



## *WRSWG Newsletter*

WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

Charity No 1041181

CARING IS SHARING

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### **Membership Renewal**

WRSWG membership renewal fees are due for 2012/2013 on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012. Because we are a non profit making group we are keeping the fees at the same level for members £5 for single membership and £8 for family membership.

New members who have joined the group since January 2012 will not have to renew their membership.

Please complete the membership renewal form which is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Cheques made payable to the WRSWG and forward to our Treasurer.

Mrs Kath Sankey  
78 Dilloways Lane  
Willenhall  
West Midlands  
WV13 3HJ

## **Dates for your Diary**

### **Coffee Morning**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012

10 30am-12 30pm

(Doors Open 10 00am)

Linden House  
211, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton.  
WV6 0DD

### **Dentistry**

**Talk by Pat Gutteridge**

**WPCT**

**Invitations enclosed with this Newsletter**

**Please reply to Liz Walker by post,  
telephone or e mail.**

**(There will not be a coffee morning in  
July 2012 or August 2012. Viv Worrall is  
organising a day outing instead)**

### **Group Outing**

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012**

**Weston-Super-Mare**

Come and join us for a day at the seaside,  
don't forget your buckets and spades, sun  
tan lotion and sun hats, then we can hope for  
good weather!

The cost is £15 per person.

The coach will drop off and pick up at a  
convenient place in Weston to avoid too  
much walking and wheelchairs can be taken  
on the coach.

In the interest of members who wish to take  
mobility scooters we have booked Hills  
coaches who have agreed that their drivers  
will handle 4 mobility scooters. Please could  
members who intend to take a scooter  
reserve their place as soon as possible so  
that we can assess the need for assistance?

I do hope as many of you as possible can  
join us for what should be a 'fun day out'  
Places will be on a first come first served  
basis and we hope to fill the coach.

**A few places are still available for this  
outing, please contact Viv Worrall direct  
by telephone.**

**Viv Worrall (Committee Member)  
WRSG) 01902 845706**

### **Holidays**

**All Inclusive 5 days Turkey and Tinsel  
Break 19<sup>th</sup> November 2012 £285 pp**

**Bembridge Coast Hotel Isle of White**

Bembridge Coast Hotel is a first – rate modern  
Hotel on the East Coast of the Isle of White just  
meters away from the Solent. The Hotel is  
situated in 23 acres with its famous Spanish  
Gardens and sea views.

The break includes return executive coach  
And two coach excursions. 4 nights half  
Board. Entertainment and inclusive bar from  
12pm until 11pm. (restrictions apply)



**Bembridge Coast Hotel Isle of White**

**A few places are still available for this  
Turkey and Tinsel holiday. Please contact  
Joyce Knibbs if you are interested on**

**Tele: 01902 862198**

## **SNOWDON CHALLENGE**



**I would like to remind our members of a very brave lady who will be attempting to walk up Snowdon to raise funds not only for our WRSG group. I have replicated Eileen's article this month to remind those of our members who have yet to donate. If you have mislaid your sponsor form please use the one enclosed with this Newsletter. We need to support Eileen with her fund raising for the WRSG it will be a huge personal achievement for someone who has experienced such adversity with her Rheumatoid Arthritis.**

Hi There,

My name is Eileen Woolverton and I'd like to introduce myself.

Like you I have R.A. Everyone's journey through this disease will be different but I'm sure we all remember when our disease started, the way we reacted to our diagnosis and the changes we had to make in our life as the disease progressed. Each of us will have dealt with it differently, though there will also be common threads.

I was diagnosed with RA when I was 49 and its onset was rapid and severe. I was lucky as my GP referred me immediately to Dr Ali, who I cannot praise enough. He and his nurse Helen were my first contacts with the Rheumatology Department and they were kind, understanding

and positive. Various treatments were started and improvements made, though my disease, like many others, did not stabilize for quite some time. I always had problems with my feet though and could wear 3 different sized shoes in a day and still, if I went out in the evening, had to come home barefooted as my feet had swollen so much

Almost 3 years ago, as my RA had not stabilised enough I was offered a relatively new treatment which has transformed my life. I am now able to lead a normal life, something which had been impossible for the previous 10 years. I am determined to take this opportunity to do those things, while I am well, which I thought I would never be able to do again and to also try some new activities.

I have long wanted to play the clarinet and started lessons two years ago. (I'm pretty awful but I enjoys it and is improving or so my kind teacher says!) This is something I could not envisage doing when I was really poorly with swollen joints in my hand, I also wanted to go to Norway to walk in the Norwegian Fjords and see the midnight sun - it rises and sets at the same time in different parts of the sky - fantastic. I was lucky enough to be able to do these two years ago and the experience was only made possible by the excellent treatment I have received from the Rheumatology Department in New Cross.

I recently decided I would like to give something back to the people who had helped me so much and thought I would like to do a sponsored walk - seems appropriate since I couldn't walk 100 meters when my problems first started and even walking on a carpet felt like walking on a thousand pebbles.

My challenge for this year is to walk up Snowdon to raise as much money as possible for the Rheumatology Department, WRSB and ARUK. I would be extremely grateful to anyone who could sponsor this walk, no matter how small a donation, as we will all ultimately benefit from it locally and nationally. I am going to do this walk in May. The date will be decided by the weather as I do not think it wise or safe to walk during very wet weather. I will, however, let you know when we have done it through your newsletter. Also Liz has invited me to one of your coffee morning and if at all possible, after we have done our walk, I will come to see you.

I do hope you will be able to sponsor me. As you can imagine it would be an amazing achievement considering 13 years ago I could not walk upstairs but had to go up on my elbows and bottom!

Please find enclosed a sponsorship form for you to fill in if you feel you can make a contribution and thank you for taking the time to read this.

**Kind Regards Eileen Woolverton**

### **Latest News from Eileen Woolverton.**

**Eileen and her friend successfully completed the walk up Snowdon on the 12 May 2012. It took three and a half hours to walk up Snowdon and five hours to walk down.**

**I am so pleased that Eileen was able to achieve this very challenging walk she is an example to us all of how you can overcome severe disability.**

**May I remind you again to support Eileen's challenge. My apologies to those members who have already submitted their donation.**

**Please use the enclosed sponsor form, cheques made payable to Snowdon Challenge, and please indicate on your sponsor form who you would like the money to go to i.e.: Wolverhampton Rheumatology Support Group (WRSB), Arthritis Research Council Wolverhampton (ARC) or New Cross Rheumatology Department (NCRD).**

**I am happy to collect your donations either at the coffee morning 11 June 2012 or you can send them in the post to my home address.  
Liz Walker**

**234, Jeffcock Rd, Penn Fields,  
Wolverhampton. WV3 7AH**

## **FEATURES/NEWS ITEMS**

working age (16- 64 from April 2013)

### **Personal Independence Payments**

**The following article discusses the proposed Personal Independence Payment (PIP) which will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people of working age (people aged 16-64) on the day that Personal Independent Payment is introduced from April 2013.**

The proposals for Personal Independence Payment were included in the Welfare Reform Bill 2011, which secured Royal Assent on 8 March and is now the Welfare Reform Act 2012.<sup>1</sup>

The Government will be consulting with disabled people and their organisations about the regulations for Personal Independent Payment. The following illustrations are frequently asked questions that people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or new applicants may want to consider.

#### **What is Personal Independence Payment?**

- Personal Independent Payment (PIP) is a new benefit that will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people of

- According to the government department of works and pensions DLA has been in place for almost 20 years and has been largely unchanged. It is proposed that the new PIP will better reflect today's understanding of disability which has changed a lot in two decades.
- PIP will help towards some of the extra costs arising from ill health or disability expected to last for longer than 12 months. Recipients of the benefit can choose to spend it in a way that suits them best.

#### **What is Personal Independence Payment made up of?**

- Daily Living Component and a mobility component. At two rates –standard and enhanced. The amount for each rate is still to be decided.
- Awards of PIP will be based upon the circumstances of the individual and the impact of the disability or health condition and the extent to which the individual is able to live independently and participate in society.

### **What is the qualifying period for PIP claims?**

- New claims for PIP will have a qualifying period of three months during which the person will have had the health condition or disability. Although you may be eligible from when the eligible need arises and not from when you make the claim.
- For people who are already in receipt of DLA there will be no three months qualifying period but will have to meet the prospective test ( the need is expected to last a further nine months).
- People with terminal illness will be fast tracked to a guaranteed payment of the enhanced rate of PIP for Daily Living Component and will also be able to apply for the mobility component and receive that immediately if they qualify.

### **Will there be automatic entitlement to PIP for people who are in receipt of DLA?**

- The only exception is for people who are terminally ill and are not expected to live for more than six months.
- There is no automatic transfer from DLA to PIP. If you are already getting DLA you will need to make a claim for the new benefit when invited. All those of working age who get DLA will be asked whether they wish to claim PIP. Assessments for everyone of working age (16-64) will begin from October 2013. All current DLA

claimants of working age will have been contacted by March 2016.

- Most people will be asked to have a face to face consultation with a health professional as part of their assessment.
- People with the most severe health conditions or disabilities, or those who are terminally ill, are unlikely to need to attend a face to face consultation. This will be decided on a case by case basis.

### **Will the changes affect Pensioners?**

- Only working age DLA claimants who are aged 16-64 on the day PIP is introduced will be asked if they would like to claim the new benefit.
- If you get DLA and are aged 65 or over on the day PIP is introduced you will not need to claim PIP and will be able to keep your benefit beyond the age of 65 so long as you continue to satisfy the qualifying conditions.
- At present there is no decision to extend PIP to people over the age of 65. The government will want to see how the assessment for the new benefit works for people of working age before deciding if PIP should be extended to people over 65.

Reference: **Personal Independence Payments- Frequently asked Questions.** [www.dwp.gov.uk/pip](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pip)

## **Motability One Big Day Event**

**(Friday 8 and Saturday 9 June 2012 at Stoneleigh Park Warwickshire)**

A free one big day extra indoor event on Friday 8 and Saturday 9 June 2012 at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

A great day out and a good way to discover more about worry-free motoring. Motability Operations will be bringing together local dealers, adaptation specialists and a wide range of popular cars, wheelchair accessible vehicles, scooters and powered wheelchairs, all in one exciting indoor location.

You can take a look at many of the most popular cars and even test drive some of them. Also you can see some of the most popular driving adaptations to a range of automatic cars for you to test drive.

Motability offers a worry free motoring package including insurance for two named drivers, servicing and maintenance, full RAC breakdown assistance, annual car tax, replacement tyres and windscreens and a 60,000 mileage allowance over three year lease.

For more information about the One Big Day Extra at **Stoneleigh Park** visit **Motability.co.uk/onebigday** or call **0800 953 7000** lines open daily, 8am-8pm

**To book a free scooter or wheelchair for the day call 0800 953 7000**

## **Research looks at the effect of copper on Arthritis**

Some of our members have been invited to take part in clinical trials that are being carried out by the University of Wolverhampton's School of Health and Wellbeing in collaboration with New Cross Hospital Research and Development Directorate.

As yet we have not had any feedback on the trials but invitations have been extended to our colleagues in the Rheumatology Department to speak to our members at the WRSB Annual general Meeting in September 2012.

For centuries copper has been used to alleviate the pain of Arthritis and joint conditions but until recently there has been little scientific evidence to prove it actually works.<sup>1</sup>

It is estimated that more than two million adults in the UK have varying degrees of Osteoarthritis and /or Rheumatoid Arthritis, which causes joint and muscle pain.<sup>2</sup>

The theory behind wearing copper next to the body in the form of bracelets or insoles is that the mineral is absorbed through the skin and circulated through the body to relieve inflammation and pain<sup>1</sup>

There are insoles for shoes made of copper, known as copper heelers and users have reported improvements in their symptoms.

The current research in Wolverhampton aims to assess the impact of copper insoles on Arthritis patients' aches and pains and to determine whether the copper does really have an effect or if it is a placebo effect<sup>2</sup>

The trial has compared the copper heeler with a dummy heeler. Patients were given a heeler with a self adhesive insole into their footwear.

I look forward to hearing from the Department about the results of the trial and hopefully the results will be favourable.

- (1) Hewitt. (2012) Could copper be the answer to arthritis?) Express.co.uk
- (2) Morgan, A. (2012) Research into the effect of copper on arthritis. University of Wolverhampton.

## **RADAR KEY**

If you need a Radar Key for using Disabled toilets anywhere in the country ring **City Direct 01902 551155**

## **A poem for June**

When days are long, soft breezes blow,  
And sun is high at noon,  
When young birds fly and roses bloom,  
This is the month of June,

The purple yellow honeysuckle  
The smell of new mown hay,  
The Lupin and Sweet William,  
Joys of midsummer day,

Bright jewel of the calendar,  
This happy month of June,  
How we would have its days prolong  
But leaves far too soon.

(Reflections AG Carter)

**Thank you for taking the time to read this edition of our Newsletter. I look forward to seeing you at our next coffee morning Monday 11 June 2012.**

**Best Wishes to all our members**

**Liz Walker (Chairperson WRSG)**

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 by the WRSG