

New Forest Fun

Earlier this year, Arthritis Care was invited, by the Forestry Commission to discuss the issues of access to the New Forest.

We met with other representatives from the other disability organisations in the village hall at Lyndhurst and went out to the New Forest site to see for ourselves what the access issues might be.

We had a great time and discovered that whilst the path surface was good, the camber of the surface was difficult for some people. Later we came across a gate which a number of us could not open. All our concerns were fed back to the main group when we returned to the hall. It became clear that a lot of the problems were easy for the Forestry Commission to deal with and at very little cost. Everyone was very positive and clear about how things could be changed and the day was a great success. A report will be compiled and we will be kept up to date with progress.

During the day I met some fascinating people who belong to organisations I had not encountered before. One such organisation was the Disabled Ramblers. They meet regularly all over England and Wales and go out into the wilds. They are always keen to have new members and can lend out a super duper rambling scooter if needed. So if you fancy a challenge why not try it. Their website is www.disabledramblers.co.uk

If you would like to spend some time out in the New Forest but are not sure where to start you can contact the New Forest Disability Information Service on 01425 628750.



It was quite a few years since I had been out in the forest and I loved it. I must confess that I got bitten by the rambling bug and plan to go out again later in the year.

Sharon Kilty is the Arthritis Care information services manager for South West England. For more information please telephone 01736 851185 or email sharonk@arthritiscare.org.uk

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Government grants to help beat winter blues

People with arthritis are being encouraged to find out if they qualify for government grants to help them keep warm and save money



Grants of up to £2,700 are available through the Government's Warm Front scheme for homeowners and private tenants who are in receipt of certain income or disability related benefits.

If you are over 60 or living with a disability and are in receipt of a qualifying benefit e.g. Pension Credit, Disability Living Allowance

or Attendance Allowance, you may be eligible for a grant to provide heating and insulation improvements in your home. Improvements include cavity wall and loft insulation, draught proofing and for those with very little or broken heating, central heating can be installed under the grant.

The measures offered through Warm Front can reduce a households fuel bills by up to £200 per year and make the home easier to keep at a comfortable temperature.

A call to the Warm Front Team only takes a minute and is completely free. To find out if you qualify, please call Warm Front on 0800 072 0605.

If you would like more general information on saving energy in your home please call your local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512012 for free and impartial information.

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

The new and improved www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Arthritis Care has redesigned its website adding increased functionality and more space to branch websites. If you have a website you would like featured please contact Karen Moore, information services manager for South East England on 01992 301 396 or alternatively by email: karenm@arthritiscare.org.uk

New information volunteers required

Arthritis Care's information staff are looking for new volunteers in the South. Could you spare some time?



Sharon Kilty and Karen Moore, the information services managers for the South England Region need more volunteers in their areas.

The volunteer post is very varied:

supplying doctors surgeries with information, managing hospital information points, giving talks and attending information days - plus much more according to your to your interests and capabilities.

Information volunteers are fully trained and their expenses are reimbursed.

If you would like any further information about this volunteer role please contact

Karen Moore (South East England) on 01992 301 396 or by email Karenm@arthritiscare.org.uk or

Sharon Kilty (South West England) on 01736 851185 or by email sharonk@arthritiscare.org.uk.

Promoting our services

These eye-catching pink folded cards have been designed to publicise the helplines service and Arthritis Care's website.

In the South England region we are trying to reach new groups of people who may not know about these free services by sending the cards to schools, doctors surgeries and even betting shops.

If you would like to distribute these cards or can think of a place where we could send them please contact Karen Moore information services manager for the South East England on 01992 301 396 or alternatively email karenm@arthritiscare.org.uk.

Sorry we missed you ...

Due to the work involved in the launch of the new Arthritis Care website we were unable to bring you an earlier edition of the South England region bulletin during March. But we are now back on track so please keep your stories coming in especially from the branches as we would like to start a page specifically on branch news.

Pippa Nelson, regional operations manager South England



Branch news and views

We want to know what is happening in south England branches



In the next issue of the South England Bulletin we would like to run some more articles about what is going on in the branches.

If you have an upcoming event, or would like to tell us about a success in your branch please telephone 0207 380 6509 or email karenm@arthritiscare.org.uk

Booklets and leaflets

Do you know how to order booklets and leaflets?

Arthritis care is currently updating the style and content of all its booklets and leaflets.

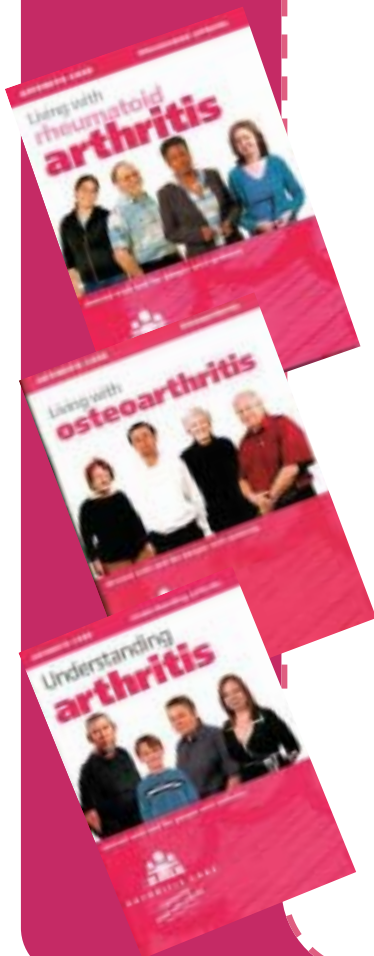
If you are interested in seeing the new designs you can download them directly from the website, or you can order them from the regional office.

There is a new Publications order form dated 5 June 2006, which

again, can be ordered from the regional office free of charge.

If you distribute booklets for your branch to hospitals or doctors surgeries please get in touch, we would really enjoy hearing about your experiences.

Please telephone 0207 380 6509 or email karenm@arthritiscare.org.uk



Training News

Challenging Pain-Train the Trainers event



This was the first time Arthritis Care had the opportunity to train eleven new members of staff and volunteers who are new to the organisation to deliver the Challenging Pain workshops.

The event took place over two days at the Passage House Hotel, Kingsteignton, Devon in November 2005 and training services supervisors Gill Boreham and Pat Brodie assisted with the training. Below are just three of the comments made by the delegates:

'this was a very interesting and well presented course. There was great group interaction and role play which helped us to bond.'

'the trainers were excellent, obviously good speakers – and good fun. The environment was supportive and encouraging, so the participants all got on so well together. This training really does give you the confidence in your own abilities.'

'practice delivery was scary, but very valuable particularly with the constructive criticism.'

In January 2006 I also trained 17 existing volunteers and staff at Arthritis Care's UK office to deliver the programme. Everyone enjoyed the training and was enthusiastic about having the opportunity to deliver these workshops in the future throughout South England.

The 'Challenging Pain in the Community' randomised research project in Plymouth is going well with five of the eighteen planned workshops delivered so far. We are pleased that more men with chronic pain are attending and the participant evaluation comments at the end of the workshops are very positive about the benefits.



Janet Cowlard is a training services manager in South West England. To find out more information about being a trainer for Arthritis Care or about training courses, please telephone 020 7380 6509 or alternatively email janetc@arthritiscare.org.uk

Training News

Chris Knight: On her retirement from training services supervisor

A heart-warming tribute to Chris Knight from Sharon Kilty, information services manager for South West England

I have not known Chris for very long, but in the time I have known her I have realised how precious she is.

Her hard work and passion for the organisation is a worthy example to us all. Chris is industrious and never misses an opportunity to promote Arthritis Care and the services provided.

Chris is always cheerful and willing to lend a hand, I would never have settled in so quickly to my job without her support. I am sure I speak for all the staff and many others when I say she will be sadly missed in her role as administrator for training.

On behalf of all the staff Chris, our love and best wishes go to you and we hope that both you and John will enjoy a well deserved rest.



Ida Miles: A tribute



It was a great shock to us all to hear the sad news that one of our training volunteers, Ida Miles had passed away on the 31 March.

Ida was trained in 2004, and was enthusiastic about delivering the You Can Break the Pain Cycle and Challenging Pain workshops. We will remember her fondly for her vitality, training skills and sense of humour.

Janet Cowlard, training services manager South England

Training News

Here are the new course schedules. Also keep an eye on the South England region section of the Arthritis Care website for further courses.

For more information about the courses below, please contact the regional office on 020 7380 6509 or seregoffice@arthritiscare.org.uk

Course	Location	Date	Time
Challenging Arthritis	Exeter	12 Sept to 17 Oct	1pm to 12:30pm
Challenging Arthritis	Hove	20 Oct to 24 Nov	11am to 1pm
Challenging Pain	Chelmsford	7 July to 14 July	1pm to 3:30pm
Challenging Pain	Eastbourne	27 June to 4 July	1:30am to 4pm
Challenging Pain	Gunnislake	5 July to 12 July	2pm to 5pm
Challenging Pain	Kingsteignton	23 Sept to 30 Sept	10:30am to 1pm
Challenging Pain	Mutley	18 Sept to 25 Sept	1:45pm to 4:15pm
Challenging Pain	Plymouth	11 July to 18 July	6:45pm to 9:15pm
Challenging Pain	Plymouth	19 July to 26 July	1:45pm to 4:15pm
Challenging Pain	Torpoint	11 Sept to 18 Sept	1:30pm to 4pm
Challenging Pain	Woking	11 July to 20 July	1:30am to 4pm
Challenging Pain	Woolwell	24 Oct to 31 Oct	10.30am to 1pm
Living Well	Flauden	7 Sept to 12 Oct	2pm to 4:30pm
Living Well	Markyate	25 July to 29 Aug	1pm to 3:30pm
You can break the pain cycle	Bideford	29 June	2:15pm to 5pm
You can break the pain cycle	Street	31 July	10am to 1pm
For 12-17 year olds			
Positive Future Workshop	Somerset	16 Aug to 18 Aug	
Positive Future Workshop	Somerset	20 Oct to 22 Oct	

The Young People & Family Project in South England

The Young People's Project is being piloted in the south of England and offers support services to young people aged 13-25 with arthritis, and their families. We run residential workshops and activity days and also have links to information provision.

This year we are holding two residential Positive Future Workshops run by trained 18-25 year old volunteer youth workers with arthritis. The workshops are for 13-17 year olds with arthritis and are discussion and activity-based.

They are held at The Magdalen Project, an environmental education centre situated in the beautiful south Somerset countryside. It has 132 acres of fields, woods, and pastures, a 20 acre small holding with cows, pigs, chickens, ducks and sheep, and lots more to explore. They also serve scrumptious home cooked food. You can find out more by visiting : www.themagdalenproject.org.uk

We also plan to hold an activity day in the summer. The day will give you the chance to meet other young people with arthritis in an informal setting.

If you are age 13-25 and interested in being part of the Young People's Project please feel free to contact us



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

Forthcoming Events

Positive Future Workshops at the Magdalen Project in Somerset:

- £# 16-18 August 2006
- £# 20-22 October 2006

For more information, please contact Alexis on telephone: 01460 240249 or email alexisb@arthritiscare.org.uk

The Young People & Family Project in South England

Sara



My name is Sara Sharratt and I am the newly appointed part-time events organiser for the Young People & Family Project in South England.

I am also a part-time youth worker for a local authority Children and Young Peoples' Services Directorate, which involves working with young people at two outreach youth clubs including planning and delivery of programmes to meet the needs and interests of the young people.

I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis when I was 16 and in the last year I have had both shoulders replaced.

I am really excited at being appointed to this post and am really looking forward to getting on and organising events for young people with arthritis and their families. I hope that I can help make the project a success.

Alexis



Hello! I'm Alexis Bradley, the brand new Young People & Family Project Development Manager for the South.

I live in deepest, darkest rural Somerset with my partner Russell. It was here this time last year that I first experienced signs of sero-negative arthritis. What a journey I've been on since then. It has had a huge impact on my life and certainly fuelled my desire to work for Arthritis Care.

I am a qualified careers guidance counsellor and my previous role was with Connexions as a personal adviser. This involved working within a secondary school for young people with moderate learning difficulties and disabilities and the supported learning department of an FE College. I delivered advice and guidance to young people and their families and provided support in the young people's transition into adulthood. Alongside this I ran fortnightly youth groups for young people with mental health issues.

I enjoy cycling, swimming, cooking and travelling and have recently developed an interest in cider making – could be dangerous...

It's great to be involved in the Young Person's Project, to be part of something that is so fresh and so positive. Sara Sharratt and I are really looking forward to actively making a difference to the lives of young people with arthritis and their families. With input from the young people, the project will evolve and I am sure, grow from strength to strength.

Campaigning in South England



The main objective of campaigning by Arthritis Care throughout South England is to put people who live with arthritis in the forefront of planning and evaluating health, social care and other services so that they can enjoy a better quality of life.

How can people with arthritis campaign?

By having a voice. Central government is recognising the need to involve users (that's you) in the planning and evaluation of services. Local service providers have a duty to listen to your needs and issues and to work with the voluntary organisations that represent you.

Why should I campaign?

Without campaigning for positive change, positive change will not happen. Campaigning does not have to be at a national or international level.

By addressing a personal issue, you could also benefit the community in which you live, improving the lives of others. Many small changes add up to one big change.



If you would like to get involved with campaigning, please contact the regional campaigns managers for the South England Roseann Pailor (South West England) or Siobhain McCurrach (South East England).

For more information please telephone 0207 380 6509 or email roseannep@arthritiscare.org.uk or email siobhainm@arthritiscare.co.uk

Introducing your new campaigns representative for South East England



I'm Siobhain McCurrach (pronounced "Shevornne"), the new regional campaigns manager for South East England.

I hope to be able to meet you all in person soon at events and meetings organised by Arthritis Care or by organisations you work with or perhaps through being introduced to you through my local contacts.

"So, what's she like?" Colleagues and friends tell me I have a warm personality with bags of enthusiasm and energy. Whilst I'm perilously close now to the big '4 0' I still feel I'm 25 inside.

I've got two boys (William 6, George 3) husband (James) and a chocolate labrador (Ellie). We live in a small village in North East Hampshire (near Petersfield).

The 'Serious bit' now: I've built up 14 years' management experience in non-departmental public bodies, not-for-profit and user-led organisations in the health, social care and grant making. I've worked with senior health and social care managers to help influence local policy making and been the link between local communities and health and social care providers. Most recently I did PPI consultancy work for West Sussex VOLG (a PPI Forum Support Organisation) and SCOPE (likewise in Surrey). ('PPI' means Patient and Public Involvement (in Health decision making)) Before that I was PPI Forum Advisor (South East) at the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH). And before that I was Manager of Surrey Users Network (a key stakeholder User-led organisation in Surrey).

I've also been: training in volunteer advocacy with East Hampshire Advocacy Scheme, singing at Christmas time with Hawkeye Choir, a parent helper at the village's children's craft workshops for religious events, Beavers (Scouts) Liss group and at a children's Religious Education class at St Laurence RC Church Petersfield. I'm also interested in politics, skiing, aerobics, walking, gardening, classical/jazz music and house renovating.

If you would like to get involved with campaigning, please contact Siobhain McCurrach the Regional Campaigns Manager for South East England. For more information please telephone 0207 380 6509 or email siobhainm@arthritiscare.org.uk

What can I do to make things better?

Can you identify a problem that could be resolved if the right people were made to care? Get in touch with the campaigns team, they can help you to make changes in your local area.

For more information please telephone 0207 380 6509 or email roseannep@arthritiscare.org.uk or email siobhainm@arthritiscare.co.uk

Hydrotherapy Pools

For many people with arthritis, free access to hydrotherapy is an essential part of their treatment. The water temperature in hydrotherapy promotes relaxation, helps relieve pain, assists movement and enables you to exercise more freely. Exercise can help prevent arthritis from getting worse.

What's the current situation?

Most hydrotherapy pools are found in the physiotherapy departments of hospitals. However, not all hospitals have pools.

This can mean that a person with arthritis has to travel many miles to get to a pool. Even worse, some of those that do exist are being closed, or their opening hours are being reduced.

Why should I care?

People with arthritis benefit from hydrotherapy. In hydrotherapy, the water supports your weight and relaxes your muscles, making it easier to exercise. Following a regular exercise programme enables people with arthritis to live a more pain-free, independent life.

What is Arthritis Care in South England doing?

Following the closure of Watford Hydrotherapy pool, St Albans branch successfully negotiated with St Albans City Hospital Rehabilitation Unit to use the newly built hydrotherapy pool one evening a week for two sessions. New members are always welcome



What can I do?

You can let us know what you think by email, phone or post.

You can contact your local hospital and ask them about hydrotherapy pools in your area. If there is no pool, ask them why.

If you would like to get involved with campaigning, please contact the regional campaigns managers for the South England Roseann Pailor (South West England) or Siobhain McCurrach (South East England).

For more information please telephone 0207 380 6509 or email rosan-nep@arthritiscare.org.uk.

Campaigning News

Roseann Pailor and Sharon Kilty were very kindly invited to attend an information and campaigning event organised by the Local Opportunities Partnership at Liskeard. LOP is an organisation that offers support and advice to unemployed people who live in the Liskeard area.

They can advise on setting up a business amongst other things and they have a small grant scheme to help people get started. They work very closely with the voluntary sector and provide a point for networking together

Their information event included many local charities and other organisations that help the local community. The first day helped us to meet other organisations and learn more about what is available in Cornwall.

The second day was open to the general public and we had many people visiting our stand asking for information about arthritis and Arthritis Care and the services our charity provides. It was very successful and helped to

spread the word that Arthritis Care is out there and ready to help. We also managed to find some new local organisations that are willing to keep a stock of our literature for their clients. So more people with arthritis are likely to hear about us. All good news!!



Roseann Pailor Regional Campaigns Manager for the South West

Access

Many people who live with arthritis experience problems with their mobility. Some people will need to use wheelchairs and therefore need good accessibility to buildings such as shops, hospitals and GP and MP surgeries.

Because of the pain and stiffness they experience, those who do not need to use wheelchairs may still have problems with walking certain distances, standing in long queues, difficulty in opening doors and having to climb stairs.

What's the current situation?

New legislation introduced by the Government has made it a requirement that most premises should be fully accessible. However, as with much legislation, there are certain circumstances which will allow a building to not conform.

Why should I care?

It is your right to have access to local facilities and services without facing difficulties. By addressing these issues, everyday activities such as shopping could make life much easier for everyone.

What is Arthritis Care in South England doing?

We are calling for full accessibility to the built environment. We have recently surveyed MP surgeries for accessibility and will be lobbying for more changes to be made.

Arthritis Care Amesbury Branch surveyed access within their local community during a recent sponsored ramble. Their findings will be forwarded on to council planners in the near future.

Be aware of health and safety

Sandy Dakin, volunteer development manager for South England discusses health and safety awareness

The roll out of the Level 1 Health and Safety Awareness for branches programme continues across the region. Please come along to those held in your area, normally at the ALC meetings. The sessions have been well received and I am grateful to those who have attended for their participation. The learning process has been a two-way affair. I have learned a lot about the practical consequences for branches when trying to provide a service to members but also trying to follow best practice in health and safety.

As a result of discussions during the sessions, I would like to draw your attention to the following advice. If someone attending a meeting, or an outing organised by the branch has mobility difficulties which make it necessary for them to have one to one care, they should be asked to bring along a helper, someone who can easily manage the particular requirements of the individual, for example, pushing the wheelchair. Also if someone needs to be escorted to the toilet, two people must be prepared to assist. This is to ensure that help can be provided in case of a fall – one person to stay with the individual and the other to go for help. It also provides protection for the escorts in case of complaint.

Some branches have mentioned that from time to time children have been present at meetings – either accompanying members or assisting at events like Christmas dinners. This issue has been referred to the UK office for advice and guidance as there are a number of considerations to be taken into account. My advice to branches in the meantime is to discourage this until we issue new guidelines in the near future.

When transporting members, either in our own vehicles or those hired in, please ensure that all safety equipment is used

correctly and regularly checked and that safe practices are followed. The current Community Transport Association vehicle audits are proving a useful way of ensuring that we all know what is required – if any branch needs guidance or information please get in touch with me and I will be happy to assist.



Sandy Dakin, VDM
for the South

We do not want to stop branches from carrying on providing services – quite the reverse – but we ask that the safety of all is considered a priority in everything you do.

One last point on a rather less serious note – I was fortunate enough to be invited to a few branch Christmas functions and have to say that I enjoyed them tremendously. The stories I heard about members – from 101 year old ‘silver surfers’, to partially sighted members taking blind people bowling, to members in electric buggies fetching shopping for the housebound, and many more – were really heart-warming and put the concept of self help into practice.

I look forward to meeting more of you at the future ALC meetings – please don’t be offended if I can’t attend them all – I am trying to cover as many as I can but until Arthritis Care provides me with a helicopter (or according to my husband, a bigger broomstick), I can’t be in two places at once...

Sandy Dakin is the volunteer development manager for Arthritis Care South England. If you would like any further information call 0207 380 6509 or email sandyd@arthritiscare.org.uk

Watford Walk



On Sunday 7 May 2006, 35 members of the Watford branch of Arthritis Care and supporters turned up for a sponsored walk round our lovely countryside, Whippendell Wood and Cassiobury Park.

There was a choice of an easy 1.5 mile walk or a five mile walk for the more keen walkers. It turned out to be a beautiful morning, the bluebells were out in full bloom and everybody had a wonderful day.

Thank you to everyone who came to support us and see you again next year. We are still counting the money and we will keep you posted how much we raised.

Who's who in the South region?

Pippa Nelson
Regional Operations manager

Clare Mills
Regional Administrator

Toyin Onasanya
Assistant Administrator

Frances Boyce Training Services-Manager	Nina Fry Training Services-Manager	Janet Cowlard- Training Services Manager	Roseann Pailor (SW)& Siobhain McCurrach (SE)Regional Campaigns Managers	Karen Moore (SE) & Sharon Kilty (SW) Information Services Managers	Sandy Dakin Volunteer-Development Manager	Alexis Bradley Project Development Manager
Training Services Supervisors Philippa Jones Gillian Piggott Debbie Rose	Training Services Supervisors Hazel Dunnett	Training Services Supervisors Gillian Boreham Pat Brodie Elaine Curno				Sara Sharratt Admin/ Event Asst

A very big thank you

We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their kind donations of over £20 received at the South England Regional Office. This vital income has been used to extend training and information services in the South England region.

Branches:

Woodford Branch £500
Torquay £1997
Somerton £45

Lambeth £1500
Yeovil £4000
Christchurch Branch £115

Individuals and organisations:

Royston Lions £1,100
Thompson Fund £5000
Elburton Young Wives Club £20
Arthritis Matters £250

Annual General Meeting 2006

This year's annual general meeting will be held on Saturday 15 July at 1.30pm at the Novotel in Birmingham at the address below. All members will receive notification in the next issue of Arthritis News.

Novotel, 70 Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2HT
If you would like some more information please contact the south regional office on 0207 380 6509 or by e-mail at southeast@arthritiscare.org.uk

Welcome to 2006!



What a birthday! We have come back to. It has been over a year since the merger of the South East and west into the south region. To give you some idea of what to expect during 2006, some figures to ponder.

During January we managed to:

- # Make and receive 1607 telephone calls
- # Exchange 7685 emails
- # Exchange 944 letters
- # Attend 42 meetings
- # Make 12 visits
- # Distribute 758 information booklets
- # Distribute 150 publications order forms

To put this into some context, during the whole of 2005 the region:

- # Made and received 12,612 telephone calls
- # Exchanged 19,287 emails
- # Exchanges 7,026 letters
- # Sent and received 104 faxes
- # Attended 151 meetings
- # Made 78 visits
- # Wrote 13 press articles
- #

- # Took part in 22 teleconferences
- # and gave 5 radio TV interviews.
- # 25,485 publications were sent out in total (*extrapolated*).
- # 6 Arthritis Awareness courses delivered = 96 participants
- # 10 Challenging Arthritis courses delivered = 102 participants
- # 13 Challenging Pain courses delivered = 117 participants
- # 6 Living Well courses delivered = 69 participants
- # 13 You Can Break The Pain Cycle courses delivered = 159 participants
- # 3 internal courses = 33 participants
- # 51 courses in total
- # 576 participants in total

During 2006 we will keep you up to date with everything that is happening across the region, but we also need articles and stories from what is happening in your area so please get in touch.

Pippa Nelson, regional operations manager for the South England.