

FIBRO NEWS



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North Somerset Fibromyalgia Support Group

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2008 DIARY DATES

Date	Topic	Speaker
Aug	Group Time	All
Sept	Coping Aids	All
Oct	Herbalist	Sue Hinchley

Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month

10.30 – 12.30 at the Folk Hall, Portishead

£1.50 per session

Group Charges

Group membership is £10 per annum. Each member receives a monthly newsletter by post. When attending meetings a fee of £1.50 is made to cover refreshments, a raffle and hall hire. Books can be borrowed for a returnable deposit of £1.



Birthday Wishes

to all of you, who are celebrating this month

Our July meeting

was well supported and we welcomed back several who had been on holiday, including Betty and Norman.

An unexpected and very uplifting happening was the arrival of Sally, who we have not seen for so long. There was a lot of hugging and kissing (or hugging as my grandchildren call it) and we all hope she enjoyed her visit. Well done Sally, we look forward to your next visit.

Betty's introduction began with a reminder for all of us to send our "Declaration on Fibromyalgia" letters to our local MEPs who will be attending the [European Parliament in September](#). A sample letter was printed in the July issue of our newsletter, together with details of the seven MEPs surrounding our area. **It is vital that as many letters as possible are sent to them as soon as possible before they meet in September to be effective.**

We then had a short discussion about the pain Management course being held at Southmead hospital. Individual members recounted experiences of positive help but also unsupportive remarks made to newly diagnosed Fibromites who leave the surgery or consulting room wondering, "where do I go from here"?

It appears generally accepted that Physiotherapists, Nursing Staff, and Occupational Therapists are more interested in discovering the intricacies of Fibromyalgia, and perhaps through them the medical practitioners may come to question and discover, rather than brush it aside when pronouncing the diagnosis of Fibromyalgia to a patient, mystified and exhausted, unable to get a decent night's sleep, perhaps with several other unpleasant symptoms and uncontrollable pain.

The summer outing is still to be finalised, but we had further details from Gina that Bees Tea Gardens is accessible for most people, there being a short upward slope to walk from the visiting riverboat. An afternoon trip from near the SS Great Britain would leave at 2.45 pm and be back at 6.30 pm. When purchasing a "boat ticket" it is advisable to obtain another ticket for your car, which allows longer parking behind the SS Great Britain. On weekdays costs £1.10 and may be a little more difficult to find during the week.

One of our members visited Jackie Fisher, our speaker in June and apparently derived great benefit from her encounter. The one consultation helped solve a problem of some year's endurance.

We then moved on to **hobbies**. It is quite amazing the variety, the intensity, the professionalism, the enquiring minds, the enthusiasm and the fun generated by our members and their willingness to share an interest or passion with the group.

I can only skim over these hobbies but make a note of the speakers if you would like to take up a similar hobby. Most Fibromites are, or have been, busy people, always doing their best at whatever they do, seldom refusing to do someone a good turn and trying to fill a gap when someone is missing, so hobbies usually get squashed in between other activities.

HOBBIES

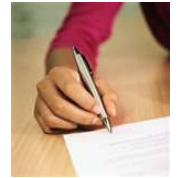
Betty started the ball rolling. Her great passion is gardening but this has become frustratingly difficult, as for many of us, so Betty has taken to reading a wide variety of literature and more recently has taken up knitting, encouraged by the news of a new grandchild on the way. The tiny primrose yellow jacket she held up, conjured memories for many of us. Another member, who just happened to have a tin of assorted buttons amongst her hobby materials, solved the problem of finding some tiny buttons!



Yvonne, one time serious equestrian and tennis and badminton player, must have had a hard time coming to terms with the limitations that Fibro put on her, with help and encouragement from her artistic daughter, has taken up water colour painting.

Usually working from photographs, the collection she brought, mainly of landscapes were beautiful and mind-boggling. It is quite amazing what hidden talents just want to be discovered. I'm sure Yvonne could hold a successful exhibition any day.

Edith has been involved with writing for a lifetime. Keeping a daily journal, writing letters to pen pals all around the world, and indulging in poetry. Her previous hobbies were gardening and cooking, but difficulties with those, broadened her interest in creative writing. She decided to do a beginners course, which encourages writing in all genre. This led to courses at Bristol University, about which, in this newsletter she gives further details to anyone interested. She then read to us a sixty word composition, a competition piece, in which her six year old granddaughter Claire questioned her Granddad about his forthcoming visit to hospital and if he didn't come back, could she have his computer!!



We also heard "A bus journey" and "a bad hair day", which left several of us scratching our beautiful hair dos.



Richard, Returned from a spell of being unwell, to share his passion for photography and his expertise with computer editing, positioning and framing some beautiful studies of orchid's and lilies, which he lovingly tends at home. He told us that the walls of his den are covered with pictures he has taken. He also photographs outdoor views and places demonstrating weather and sunsets and has had several shown on Richard Angwin's Points West weather forecasts. Another passion is looking at and photographing restored steam engines. There was also a panoramic photo of central Bristol taken from a hot air balloon flight, which was a Christmas present from his daughter and partner.

Jenny has a shed!! - what pictures that conjures up? Well in that shed she has created a mini business in the most beautiful craftwork. Jenny brought a wide selection of the articles she designs and makes up: - painted boxes, stencil work, gift boxes and cross-stitch cards being just a few of the pieces she laid out for us to see.



Maureen has a very relaxing hobby in knitting. No good for me I cannot take my eyes off my work or I drop stitches or loose my place in the pattern which means I have to cut myself off from radio, TV and even talking!! Anyhow Maureen is sharing her caring side with the rest of the world, particularly those in need, by making knitting squares for blankets, commencing with one stitch and increasing to 40 on a line and then back down again to produce a diamond shape. She is always glad to receive any double knitting wool.

At this point **Averil** gave us details of Friday coffee morning 10.00am – 11.00am at Clevedon Baptist church, a quiet get together which has a knitting circle supporting a Scottish charity which also sends garments to countries in need.



Shirley - always loved writing but not in a disciplined way. Began writing about thirty years ago whilst living the "Good life on the Tyntesfield Estate but then gave it up after returning to work. Fibromyalgia with it's semi comfort of sitting in an arm-chair or at a desk revived the need to write and joining a creative writing group in Nailsea 3 years ago has encouraged more regular work. Most is memories of life events, pets, and natural history. She told a story of a baby chimpanzee, which she was privileged to meet at Bristol Maternity Hospital fifty years ago.

Carol has hidden talents as a sculptor and brought one of her creations. Having dabbled in wood burning, carving, tie dyeing and Batik, she chose to pursue carving thermolite building blocks, the grey lightweight ones used to build inner walls of modern houses.

The magnificent horses head, mounted on a wooden block had been cut and smoothed with a Sureform file and painted with white emulsion.



As the meeting grew to a close we had a reminder about gift items required for the sales table at the next FMA UK fundraising event organised by Wendy from the Weston Group on August bank holiday. Any items including broken jewellery, which Wendy can creatively repair, or re-work into new costume jewellery, will be gratefully accepted.

Please contact Julia for collection.

Fired up by our hobbies morning we discussed the possibility of a craft demo in the autumn.



My Hobby

At our July meeting I said how one of my main hobbies is writing. Since I was a child I've written stories, the occasional poem and letters – lots and lots of letters. I had pen pals from Sweden to Sri Lanka (or Ceylon as it was then).

With the dawning of the computer age I started corresponding by email. Some of my writing friends are nearly as mad as me and we regularly send letters by ordinary post as well as over the Internet. But I've also kept writing my little stories, not for money but for pleasure. It wasn't until I retired and was looking for things to occupy my days that I discovered that what I'd been doing was called Creative Writing. Up till then I'd thought it was a sort of adult learning for those who couldn't read or write very well!

Once I got that straight I enrolled in a beginners' course at a local college where the tutor was very encouraging and pointed out how to improve our styles. Since then I have written almost every day and it has really helped me cope with the pain and frustrations of Fibromyalgia. I can disappear into my own fantasy world and let my imagination take flight. Because it's fiction I can make anything happen.

Since that first course, I've been on several others – some just a half-day, others longer. To my surprise I found that the English Department at Bristol University run some excellent writing courses at very reasonable fees. These can be during the day, evening or on a Saturday. I have studied non-fiction, autobiography and poetry to name a few. It's not all writing; there are workshops which look at a particular author so you are reading as well. One Saturday I was going to a class and met another lady who was looking a bit lost.

“Can you tell me where Jane Austen is?” she enquired.

Well, there's no answer to that, is there?



If anyone else shares my hobby and wants to take it further here's how:

- Look up your local evening classes for Creative Writing
- Bristol University - look up www.bristol.ac.uk/lifelong There's no age limit on their Lifelong learning programme which covers many subjects.
- A prospectus for Bristol University part-time courses is readily available in the public library and even supermarkets (I've seen them in Morrison's at Cribbs). Contact: Ms Hilary Betts, School of Humanities, 3/5 Woodland Road, Bristol BS81TB Telephone 0117 928 8924 or email hilary.betts@bris.ac.uk
- Another method I've tried is a correspondence course. You can do these by ordinary post or by email. Vanda Inman is based in Cornwall and runs excellent courses which you can do in individual modules at your own pace. She has helped me a lot. Look her up on www.writespace.co.uk or write to

Vanda Inman, Rivendell, St.Clether, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 8QH
Tel 0156686533

It's never too late. This month I've read of a lady who's had her first book published at the age of 93! I just wish I'd discovered Creative Writing classes a long time ago. It's great fun and you don't need to leave the house if you don't want to.

Go on! Indulge your fantasies!

Edith Anderson



“**Kathryn Smith, Averil’s** daughter, will run in the Bristol Half Marathon on **14th September** in aid of **FMA UK** .

Her donations page can be found on the internet at www.justgiving.com/kmcmannusmith

Please give her your support.”

“The September meeting will be an open discussion on coping aids at home, in the car, on holiday / other travel. Bring along your tips.”

Obtaining Travel insurance for people with Fibromyalgia.

Richard has been enquiring to see what the extent is, of insurance companies not providing cover for those who have Fibromyalgia together with age discrimination.

I have some info on a company that does provide cover for Fibro and insures for any age.

This is a subject that comes up repeatedly as more and more insurance companies are not insuring certain medical conditions.

On enquiring to see what companies will insure us, I found the response was quite variable. But listed below is one company who will insure irrespective of Fibromyalgia, however the premiums will vary taking in to consideration of individual circumstances.

The first company I contacted was called AllClear reply below

Dear Mr Sparkes

Thank you for the below e-mail, **we can offer travel insurance cover for those suffering from Fibromyalgia.**

Unfortunately we cannot give quotes via e-mail or advise if there is an additional premium for this condition as this does depend on the individual circumstances. Our quotes are based on the customers age, medical conditions and destination so exact prices are unavailable.

Kind Regards

Admin Support

Below is an extract from **AllClear** website

Our market-leading travel insurance product AllClear provides insurance for holidaymakers irrespective of age, medical condition or disability. We also provide outstanding security for homeowners with AllClear Home Insurance.

AllClear Tel **08712 088 579**

<http://www.allcleartravel.co.uk>

I am investigation other companies to gain more info for the group, so I will update you when I get more information. I hope you find this useful.

Richard