

Positive Pilates

As a child with arthritis, exercise was not recommended. I therefore spent my school days carrying other people's coats or sitting in the library. That pretty much summed up my attitude to exercise from then on

Getting involved in *Challenging Arthritis* and outlining the importance of exercise, I decided to find something that wouldn't be too tough or unrealistic. A friend had recently undergone the arduous training to become a fully accredited Pilates instructor. When I asked her why, she explained that Pilates had sorted out her long standing back problems. She had discarded her back corset and was a fantastic advertisement for the exercise.



Pilates is an exercise method developed by Joseph Pilates. It is a movement system that challenges all levels of fitness and relies on strengthening core postural muscles and developing body alignment. It is used for recovery from injury, to improve posture and can also offer a challenging workout for the fittest athlete. Everyone starts with the basic core principles and progresses at their own rate.

As I am a delicate flower, it was decided that easy ones would be best. One of the reasons I have avoided exercise classes is because, unsurprisingly, everyone was always much better than me and I couldn't keep up. Long term rheumatoid arthritis has not only affected my joints but left my muscles weak and badly in need of toning. Pilates has strengthened these muscles, and consequently taken some of the pressure off my joints. It doesn't knock me around, and it makes me far more body conscious. By that I mean if I am sitting watching TV in my usual slouch position, I am aware, and can stop sitting like a bag of potatoes, and hopefully stop neck and back problems from developing.

If you wish to try Pilates, do make sure that the instructor is fully trained and is a member of a recognised professional body such as The Body Control Pilates Association or The Pilates Method Alliance. By the end of next year it is expected that every properly

qualified Pilates teacher will be on The Register of Fitness professionals and can be checked by clients.



Philippa is the training services supervisor for Surrey

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Raising awareness of living with auto-immune diseases

Plymouth leads the way by staging an Auto-immune diseases Awareness Day at the Sherwell Centre, Plymouth University on the 5 November 2005

The event was organised by one of our new training volunteers, Mayne Sundewall-Hopkins, who is secretary of the Devon Lupus group, and her husband David. Representatives from over 20 local, regional and national support groups were on hand to offer assistance and share information. Thanks go to Chris Cleary, secretary of Plym Arthritis Care Self Help branch, and Pat Brodie, training services supervisor, for manning the Arthritis Care information stand throughout the day.

The event was officially opened by Plymouth's deputy lord mayor, councillor David James, who was there with his wife Diane, who also has arthritis, and was recovering from a recent knee replacement operation. Local MPs Linda Gilroy, Alison Seabeck, Colin Breed and Gary Streeter attended during the day. The Peninsula Medical School and the University

were also represented, with Dr Paul Eggleton from Exeter and Dr Andrew Foey from Plymouth. Both have a special interest in auto-immune diseases and are involved in related research projects.

In addition to the displays and presentations, there were five talks: Christina Bustamante on Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Dr Paul Eggleton on his research, Janet Cowlard of Arthritis Care on the Plymouth research project called *Challenging Pain in the Community*, Jayne Howard on *Arts For Health* and Jill Owen on the role of Public and Patient Involvement Forums.

Everyone agreed that this first awareness day had been a great success bringing together as it did people from across the counties of Devon and Cornwall. It is hoped that a similar event will take place in autumn 2006 or 2007.

Publicise your branch events, local campaigns, services and contacts on the Arthritis Care website

Get noticed on www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Did you know that on average nearly 25,000 people visit the Arthritis Care website every month?

Visitors spend about 18 minutes on the site per visit. So take advantage of our web technology to reach more people with arthritis. We have plenty of space for general news and activities on the South West and South East regional pages on www.arthritiscare.org.uk

This is a perfect opportunity to publicise branch events, local campaigns

and services or any other useful contacts.

If you have any news or events you would like to add to the website we would love to hear from you.

Please contact your Information Services Manager. For the South West Sharon Kilty on 01736 851185 or Karen Moore on 01992 301396 for the South East.

A Snowy Day in Axminster—South West England Vehicle Audit

We couldn't have chosen a worse day, as it turned out, for the audit of our vehicles by the Community Transport Association (CTA).

Several inches of snow hit the West Country on the night of 27 November and the morning of the 28 saw us all waking up to a Winter Wonderland.

I tried to contact branches to discuss whether or not to go ahead with the audit, but with limited success as some of them



had already started out – the remainder said that they would wait to see if the weather improved – so it was with some trepidation that I set off for Axminster.

My journey was not too bad, a bit slower than usual and some roads were blocked, but I made it and arrived at the premises of Robin Wilson, the chair of our Axe Valley Group, who had very kindly agreed to let us use his premises for the inspections. I was

really amazed and delighted when **all** of the vehicles turned up – some a bit late, but all driven by sensible, dedicated volunteers who enjoyed the opportunity, provided by

Robin's daughter Gemma, to have a cup of coffee and a sit down in the warm while they waited for their vehicles to be looked at.

The CTA inspector, Bill Hyde, worked hard to get the vehicles checked as soon as possible and we managed to send everyone homewards by 3.30pm before it started to freeze again.

I am very grateful to all the volunteers who turned out to enable us to complete this important piece of work and I also wish to thank the branches involved for their cooperation. The reports will be with us soon and I am sure we will find them helpful and supportive of our efforts to ensure that we are all using best practice in the management and operating of our vehicles.

Sandy Dakin is the volunteer development manager for the South region



'We couldn't have chosen a worse day, as it turned out, for the audit of our vehicles by the Community Transport Association.'

Top training

Congratulations to Jette Hansen, training volunteer at our Watford Branch who has achieved her accreditation as an assessor for the Chronic Disease Self-management Course (CDSMC)

As part of the NHS Expert Patient Programme, many Primary Care Trusts are running Chronic Disease Self-management Courses, helping people with a wide range of long-term conditions towards a better quality of life through using their knowledge and skills to assist self-management.

These courses are run in a similar way to Arthritis Care courses such as Challenging Arthritis and were pioneered by American

professor Kate Lorig who Janet Cowlard met on her Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship.

Following many years of experience with Arthritis Care running our courses, Jette has trained and been passed to become an assessor, helping other trainers to achieve their best within the CDSMC. We wish her all the best in this new role and applaud this exceptional achievement.

Awards for Amesbury Branch

Arthritis Care was able to recognise the contributions of a husband and wife team at Amesbury's AGM on Friday 11 November 2005



John was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for his years of service as secretary of Salisbury branch, chair of the Wilts Area Liaison Committee (ALC), years on the regional committee and his continued support for Arthritis Care at the Amesbury branch. Chris was presented with a Certificate of Merit for all her hard work for Arthritis Care. Here are Chris' own words to describe her reaction to the unexpected presentations:

'I have a lot to live up to now. I was presented with a Certificate of Merit from the Arthritis Care board in thanks for what I do for Arthritis Care. Sandy Dakin came along to our Amesbury AGM and presented it to me. John, my husband, had one of appreciation for what he's done for Amesbury branch and Arthritis Care in general.

To say I was gob smacked is an understatement. I only do what I can. I've benefited so much from Arthritis Care myself that I wish to let others in a similar situation aware of Arthritis Care services and the benefits they can achieve. I'm sure others do a lot more than me. I feel very honoured and still shocked.'

Happy 30th Birthday to Hastings Branch

30 years of Arthritis Care in Hastings was marked by lots of celebrations on 21 November

It was a very musical event with Hastings Philharmonic Choir and their conductor Roger Wilcock visiting the branch to sing some Christmas carols. The MP for Hastings and Rye, Michael Foster, made a great impression with his excellent singing voice.



Also celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the branch inauguration were other honoured guests. Honorary president Dr Innes welcomed the deputy mayor of Hastings, councillor Maureen Charlesworth, Pippa Nelson, Arthritis Care South regional operations manager and Janice Borthwick who represented past and present speakers. The event was also enjoyed by many local branch mem-

bers.

The Hastings branch meet on alternate Monday afternoons in Hollington to enjoy social activities from outings and talks to bingo and strawberry teas. In the last couple of months they have enjoyed a visit to Bewl Water, talks on Mallydams Wildlife Reserve and St Leonards, a fashion show and a quiz.



Here's to another 30 years of this vibrant branch.

Publishing emails and addresses

As the safety of our volunteers and branch members is uppermost in Arthritis Care's mind, we would like to offer some guidelines for the use of personal contact details. We would like to provide official phone numbers and e-mail addresses for everyone, however this is cost prohibitive. We will not publish your personal details in official documents without asking for written permission.

- Please feel free to quote the South regional office number and email address for any responses. We would be happy to pass on anything we receive.

- Please do not give out or publish your home address.
- Try to screen phone calls if possible and report any suspicious ones to South regional office and the police.
- If it is necessary to publish an email address, set up a free account with domain names such as Hotmail or Yahoo. This will not only protect your personal email from spam but can be accessed anywhere by different users if they know the password.

Things are happening in Haywards Heath



Fun at the Haywards Heath Fair

Arthritis Care Haywards Heath and District branch members are involved in a varied programme of meetings with different speakers and activities each

month, visits to places of interest, afternoon teas and campaigning for better services.

We sharpened our campaigning skills last year when local services were cut back and there was a danger of our hospital's rheumatology department being moved to a sister hospital in Brighton. This would have increased travel times significantly. Parking is also very difficult in Brighton.

Members were provided with advice on how and what to write to the chief executive of our hospital trust. The key message was that we were unhappy with the proposed move because of increased travel time which would increase pain and barriers to treatment for many of our members and that we were prepared to work with hospital management to improve services. Our local MP, Nicholas Soames, was very supportive and arranged public meetings where the whole range of medical services were debated. Our arguments were effective and as a result of our campaign we now have three rheumatologists,

one of whom is our president, and a team of nurses who work between the Haywards Heath and Brighton Hospitals. We recently donated a digital camera to the department to enable staff to take photographs of patients and their joints for research and educational purposes.

Arthritis News is available in many GP rooms and rheumatology waiting areas. Some of our members are on hand to encourage newly diagnosed patients and offer them first hand experience of the treatments available and we attend a session of the local arthritis information programme coordinated by an occupational therapist who is also our vice-president. Cards are sent to members who are ill and a regular newsletter is produced. Several of our members belong to the Mid-Sussex Primary Care Trust Health Involvement Group and we are members of the Mid-Sussex South Council for Voluntary Service. We are currently investigating ways of drawing younger people with arthritis into the fold so that they can benefit from services provided by our local trust and Arthritis Care.

We are grateful for the care that we receive and work hard to ensure that it is maintained and that the community is aware of the standard of treatment available. Arthritis is not something that 'you must just be prepared to live with' as many have been told in the past.

'Arthritis is not something that 'you must just be prepared to live with' as many have been told in the past.'



A Trip on the River Wey

Happy and Healthy with Hydrotherapy



St. Albans branch hydrotherapy group

Above is a recent photograph taken at one of our successful hydrotherapy sessions held weekly at the very good pool at St. Albans City Hospital.

We are fortunate to be able to use this pool which has opened in 2000; Eileen Francis was then able to negotiate with the hospital for an evening session which Arthritis Care members could attend.

About six of our branch members attend regularly; about 20 or more members of the public make up the rest of the clientele for the two consecutive sessions held each week. The branch is able to subsidise running costs when necessary, which is of benefit to us all.

We are also very lucky to have the services of two Physiotherapists who run the sessions in a very professional, yet warm and friendly way. We have a most enjoyable time whilst benefiting from the therapy.

Picture and article courtesy of Muriel Grant

For the latest advice and suggestions on exercising with arthritis check out of new information booklet : *Exercise and Arthritis*. This replaces *Fit for Life* and is available to order from Netpack.

On the Alert for Home Callers

It's been brought to our attention that some unscrupulous people have tried to use the Arthritis Care name to gain access to our members, offering to visit them and discuss their arthritis

We do not make our mailing lists available to any other organisations, particularly commercial concerns and do not make unsolicited or sales calls.

Arthritis Care staff and volunteers will always be happy to let you confirm our identities with the regional office and leave contact details for you to check.

If you have any concerns or questions

about anyone who contacts you regarding Arthritis Care, please do not hesitate to contact the South regional office on 020 7380 6509 to discuss.

It is very sad that we have to take these precautions however it is better to confirm the identity of all callers before revealing any information, opening your door or allowing anyone access to your home.

A thank you from the South East England regional chair

This newsletter gives me the ideal opportunity to say a huge thank you to all the branches in the South East region who took the time and effort to reply to my request *What's happening in your branch?*

As someone whose roots are firmly entrenched in the branch network, I always knew we were good, but thanks to your replies I now know we are actually GREAT. Branches are providing widely varying programmes whether it be talks from rheumatologists, film shows, musical entertainment, quizzes or that old favourite - a game of bingo and it seems most of us enjoy wonderful Christmas parties. There are plenty of outings and the odd holiday (usually at one of our hotels), far too many activities to mention in this small space.

You all undertake the necessary fundraising initiatives we all need for our branches survival, make sure doctors' surgeries have *Arthritis News* and distribute leaflets to local hospitals etc. Branch news is often spread via local papers and parish magazines.

I was delighted to learn that there are several hydrotherapy groups running. One branch who lost the use of their pool looked into the benefits of alternative therapy and instead enjoys massage therapy sessions, sounds wonderful.

Even if your branch welcomes its members for a cup of tea and a biscuit, it is still providing a valuable service for people with arthritis in your area and we must never allow this activity to be diminished in any way.

The second part of my request to you was to ask if you had connections with other voluntary organisations. Again, knowing how seriously you take your branch work, I shouldn't have been surprised to learn that many of you are

very actively involved indeed.

Age Concern and the CVS are mentioned several times, as are Public Health Forums and Local Council Disabled Forums. Transport is high on the agenda in one form or another, whether it be the lack of it (particularly in rural areas), or reliability, access, expense, dial-a-ride etc. and many of you attend meetings that try to address these problems. All these meetings provide the ideal opportunity to network which is one area we don't always capitalise on. It's a chance for us to put our Arthritis Care hats on and tell people who we are and what we do. I know of course many of you are already doing this but perhaps we could do more.

The information you have provided me with is just what I was looking for and gives me plenty of information to take to the next meeting of the Joint Working Group. So thank you once again.

This newsletter gives me another opportunity to remind branches that regional office, your regional chairs and trustees are here to help you if you feel your branch may be experiencing difficulties, so please do call us, whatever the reason.

Now it just leaves me to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful new year and let's hope we do not experience the harsh winter we have all be threatened with.

Best wishes,

Jackie Adams chairs the South East England regional committee

'I always knew our branches we were good, but thanks to your replies I now know we are actually GREAT'

Library takeover



Since coming into post in the middle of October, one of my main projects has been to encourage library authorities to take copies of *Arthritis News*.

I am delighted to report that this has been a resounding success. It all started with Cornwall agreeing to take 1,000 copies every issue, which they are distributing throughout all their branches and their mobile libraries as well. They received the September/October issue and my husband came back beaming from Penzance library to report that the *Arthritis News* had been placed at the reception desk in a very prominent position. He has since returned to find all the copies have gone.

Other authorities have also been very positive, but due to their limited space they have chosen to only take a few copies for each library branch. These are being displayed as reference copies along with the daily papers, and other magazines.

There are now a total of 2,524 copies going out to nine authorities. There are still five authorities that are considering how they wish to proceed, so hopefully, there will be a few more numbers to add to our total before too long.

Sharon Kilty is the information services manager for the South West

'There are now a total of 2,524 copies of *Arthritis News* going out to nine authorities in the South West'

Simplify your Christmas shopping

Arthritis Care's Christmas catalogue is now available. Beat the crowds and browse from your armchair...

As well as modern and traditional Christmas cards, we offer an attractive range of cards, notelets and gift wrap for your everyday correspondence throughout the year.

In addition there are some practical gifts such as an ergonomic pen to help make writing those Christmas cards easier and a relaxation tape to help you recover when all the shopping and cooking is over.

Don't forget a cuddly Arthur bear for snuggling up to on winter nights.

Just call 020 7380 6553 to order your copy.



Current campaigns

Below is a list of some of the current campaigns being fought at the moment. Please contact Roseann Pailor on 01793 526211 or by email on RoseannP@arthritiscare.org.uk if you would like to learn more about these issues or have any new campaigns you would like to pursue.

- A local group of hydrotherapy users in Tooting are campaigning for the temperature to be increased in pool after an executive decision was recently taken to lower it following a change in management.
- Addressing the problem of not having an Arthritis Care presence in Cornwall and looking at ways to support people with arthritis who live and work there Corn-

wall. Please contact Roseann with any ideas or suggestions.

- Promoting service user involvement when planning services. Actively supporting service users and encouraging Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to work together in planning the provision of services to the community.
- Public transport. Looking at all aspects, particularly obstacles for people with disabilities who use public transport or would like to.



Roseann Pailor is the regional campaigns manager for the South West

Campaigns and information - out and about

On the last day of November, Roseann Pailor and I went to Sain's AGM to raise Arthritis Care's profile in the areas. Sain stands for Somerset Access and Inclusion Network.

It brings together as many disability organisations as it can to take action over issues that affect disabled people in Somerset. There was a good turn out of organisations and we all had our stands with our information booklets and goodies on. We met lots of like-minded people and made some important contacts with other groups. Roseann was very busy with her campaigns bro-

chures and we had a good number of people visiting our stand throughout the day.

We were both surprised and delighted by the response from the people attending, many of whom had not heard of Arthritis Care before. We also met one of our members from the Williton Branch, 'Hello Dorothy'. It is the first time that Roseann or I have ever set up a stand like this before, I think we did well and we both had a very enjoyable if exhausting day.

Sharon Kilty is the information services manager for the South West

Calling everyone in Gloucester

Arthritis Care is very committed to raising awareness within the Gloucester area.

Roseann Pailor, campaigns manager for the South West, would like to reach people in Gloucester to support them with any campaigns or issues they may have.

Please contact her on 01793 526211 or at RoseannP@arthritiscare.org.uk if have any local issues or concerns you would like to be addressed or publicised.

She would also like to hear any ideas you have for extending Arthritis Care campaigning services in the area.





Hospital information points

Remember what it was like when you walked out of the doctor's office, having been diagnosed with arthritis?

Did you find you had many more questions to be answered? Was it difficult to get clear unbiased information? Or did you just want to talk to someone who had been through a similar experience?

Through our hospital information points (HIPs) we are trying to reach people with arthritis where extra support is badly needed – rheumatology clinics. We offer clear, relevant information and publications.

But the service is not confined to the newly diagnosed. Many people who had had arthritis for a while may need support or signposting to new ways of coping with arthritis.

Our information volunteers provide positive role models, an understanding ear and access to lots of information about all aspects of arthritis. They are an essential and valuable resource throughout the region.

Where can I find information in my area?

At the moment we operate four hospital information points (HIPs) in the South East and many unmanned information points in the South West. But we are aiming for many more in 2006

At present in the South East we run manned HIPs at: St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey, Barnet Hospital, Kings College in London and Bedford Hospital.

We are hoping to re-instate HIPs at the Sir Joseph Hotung Centre, Tooting and Lister Hospital, Stevenage very shortly. Which would bring us a total of six HIPs for 2006.

We have also completed a pilot project in Hertfordshire to ensure that all libraries

are provided with Arthritis Care posters and leaflets. This project is currently being monitored and may roll out to other counties and possible information point sites next year.

Due to sterling work of Chris Knight and our South West information volunteers we maintain around 121 unmanned information points in the South West covering everywhere from major hospitals to local chemists and community centres.



Extending our information services

As you can see from the story above, our volunteers are the key to reaching and educating people with arthritis.

We are aiming to increase local information provision by providing HIPs and information points in as many regional areas as possible. If you could spare a few hours a month to help people with arthritis at your local rheumatology, physiotherapy or other department,

literature distribution or have any suggestions for places we could target to reach more people with arthritis we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Sharon Kilty in the South West on 01736 851185 or Karen Moore on 01992 301396 in the South East to find out how you could be a vital local information source.

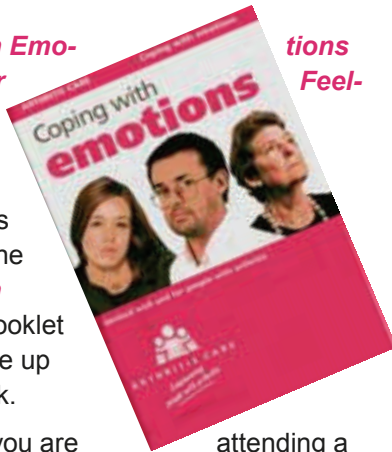
New Publications

Following hot on the heels of our recent new additions to the Arthritis Care publications list, we have three more new booklets available.

Coping with Emotions replaces **Our Feelings, Our Emotions**.

Nothing fundamental has changed in the **Coping with Emotions** booklet so please use up existing stock.

However, if you are attending a high profile event or such like, it would be preferable to take along the more accessible and attractive new version.



Understanding Arthritis takes the place of **Information for People with Arthritis**.

Some important medical information has been changed in the new **Understanding Arthritis** which means we would ask all of you to destroy stocks of the old booklet as soon as you receive stocks of the new.

A updated **Fit for Life** booklet, entitled **Exercise and Arthritis** is now available to order from Netpack.

The codes for ordering these booklets from Netpack will remain the same.



Update your information pack

Due to all the hard work of the publications team there have been a lot of changes to our literature over the last six months.

There are more new-look booklets planned for 2006. The next publications to be updated will be **The Balanced Approach**, followed by **Working Horizons**.

To help you manage your booklets stocks, here's an at-a-glance guide to new and amended publications.

Understanding Arthritis replaces **Information for People with Arthritis**

Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis replaces **Rheumatoid Arthritis – a guide**

Living with Osteoarthritis replaces **Osteoarthritis – a guide**

Coping with Pain replaces **Talk about Pain**

All of the old booklets contain outdated medical advice, please destroy.

Coping with Emotions replaces **Our Feelings, our Emotions**

Exercise and Arthritis replaces **Fit for Life**. Please use up old stock.

Benefits for Beginners - contains outdated information, please destroy. Replaced by six Information sheets, available to download from www.arthritiscare.org.uk

If you have any queries please contact your Information Services Manager. For the South West Sharon Kilty on 01736 851185 or for the South East, Karen Moore on 01992 301396.

Please check your booklet stocks for old publications.

We want to offer our users the most relevant and up-to-date information possible.

Challenging Pain in the Community



I have always known that appropriate venues are an important part of the success of any training session. This venue had been chosen for us and provided free by Pain Clinic staff at the Derriford Hospital, Plymouth. So, it was with trepidation that my fellow trainer and I arrived at the venue after a long walk through hospital corridors to find ourselves in a room surrounded with examples of anaesthetics equipment in glass cases. We felt that we were in for an interesting afternoon, however we joked with each other we would have little difficulty sending our participants to sleep.

Luckily for us the 15 participants were vocal, interested and keen to learn. This was the first trial of an exciting generic **Challenging Pain** workshop to be delivered as part of the *Challenging Pain in the Community* research project. The first workshop was held on the 2 and 9 November 2005.

Challenging Pain was written by Arthritis Care and staff of Derriford Hospital, and we were really keen to make a success of the workshop. Over the two sessions the trainers built up a good relationship with the participants, which led to an extremely successful course.

I always feel elated at the end of courses, but I was particularly happy to receive encouraging, sincere comments from the participants about this new course. To know that the entire course 'was of value' and that they were 'positive about the future' and that we had helped to create a 'sense of sharing with others' made our adventure in the anaesthetics seminar room well worthwhile.

A few comments from the participants:

'I have learnt so many new ways to cope with my pain'

'It was good to talk to others who understood how I felt'

'I would like to continue to meet regularly'

'I didn't realise how stress could effect my condition. Now I know the signs I can act on stopping myself from getting worked up'

'I really enjoyed the course'

'The relaxation was so good I nearly fell asleep!'

Gill Boreham is the training services supervisor for Cornwall

'Over the two sessions the trainers built up a good relationship with the participants, which led to an extremely successful course.'

Forthcoming Courses

New course schedules for the South East and further courses for the South West will be published in the New Year. Also keep an eye on the region section of the Arthritis Care website. We will update the courses as soon as we have further information.

For more information about the courses below please contact Janet Cowlard on 07767 441643 or by email at JanetC@arthritiscare.org.uk

Alternatively please contact the regional office on 020 7380 6509 or seregoffice@arthritiscare.org.uk

Course	Location	Date	Time
Challenging Pain	Plymouth, Devon	18/01/06 to 25/01/06	13:45 to 16:15
Challenging Pain	Portland, Dorset	07/03/06 to 14/03/06	14:15 to 16:45
Challenging Pain	Plympton, Devon	05/06/06 to 12/06/06	13:45 to 16:15
Challenging Pain	Plymouth, Devon	06/06/06 to 13/06/06	13:45 to 16:15
Challenging Pain	Plymouth, Devon	07/06/06 to 14/06/06	10:15 to 12:45
Challenging Pain	Plymouth, Devon	19/07/06 to 26/07/06	13:45 to 16:15
Challenging Pain	Weymouth, Dorset	15/02/06 to 22/02/06	14:45 to 17:15

The New VDM Role

With the demise of the Branch Futures Project in November 2004 and the declaration that the volunteer network manager role was redundant, thinking turned towards the future support of branches and volunteers

Acknowledging that Arthritis Care is a volunteer organisation, it is essential that volunteers receive a proper induction and are provided with clear information about their roles and responsibilities, which take into account the Charity's constitution, charity law and legislation. The Board of Trustees needed to ensure that the organisation understood the liabilities and risks it faced, and also the duty to support, advise and inform volunteers whatever their roles within the organisation.

Following much discussion and interaction at all levels, the role of the volunteering development manager emerged and four appointments have now been made to support the South, Central, and North regions of England, and Scotland. Currently there is no VDM in Northern Ireland or Wales although an appointment in Northern Ireland is being considered.

Scotland decided to use some branch closure monies to gain an Investing in Volunteering Award and the Scottish team are working together to achieve this exacting accreditation. Copies of the criteria and evidence required have been made available to the English VDMs and it is hoped that the Scottish experience will enable us to work on an early accreditation for England.

The UK facilities manager, Janet Lawley has provided all VDMs with Health and Safety Level One documentation to help new and key branch volunteers understand basic health and safety issues such as accidents and their prevention, first aid, fire and emergency evacuation, risk assessments relating to venues and branch meetings, personal safety/lone working, manual handling, including working at height, and food hygiene. It is expected that the delivery of this training will take approximately half a day. To complement this, the VDMs are currently undergoing internal and external training in first aid, food hygiene, working safely, and mini bus safety.

The VDMs will also have the responsibility to ensure that all branch area liaison committee (ALC) and regional committee members fully understand the duties of their roles and are

equipped with information to enable them to operate within the requirements of the regional manual. Induction training packages will be prepared to support both new and existing committee members. I hope that everyone will appreciate that these measures are intended to help and support individuals, and will find them useful.



**Sandy Dakin, VDM
for the South**

A follow-on programme for newly appointed volunteers, changing honorary officers and key volunteers will be made available in due course along with any further training which may be determined.

Opportunities will be taken to deliver this support at ALC meetings thus incurring no additional costs and I have already started delivering the health and safety workshops at the current round of meetings. Where there are no ALCs or where branches do not attend it is likely that we will have to look at branches contributing to the costs, if they have sufficient funds to do so.

Training for specialist roles, such as training, information and campaigning volunteers will continue to be provided by the specialist managers and in the Southern England region there is already close cooperation between the various members of staff involved – we work very much as a team since there are not many of us and we will always try to share venues and opportunities in order to achieve cost savings.

I look forward to working with you all in my slightly different role and I wish you:

**A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A GOOD
NEW YEAR**

Sandy Dakin is volunteer development manager for the South Region

New training services supervisors for Beds, Bucks and Berks....



I'm Gillian Piggott. My background is in HR and for the five years prior to my retirement, I organised the Distance Learning Unit at Barnfield College in Luton.

I have been a volunteer with Arthritis Care since 2003, and have found retirement does not leave much time for hobbies. I have four grandchildren under five, who keep me involved, and a husband who works from home, so time seems to fly. I have osteoarthritis and am fortunate to be fairly mobile. However, like everyone else, I get frustrated by the restric-

tions imposed by the disease. Luckily, having listened to others, I realise things could be a lot worse.

I am looking forward to becoming more involved with the Arthritis Care, and meeting other members of staff - the first opportunity will probably be the meeting in Swindon on 14 December. I have very much appreciated the kindness and help I have received from everyone.

I can be contacted on 07798 572082 or by email at GillianP@arthritiscare.org.uk

... and for Kent and Sussex



My name is Debbie Rose and I have had experience of osteoarthritis for 23 years and, to date, have had both knees and one hip replaced with the other hip due to be replaced in the near future. So I will be the bionic woman soon.

Apart from that I am very fit and healthy and still go to the gym regularly and enjoy life to the full (especially now I have retired from full time work after 32 years).

I left teaching to join the health service as a career change and had a variety of roles in management, HR and learning and development. For the last 10 years my job was head of training and organisational development in a large NHS Trust in Sussex. My role included leading a team of 21 to co-ordinate and provide

training opportunities for all health care professionals in the trust and four local PCTs. I'm enjoying my new role with Arthritis Care and look forward to the challenge and I hope I can make a difference. I am currently a tutor and an assessor for the Expert Patients Programme so this complements my new role very well.

I feel very passionate about developing and empowering people so that they can reach their full potential and will use my role as TSS to help people to take control, stay positive and manage their conditions to make the best of things and look forward to working with you all and meeting you at some stage. I can be contacted on 07785 974172 or by email at DebbieR@arthritiscare.org.uk

Information services in the South West

Hello everyone, I'm Sharon Kilty and I am the newly appointed information services manager for the South Region and I will be working in the South West. I have taken over from Jayne Dunn and I am conscious that I have a lot to live up to. My working background is in healthcare and health education.

I have only recently returned to work having spent the last 11 years with my husband bringing up our daughter here in rural Cornwall.

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Having had arthritis for 23 years, I am conscious of the daily impact it can have on people's lives and the great value that meeting and talking to others with arthritis can have.

I first discovered Arthritis Care when I was an inpatient on the rheumatology unit in Truro and within a very short space of time I became a training volunteer, delivering courses in Cornwall. Later I also served on the regional committee for the South West as well as the national committee of what used to be Young Arthritis Care. I continue to write a column for Arthritis News called 'A Wellness Diary' which I enjoy very much.

I have long been passionate about empowering people with arthritis and look forward to continuing this work in my new post. Initially I plan to increase the availability of our literature throughout the region.

I also plan to work closely with my colleagues Karen Moore and Roseann Pailor among others to develop Arthritis Care services in the South West, particularly in Cornwall. I plan to continue meeting the information volunteers in the region and support their valuable work. I hope that together we will look at ways we can improve information access to all.

I am really looking forward to meeting everyone in the near future and if you have any questions or requests please do not hesitate to contact me on 01736 851185 or email me at SharonK@arthritiscare.org.uk .



Who's who in the South region?

Pippa Nelson Regional Operations Manager							
Linda Farnham Regional Administrator				Toyin Onasanya Admin Assistant			
Sandy Dakin Volunteer Development Manager for the South	Frances Boyce Training Services Manager for South East	Karen Moore Information Services Manager for South East	Vacant Regional Campaigns Manager for South East	Nina Fry Training Services Manager for Bristol, Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire	Janet Cowlard Training Services Manager for Dorset, Devon and Cornwall	Sharon Kilty Information Services Manager for South West	Roseann Pailor Regional Campaigns Manager for South West
Training Service Supervisors Philippa Jones - Surrey Debbie Rose - Sussex and Kent Gillian Piggott - Beds, Bucks and Berks Vacant - Herts & Essex				Training Services Supervisor Hazel Dunnett - Wiltshire Chris Knight - Training Admin Assistant	Training Services Supervisor Gilliam Boreham - Cornwall Pat Brodie - Devon		

A very big thank you



We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their kind donations of over £50 received at the South England Office.

This vital income has been used to extend training and information services in the South region.

Branches:

Banstead and Sutton, Bridport, Clacton, Havant, Isle of Wight, Merton and

Morden, Pinner, Plymouth Self Help Group, Southampton and the South East and South West regional committees.

Individuals and organisations:

Anne Bowerman South England Volunteer
Bedford Swan Charity Supper Club

Bristol Royal Infirmary
Bobby & Christine Parr
Chigwell Rotary Club
Corporation of London Pensioners' Association
Dacorum PCT
Family and friends of the late Wendy Parsons
Family and friends of the late Ralph Coates
Family and friends of the late Hazel Burke
Family and friends of the late Anne Evans
Family and friends of the late Una Myers
Family and friends of the late Norman Chalk
Haynes of Colyton
Martin Dando
Melksham Town Council
North Wilts PCT
Okehampton Golf Club
Mrs D Green
Pear Tree Charity Bingo
St Mellion Golf and Country Club
Family and friends of the late Margaret Burcher
Watford & Three Rivers PCT
West Wilts PCT

Where has the year gone?



It is hard to believe that 2005 will shortly be drawing to a close. We have had such a busy year since the South West and South East regions merged creating the new South region.

The Bulletin has been full of some of the good work that staff, volunteers and

members have achieved during 2005 this has ranged from visits abroad, updating training for *Challenging Pain*, successful fundraising for the young persons project, contracts being delivered, successful campaigns of branches, an increase in information provided through libraries and hospitals - just to name a few.

None of the work could be achieved without the

commitment to Arthritis Care from all of us who are involved and I would just like to say a big thank you to each and everyone one of you for making the new region the success that it has become. We would especially like to thank all of our valuable volunteers, without whom we would not have been able to support so many people with arthritis in 2005.

2006 has all the possibilities and challenges for improving the work we have begun and I hope like me you are looking forward to meeting these next year. We have many exciting new initiatives including the redesign of www.arthritiscare.org.uk, a national information project and the start of a young persons and families project amongst others.

I hope you have enjoyed this edition of *The Bulletin* and I would like to wish you all a very happy and restful holiday during this festive time.

Pippa Nelson is the regional operations manager for the South region