a need to establish standards and to provide a network of qualified practitioners to which the public could refer with confidence. Members are bound by the Association's Codes of Practice and Ethics.

Where can I find a Reflexologist?

The Association publishes a Referral Register of practitioners for the benefit of members of the public who wish to consult a qualified and experienced Reflexologist. This can be found on the Association's website at: www.aor.org.uk.



FEET CONFUSION

When my friend's son was about 4 years old, he put his right shoe on his left foot and his left shoe on his right foot. I said, "Danny, you've got your shoes on the wrong feet!" He looked down at his feet, somewhat confused and replied, "No I haven't. These are my feet!"

Joan Quinn

PLEASE, GOD

As my 5-year-old son and I were headed to McDonald's one day, we passed a car accident. Usually when we see something terrible like that we say a prayer for those who might be hurt. So I pointed to the accident and said to my son, "We should pray." From the back seat I heard his earnest request: "Please, God, don't let those cars block the entrance to McDonald's."

Anonymous

Feet Aint what they used to be!!

My mother used to warn me,
That wearing shoes with four inch heels,
I would end up with corns and bunions,
And now I know just how it feels.

I had a pair of sling backs,
Shiny patent and bright red,
With straps around the ankles,
But how my poor feet bled

I would cram my feet into narrow shoes,
And shoes with square cut toes,
Then hobble home from the dances,
How I walked goodness knows.

I went to a dance one evening,
And danced most of the night,
Then walked home barefooted in pain,
Oh what a sorry sight.

Now that I'm older and wiser,
And my feet are swollen and red,
I wish I'd listened to my mom,
And worn sensible shoes instead
Yours FEETFULLY

Brenda Mullaney

Foot-care failure 'causes misery'

Older people are being left housebound and disabled by a lack of NHS foot-care services in England, Age Concern says.

It cites Office of National Statistics figures from 2001 suggesting a third of over-65s cannot cut their own toe-nails and struggle to access NHS services. Some are even trying to cut their nails with gardening shears, the charity said as it launched a campaign on the issue.

The Department of Health said they expected the NHS to provide good chiropody services for the elderly. People may need to see a chiropodist because of problems with poor circulation, ulcers or overlapping toes. Older people may also need help with basic foot care such as nail cutting and foot hygiene because they can no longer reach their own toe-nails. Launching their Feet for Purpose campaign, Age Concern said older people were being put on long waiting lists forcing them to pay privately or rely on services provided by the charity.

It said an NHS report showed that between 1996 and 2005, there was a 20% drop in new episodes of care in NHS chiropody. In some areas people have no access to foot-care services on the NHS, Age Concern said.

"Unacceptable"

Lack of even the most basic foot care puts the elderly at risk of complications that lead to dangerous falls, severe restrictions on mobility and social isolation. Age Concern director general Gordon Lishman said as well as cases of people cutting their nails with gardening shears, people had also resorted to kicking solid walls in their bare feet to break their nails. "This would have been unacceptable in 1948 when the NHS was created, and it is certainly unacceptable nearly 60 years later. "Foot-care services should be free and universally available to those who need them - yet increasingly in many parts of England they are being restricted or withdrawn." He called for the Department of Health to include chiropody in the NHS maximum waiting time target of 18 weeks.

A Department of Health spokesman said it recognised the importance of the provision of chiropody services to older people. "While the 18-weeks target does not cover chiropody, it will mean faster access to treatment for many conditions affecting older people that involve consultant-led care," he said. "We expect the NHS to provide high quality chiropody services as we know healthy feet have a huge impact on the quality of life of older people." Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists chairman Janet McInnes said if older people were able to stay physically active they placed less of a burden on other parts of the health service.

"The importance of good foot health in maintaining older people's independence, mobility and social contact cannot be overstated."

Story from BBC NEWS:
Published: 2007/08/19

Brenda Mullaney is really on form at the moment.

Keep em coming Bren!

THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN

Did you ever hear of Molly Brown?

A true heroine it is told,
Who saved dozens of women and children's
lives a woman so fearless and bold

She manned a lifeboat back in April 1912
When the great ship the Titanic went down,
Single handedly rowing for hours on end,
The unsinkable Molly Brown

On reaching America she was acclaimed in
New York,
The people came from far and wide,
A rich industrialist fell in love with her,
So Molly became his bride.

They made a film about Molly,
That was shown in every town,
A brave young woman who never gave up,
The unsinkable Molly Brown

I know people just like Molly,
Heroes and heroines in their own way,
Not for them awards and praise,
But carrying on helping each and every day

And I call them the unsinkable
Molly Browns.

That's all folks.
Bren Mullaney.

Do children grow up too quickly now?

At the beginning of the school summer holidays Jessica, Jack and I were preparing lunch in my kitchen. I asked Jessica to open a carton of milk. "I hope I don't break my nails" she said. I hadn't noticed but she had beautiful white square artificial finger nails. When I was 11 years old I was playing hopscotch and skipping not worrying about my nails!

Dorothy

Can pets sense illness?

A cat has apparently "predicted" the deaths of 25 residents in a nursing home in the US. It seems fanciful but can pets detect illness or even death? The residents of Steere House nursing and Rehabilitation Centre in Rhode Island would be forgiven for getting a little anxious if Oscar was to curl up next to them. Not generally friendly to patients, this show of affection has been used to warn families that their loved one has not long to go. Sounds far-fetched? Animal behaviour experts in the US say Oscar probably smells a chemical given off by the body

The work of dogs in epilepsy is more advanced. The charity Support Dogs has provided 45 seizure alert dogs to epileptics such as Tony Brown-Griffin, 35, from Kent. Twelve years ago, prior to her getting her first alert dog, she was suffering 12 major seizures a week and countless minor ones, so was housebound and childless. Now she is independent and a mother of two. Ajay, a golden retriever, licks her left hand 40 minutes before a major seizure, which only happens twice a week now, so she can get herself out of harm's way. "It's a major stress reduction. I don't have to worry about epilepsy at all unless my dog alerts me. Before I was thinking 'Do I have time to cross the road, will I have a seizure?'"

But neither Tony nor her husband knows exactly how Ajay is doing it, because the slight changes in Tony's behaviour prior to a seizure are imperceptible to them. "He doesn't get a crystal ball and headscarf and say 'I predict you will have one three weeks on Tuesday' but whether it's a change in blood pressure or body temperature or whether I sweat or smell differently, or a combination of things. "In the early days it was very difficult to go with the dog because I would feel so well but he was 100% accurate, 100% of the time."

"Dogs are very good at picking up on emotional changes and when people are depressed and inactive they are very good at comforting people in these circumstances.

Elephants show the same altruistic tendencies, but not cats, they are very much more selfish, solitary creatures."

One theory about how dogs have evolved this capacity is that their wolf ancestors developed an ability to tell when one of the pack was sick. But it is not just in health that the heightened senses of animals have proved to be more advanced than humans'. Scientists remarked at how few wild animals died in the Asian tsunami in 2004, because they were able to sense the disaster and move to higher ground.

"I have always had at least one cat, and have noticed how they pick up on my mood. If I am upset or ill, my cat will come straight to me to provide comfort. I even observed this with a cat we took in from a rescue shelter, who would not come anywhere near me when I felt well! I think it is more extraordinary for a cat to do this (and they clearly do) despite being independent creatures, whereas a dog is dependant, and it is in their interest to keep their host happy. "

Jane, Kent

"Cats also show empathy for people who are suffering bereavement. When my father died, and my mother came to stay with us, both our cats would not leave her side and even slept on the bed with her, something we don't normally allow, but we could see the comfort she was getting from them."

Helen Waite, Appleton, Abingdon, UK

"When I was a child living in Canada, we had a Russian wolfhound who never displayed the slightest sign of intelligence! But one day, he tore into the house in terror and hid in the basement, flatly refusing to come out.

The weather was clear and fine and we could see and hear nothing unusual to have upset him. Exactly 40 minutes later (to the minute) we experienced a major, grade four, tornado which destroyed a vast majority of the county. Once the storm had passed, he came out of the basement and never entered it again! "

Charlotte Cheshire, Telford, England

“I do not agree that cats are very selfish and unfeeling. When I had a miscarriage and was in mourning my cat offered me more comfort than any human. He waited for me to sit down at 11am each day and purred and comforted me when I was crying. He definitely sensed my emotions and helped me recover more quickly. “

J. Turner, Torquay Devon UK

“My cat always sits next to me when I feel unwell. She will stay there for hours, whilst normally she doesn't bother that much. OK - she may detect physical or behavioural changes in me which cause her to do this. Explain this one though. In the 80s, I lived in London and would come home most weekends. When I came in my mother would have a cup of tea waiting for me on the table. How did she know when to make it? Because about 5-10 minutes before I arrived home, my cat would sit in the window and start crying. Every single time! Is it sense of smell or detection of mood change? Probably not! I like to think it is psychic ability. I can't really think of another explanation. “

Gill, Newport Gwent

“I think there is an inexplicable and possibly mystic connection between animals and humans. My cat left our house and went to live up the road with an elderly neighbour. He lived there for over two years and in that time he never came home. The neighbour became ill and was taken to hospital. Although we were feeding the cat he never left her house. Then one day about two weeks later he suddenly showed up at our house, curled up and went to sleep. About half an hour passed, and we received a phone call telling us our neighbour had died about half an hour ago. I've never been able to explain it but I do believe there are things that are just unexplainable. “

Erica Fowler, London

For the twenty years I had my little Cairn terriers, Sam and Danny they knew when I was feeling down and would jump up on the settee to lie by me. I still miss coming in to the welcome from a dog but it would tie me down too much to have one.

Dorothy

SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE GAUMONT

Every Sunday afternoon after lunch,
About a quarter to two,
My mother would take my Brother and I
Off to wait in the cinema queue.

The Gaumont cinema was popular in those days and you would queue for an hour or so
No just walking in like today,
But you would queue for the 3.Oclock show.

At last we would go inside,
And search for seats for three,
Then happily wait expectantly,
My mother, my brother and me

Then mom would open her handbag,
And give us our promised treats,
The homemade toffees she always made,
They were our favourite sweets.

We watched Betty Grable the dancing star,
And I fell in love with John Wayne,
The Bowery boys we really loved,
And marvelled at Tarzan and Jane

We laughed at Abbot and Costello,
But our favourite was Johnny Mack Brown,
Who captured all the baddies
And saved the people in the town

Those halcyon days of long ago,
Stay with me now its true,
Those wonderful Sunday afternoons,
That started in the Gaumont cinema queue.

We never missed from the late war years of
1945 until I left school.

Luv Bren Mullaney

Donations

It is always sad when we have to announce the death of one of our members. At the beginning of August Vic Winfield passed away and the family donated £155 in his memory. We have also received several donations this month for no reason other than people wish to support the WRSB for which we are always grateful.

Turkey and tinsel in Western Super Mare

Joyce Knibbs is organising a turkey and tinsel holiday in Western Super Mare. We are going to the Smiths Hotel from Monday, 29th October to Friday, 2nd November.

The cost of the holiday is £190 per person. To book a place or ask for further information ring Joyce between 4.00 and 6.00 p.m only please

Christmas event at Shugborough Hall

Sheila Fardoe is arranging a Christmas Festivities visit to Shugborough Hall on the evening of Thursday 6th December.

The cost is £12 per person which includes the coach and admission. We leave Falkland Street Coach Park at 4.00p.m and leave Shugborough at 9.00 p.m To book places ring Sheila between 4.00 and 7.00 p.m. only please

Christmas Coffee Morning

Our Christmas coffee morning has been arranged for Monday, 10th December at the Holly bush, Penn Road, Wolverhampton from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. We will provide Tea, coffee, Squash and mince Pies and there will be no charge for the event. We will hold a raffle and have a “bring and buy” sales table but the aim of the coffee morning is the same as last year. We just want to meet and have a chat and hopefully a laugh. Invitations will be enclosed with the November newsletter.

You may wish to stay for lunch because the Holly Bush has a very varied, reasonably priced menu.

Picture the scene

Brian Knibbs was taking a Zimmer frame for an elderly relative to borrow. Nothing unusual about that you might think except that Brian took it on the back of his motorbike !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this newsletter are taken in good faith and are not necessarily endorsed by the editor or the WRSG. The use of a product name does not constitute an endorsement or a recommendation by the WRSG

Different responses

For a long time I have asked people for help in the supermarket. The other day I asked a man to reach something from the top shelf. I said “Could you reach three bottles of lemonade down for me please?” and then I added “I can’t get my arms up there” to my amusement he replied with a smile “I bet you would reach if there was a £20 note up there” What do you make of that?

It was not so amusing when I went to Iceland. I needed a £1 coin for the trolley and couldn’t get it out of my purse. I asked a young lad of about sixteen for help. He looked embarrassed and fetched his dad. His dad took the £1 out of my purse and put it in the trolley. I realised afterwards that if you think about how it would have looked on the CCTV camera who could blame the lad. What a society we live in if someone is frightened to give a helping hand.

Albrighton Moat Project

Some time ago Eric Booth, one of our members, wrote telling us about the Albrighton Moat Project. Three of our committee members have now been to have a look at the venue.

The Albrighton Trust, Blue House Lane, Albrighton, Shropshire, WV7 3FL

The Albrighton Trust is dedicated to providing sports, arts, education and recreational facilities for people of all ages who have disabilities or are disadvantaged. The site is sub-divided into 35 themed gardens. Why not go along and enjoy an angling session or just relax in the gardens and do a bit of bird watching.

The entire four and a half acre site is completely wheelchair accessible and manual and electric wheelchairs are available for use free of charge whilst on site (Booking is recommended) The site is open Monday to Friday 9a.m. to 5p.m. Tea, coffee, squash and hot chocolate are all available at 50p each.

If you would like a brochure or more information call 01902 372441

