



## *WRSWG Newsletter*

**WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP**

**Charity No 1041181**

**CARING IS SHARING**

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***DOROTHY DARBY***

This April 2009 edition of the WRSWG newsletter is devoted to our former chairperson Dorothy Darby who sadly passed away on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2009. Dorothy had been very poorly for a long time and despite her poor health and increasing immobility she continued with her responsibilities for the WRSWG always putting others before her own failing health.

Dorothy was inspirational, a wonderful leader, my very special friend. I do not know of any one single person who will be able to step into the role that she so expertly carried out for the WRSWG. Knowing Dorothy as well as I did however she would be very annoyed with us if we didn't try to continue with her good work for the group.

The group will carry on in Dorothy's memory. The committee will be relying on you our members to support us as you have always done in the past. Let us continue with her good work and make her proud of us.

I look forward to seeing you all at the coffee morning on Monday April 27<sup>th</sup> 2009. This event is for all of us to remember Dorothy and to share our wonderful memories of a fabulous friend and colleague. We are pleased that members of Dorothy's family will be joining us for the coffee morning. God Bless you Dorothy

*Liz Walker*



Dorothy on holiday Turkey and Tinsel  
Alveston Hall 2008

### A Tribute to Dorothy from Liz

I first met Dorothy in 1994; I had been newly diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Dr Newton thought I might be useful in some way to the group and arranged for me to meet her.

The day we met happened to be my birthday it was also Dorothy's and we discovered that we shared the same birth date.

At the time of our first meeting I was feeling quite poorly and definitely felt very sorry for myself. Discovering that I had Rheumatoid Arthritis was profound, so life changing. Meeting someone else who understood exactly how I was feeling was wonderful, she showed me the way forward

Dorothy took me in hand; she was my buddy, never giving me the time to feel sorry for myself anymore. I took an early retirement from Nurse Teaching and she soon introduced me to the world of voluntary work and I started as a volunteer for Arthritis Care UK and eventually became a home visitor for the WRSG. To this day I will always be indebted to Dorothy for the friendship she gave to me; she was an absolute life line in those early dark days of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

There are many people who are indebted to Dorothy for similar reasons to mine not least for the untiring work and devotion to assisting others in her various roles on many health care forum's and committees around the city.

To name a few of her achievements:

Chairperson/Secretary WRSG

Chairperson Lymphoedema Group

Member of various Primary Health Care Trust committees

Member of various Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust committees

Member of the former Wolverhampton City Public Information Group.

Previous Chairperson/Press Officer of the Patients Forum.

Voluntary Home Visitor and Information Officer for Arthritis Care UK

Committee member of the former Community Health Council.

Invited by the WRHT to attend the 60th anniversary of the NHS as a patient representative held in Westminster Abbey in 2008.

I miss Dorothy, I miss her inspiration and driving force, the energy she invested into the WRSG was phenomenal. The group were blessed to have had such a leader.

Liz Walker Acting Chairperson WRSG

### A Tribute to Dorothy from Trudy Bowen

Dorothy Darby was a name I had heard often in the committee rooms and corridors of the Civic Centre. She was an icon of community involvement in health services across the spectrum; definitely not a single issue person. Her name was given to me by Directors of several services when I was first diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. I didn't actually meet Dorothy until 2007 when I heard her name called in Rheumatology Outpatients and I gathered my courage to speak to this legendary person. Dorothy took me to her bosom and gave me encouragement, support and straight talking when I needed it.

Dorothy was knowledgeable, well informed and willing to share her insights; the epitome of the "expert patient". She was unafraid in the face of bureaucracy and fearless in her defence of all health services.

She was interested in people and issues and developments. Dorothy was particularly fascinated by my robot vacuum cleaner and I can still hear that rusty voice enquiring if she could speak to "robbo" which threw me for a few seconds.

It is difficult to pay adequate tribute to Dorothy, a woman who was fiercely independent, sometimes stubborn, a gifted communicator with the ability to draw people in. I know that she is greatly missed, not least by me, and will continue to be so. She told me once that she longed to wear fashionable shoes, so wherever you are Dorothy, keep wearing the court shoes.

Trudy Bowen WRSB

Committee Member



### Dorothy and June Osborne on a walkabout viewing the developments at New Cross Hospital in 2002.

Dorothy and June are seen here with their colleagues from the Patients Forum. Colin Rea, Director of Developments conducted the tour which included a tour of Hollybush House, Undergraduate Teaching Facilities, the foundations of the new Radiology Department, the new body store and the new Heart Centre.

How we have all benefited from these developments.

### A Tribute to Dorothy from Bhagwant Sachdeva (WRSB Committee Member)

On behalf of the Satrang Mehfil Group and on behalf of Mrs B K Sachdeva:

Despite your suffering you diligently chaired and supported the Wolverhampton Rheumatology Group.

We remember your cheerfulness and kindness. You will be sadly missed by all.

Bhagwant Sachdeva

Committee Member

Dorothy, June and Liz on holiday at Sinah  
Warren Hayling Island 2007



A Tribute to Dorothy from June Osborne

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND

We all arrive by different roads at the  
appointed place.

Each one has his star to follow and his path to  
trace.

Perhaps we never shall retrace that old  
familiar path.

But somewhere we shall fall in step and find  
another road to travel.

To share our hopes and dreams.

Though now apart but close in thought, our  
separate ways we wend.

You will always be to me my – colleague and  
my friend.

God Bless

June Osborne Committee Member

Do Not Be Sad

Do not be sad

For I am with you

Do not be sad

In our lifetime we have

Done so many things together

And now I am resting in God's garden

Thinking of you all

So do not be sad for as time goes by

You will have all our lovely memories

I have only left you for a little while

I am with you in spirit

So tell all my family and friends

I am only just asleep

And one day we shall all meet

So do not be sad

Carol Boneham (International Poet)

## A Tribute to Dorothy Darby

When I was asked with Diane Evans to write an article about Dorothy, my initial reaction was; where does one begin and where does one end.

Diane and Dorothy go back many years when Dorothy gave so much help with Diane's son Jeffrey.

Then of course we all had long term connections with the Rheumatology Department. Dorothy was like the bionic woman. It was amazing how she never gave in to any challenge that came her way. She was a first class advocate for the right cause.

Dorothy joined the Wolverhampton Rheumatology Support Group (WRSG) but still kept links with other organizations. It was so rewarding when she eventually took over as the Chairperson of the WRSG.

The one love all three of us shared was our families. Dorothy would endlessly talk about Ashley, Greg and her grandchildren Jessica and Jack. It was wonderful that through Dorothy's struggles with her conditions; when she related to her family it appeared to give her more going power when she needed it.

It was a hard struggle twenty years ago when we took on the challenge to lift the profile of patients with musculoskeletal conditions, eventually we succeeded. Everyone knew who we were and that we were not going away.

Dorothy introduced us to Liz Walker whom you all know, and who does a lot of hard work for the WRSG and other organisations.

The one plus about our Dorothy was she never sat on her laurels as one would say. She would be on the telephone for hours hoping Diane and myself were moving forward with ideas and, of course, Dorothy had the connections so that did help.

To actually write about Dorothy's achievements would be endless. What one should say is what Dorothy could not do. Dorothy never knew her limitations. Diane was always telling her to slow down, but I think poor Diane's words were falling on deaf ears. I remember an incident (I think you would call this an anecdote) when at my home Diane and Dorothy decided to try out a new Tens machine (a machine to help with pain relief). Guess who the guinea pig was, yes me. Well then, Diane and Dorothy connected me up in a fashion, I looked like a robot; I appeared to be having vibes all over. But I am pleased to say we did laugh a lot and Dorothy always managed a cough afterwards. Of course putting her near Diane and Peter (Diane's husband) was just fatal. Yes, Diane and I will miss Dorothy and we are so pleased we knew her and had such wonderful times with her.

Carol Boneham and Diane Evans  
Former Chairpersons and Founder Members  
of WRSG

### A Tribute from Julie Hibbs

I met Dorothy through Liz Walker when we both worked for Arthritis Care delivering Challenging Arthritis courses and was invited to join the WRSG Committee.

I was constantly amazed at her ability to put aside her own health issues and worked tirelessly for the good of others.

My most interesting memories will always be of her humour, particularly when we were away on holidays.

One evening, Liz and I went to settle her for bed. We took one of her legs each to remove her stockings and amidst tears of laughter, told her to make a wish.

My wish for you Dorothy is that you are at peace and for you to know how much we love and miss you.

Julie Hibbs  
Committee Member WRSG

### A Tribute from Pat Jones

I met Dorothy many years ago whilst working at New Cross. She was a wonderful advocate for patients.

We often attended meetings together to deal with patient complaints in her role on the Community Health Council and mine as Manager in the Trauma Orthopaedic and Rheumatology Unit.

She was energetic, professional and constantly had other people's well-being at heart.

She worked tirelessly to raise the profile of Rheumatological conditions and also that of the department at New Cross.

I greatly enjoyed my Tinsel and Turkey trip with Dorothy and the group but I was so honoured to go as her carer to the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the NHS at Westminster Abbey.

I shall miss you greatly – a bionic person in more ways than one.

Pat Jones  
Committee Member



*Pat Jones, Dorothy Darby and John Brown  
The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre  
At the celebration of the  
60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the NHS 2008*



*Dorothy with Lesley Garratt*

### A Tribute from Joyce Knibbs

I have known Dorothy for quite a long time, we met through WRSG. I never really knew how many committees Dorothy served on until after she passed away.

She was always ready to help or solve problems that our members had. Dorothy and I became good friends enjoying holidays, days out, going to shows and we were always ready for lunch-time meals.

Although small in stature, she has left a big void in our lives. I admired Dorothy for all the work she did which was to the benefit to all.

Love from Joyce

Joyce Knibbs

Committee Member

### A Tribute from Sheila Fardoe

I don't know how Dorothy managed to do what she did for the WRSG. I do know that I wouldn't have been able to do it. She will prove to be a hard act to follow.

Her commitment, drive and organisational skills which have developed the group to what it is today, are to be envied.

Dorothy worked relentlessly for many years to improve health matters for which an awful lot of people have benefited.

She would not have been able to achieve this if she had not been of a caring, unselfish and generous nature.

I have many fond memories of us sitting chatting in the sun at Droitwich, sitting with

our feet up enjoying the shows at Sinah Warren and more recently at Alveston Hall.

I consider myself lucky to have known you Dorothy and having you as a friend.

Sheila Fardoe

Committee Member

### Editors Note

This newsletter is attributed to our friend and colleague Dorothy Darby (former chairperson and secretary to the WRSG since 2001).

I would like to assure the WRSG members that every effort will be made to ensure that the group continues to run efficiently for the benefit of our membership.

I know that you will all be patient whilst I attempt to develop the skills of editing and publishing the newsletter. It is a huge learning curve for me, but I will do my best to keep you abreast of forthcoming events and news items.

If you think that you could help in any way I would be extremely grateful. Please continue to send your contributions for future newsletters to me which will probably be published bi monthly.

I look forward to seeing you all at the coffee morning 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009 which will be held at the Hollybush Pub, Penn Rd, Wolverhampton at 10 30am. This coffee morning is in Dorothy's memory and I am very pleased that members of her family will join us

Liz Walker

Acting Chairperson

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### **Coffee Mornings**

#### **Coffee Morning In Memory of Dorothy Darby**

April 27<sup>th</sup> 2009 10 30am

Hollybush Pub, Penn Road

Wolverhampton

Please return booking form to assure your place.

### **Outings**

#### **Coach Trip to visit the Trafford Centre**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009 £10

#### **Birmingham Hippodrome Show**

‘We Will Rock You’

Wednesday July 15<sup>th</sup> 2009

Discounted price matinee

For further information and to book either of the outings please contact Joyce Knibbs on 01902 862198

### **Information Session**

Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009 10 30am

Hollybush Pub Penn Rd

Wolverhampton

Cooking demonstration and information re: menu's and home deliveries from Wiltshire Farm Foods

## **FOR SALE**

Pearl 4 Wheel Mobility Scooter can be delivered to put in a car

Cost £1650 will sell for £500

Telephone: 01902 790977

(Please ring the above member direct)

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