

CHESTERFIELD & NORTH DERBYSHIRE TINNITUS SUPPORT GROUP



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Newsletter: February/March 2017

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HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER OF 2017

As our January meeting at "The Badger" was so successful, we have arranged our next meeting at the same venue. As before it is important to complete a Booking Form or contact us so we can provide numbers and any special dietary requirements to the manager.

**OUR NEXT MEETING
"SOUP & SOCIAL"
AT "THE BADGER OF BROCKWELL"
81 Brockwell Lane, Chesterfield,
S40 4ED**

**ON WEDNESDAY 29TH MARCH
2017**

11.00 AM to 1.00 PM



Our speaker will be **Stephen Flinders**
The Old Curiosity Box!

With his presentation Stephen will bring along a box containing 10 curiosities from his collection. We will have an opportunity of examining and handling the objects whilst trying to work out what they did or

were used for. We thought it would be nice to try something a little different and we feel sure this will promote some interest and good conversation. Please come along and join us.

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REPORT FROM OUR PREVIOUS MEETINGS

AGM and Christmas Afternoon Tea



A good time was had by all at our

Christmas get-together in December at the Imperial Rooms, Matlock. Afternoon tea was followed by entertainment (provided by our talented members), and enjoyed by over 30



members. Thank you to everyone who made donations and took part in the raffle. The raffle raised £73 and £94 in donations.

Report from AGM

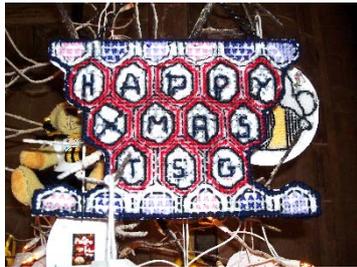
Prior to the tea and entertainment we held our AGM. Joanne Gordon is our new Chair (and also continues as our Co-ordinator), myself, Audrey Carlin, Secretary/Lay Counsellor and Sarah Walters is our new Treasurer. Sarah is DAST's Funding Development Worker whom we are happy to welcome as one of our team. Muriel, Joy and Philip were also happy to continue as members of the committee. Jodie Rogers and Debi Alvey (Senior Audiologists at Chesterfield Royal Hospital) are our Co-opted members.

Thank you to our committee for their continued support and to Philip's wife, Gail, who comes along to help us from time to time at events.



Festival of Trees and Drop-in

Our invitation to look at the lovely Christmas



trees (including the Tinnitus tree) in the 'Crooked Spire' was taken up by quite a few people who also dropped in to our office on Glumangate for a drink, mince pie and a chat. It was lovely to see people chatting happily.

[Photo of Jemma with Christmas Tree and the cross-stitch decorations she made]

Meeting at The Badger in January

Everyone enjoyed Soup and Sandwiches along with cups of tea and coffee which were available throughout the meeting and we were warmly welcomed by the staff at The Badger.



Dave Carr from the British Tinnitus Association came along to chat to us about *how to get a good night's sleep*. Although our 30 Year Anniversary booklet included Dave's

talk from our Conference in 2016, here

are a few pointers taken from his recent talk to us:-

- Don't keep looking at the clock during the night
- Tinnitus can keep you awake and stop you getting off to sleep but it cannot wake you up in the night once you have gone to sleep
- Young people sleep more deeply
- As you get older there are up to 9 periods of waking in the night
- When older, sleep is shallow
- Be busy and exercise during the day
- People who are fit sleep better
- Cheese, chocolate and tomatoes – avoid at night time
- Hot milky drink helps
- The time it takes for a coffee to get from a "dose" to half a dose is 2 hours
- Alcohol gets you to sleep but only for a limited time
- Wind down – have lights that are dimmed down before going to bed
- Stress, anxiety – write down your worries
- Only sleep in bed – don't read in bed
- Set your alarm clock and keep to a routine of getting up at the same time every day (even at weekends)
- Go to bed when tired and get up at the same time in the morning
- Avoid taking naps, this affects your sleeping pattern at bedtime

Some distraction techniques when trying to sleep:

- Count down from 1000 backwards in "sevens"
- Think of girls names starting from A
- Or boys names starting from A

Sleeping Environment:

- Don't let animals sleep on your bed or in the bedroom
- Make sure your bed is comfortable
- Sound therapy does help
- Try a pillow speaker
- The sound must be constant and not fluctuate as this can affect your sleep
- Just prior to going to bed, go into the bedroom and switch on the "sound" then return to the bathroom to finish preparing for bed. The purpose of this is because the sound will already be playing in the bedroom and wont alert you to the fact that you are turning it on "because of your tinnitus"

Still not Sleeping:

- Speak to your GP – short-term sleeping tablets will help to re-set your sleep patterns
- Sleep Restriction – force yourself to go to bed later and get up earlier – this too is a temporary measure – squeezing sleep time down

Relaxation and Mindfulness:

- Statistics have shown that mindfulness for tinnitus is more effective than other forms of relaxation
- Deal with intrusive thoughts
- Planning – thinking ahead to bedtime
- Change what you think and perceive about bedtime

Our members also had various ideas for aiding sleep – such as lavender, audio books, using alarm clocks with birdsong and a "light" version of an alarm clock.

TAKE ON TINNITUS

The BTA have a new website – www.takeontinnitus.co.uk where you will find hints and tips and there is a whole section on sleep. There is a free video clip.

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SOME OTHER FACTS ABOUT SLEEP

[Extracts from "Healthy Experts"]
Your nocturnal timetable:
Sleep usually descends within 10 to 20 minutes of going to bed. Soon afterwards, your brain waves slow down and you settle into **deep sleep** – this should constitute the first few hours of your slumber time. It's very difficult to wake someone from deep sleep but, oddly, this is the time when sleepwalking occurs. The middle of the night usually consists of **light sleep** – from which you can easily wake. The last hours of the night are mainly **REM (rapid eye movement) sleep**, the time when most dreaming occurs. Overall, **50 per cent of the night is taken up with light sleep, 25 per cent deep sleep and 25 per cent REM sleep – although patterns vary.**

Your night is punctuated by **90-minute cycles** of wakefulness, drowsiness and REM sleep. If you're well, young, fit and not stressed, the 90-minute awakenings are rarely noticed. If your sleep is fitful, you will tend to stir at the end of these cycles.

An exercise you can do whilst lying in bed if you can't sleep

Tense and relax your muscles in turn, then focus on a pleasant thought or image.

At the meeting Joy ran a raffle which raised £32.00 with £8.50 donations and Muriel sold Jack the Bear for £10.00. Our thanks to everyone. Also thank you to Jean Billyeald and "Tinker" for the £10.00 slipped in their Christmas card.



**TINNITUS AWARENESS WEEK
6TH – 12TH FEBRUARY 2017
Raising Awareness about Tinnitus**



However, our members were happy to have photographs taken and Joanne subsequently tweeted these for Tinnitus Awareness Week.

HEALTHWATCH DERBYSHIRE

Healthwatch Derbyshire is an independent organisation that represents people using health and social care services in the county. Healthwatch is the consumer champion for health and social care and was brought about by the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

WE ARE SO HAPPY AND THANK YOU SO MUCH!

You can imagine how happy we were when an envelope dropped through our letterbox from Healthwatch Derbyshire containing a "Comments Report" that had been made about our group. This read

"The commentators said how useful and worthwhile the support group is to them. They said that everyone is very supportive, due to the fact that people have the same condition. They added that the information received during the year, either via



Dave brought along to the meeting some cards **"Together for Tinnitus"** which the BTA wanted us to hold up and do a selfie then post on Twitter.

newsletters or speakers, was very useful. The commentators remained anonymous.”

The covering letter from Healthwatch read as follows:-

“After 28 days, this information, along with any feedback from your service will be forwarded to the appropriate commissioner. Healthwatch will also then feedback to the individual involved, if we have their personal details.”

As we don't know the person who has kindly taken the time and effort to write about the support we give, we would like to say a BIG THANK YOU! We have also replied to Healthwatch Derbyshire. As a voluntary group, this gives us confidence that we are really helping people and we hope that this will be acknowledged by the appropriate Commissioner.

POETRY TO CALM AND RELAX YOU

According to Vern Kousky (poet), poetry helps us find our inner voice. We all have many ideas milling around in our heads, and a poem is the perfect place to let them run wild.

Many of us feel angry, frustrated, sad, or fearful from time to time. However, because these feelings are unpleasant, we often keep them locked up inside of us. Writing and reading poetry help us let these feelings out and also better understand them.

Poetry 'can help cut depression rates' [Report from The Daily Mail October 2016]

Using poems to help people with depression could save the NHS nearly

£200,000 a year, according to research published (in October 2016) for National Poetry Day.

A new report based on 196 people with psychological problems found that 75% found writing poems was an emotional release.

Two thirds found reading or listening to poetry helped them be able to relax and feel calm.

And 7% weaned themselves off anti-depressants or tranquillisers using poetry and with the help of their GP.

The research is featured in a new report "Arts, Health and Well-being" that is due to be published at the end of the month (October 2016).

Author Dr Robin Philipp, a consultant in occupational and public health at Bristol Royal Infirmary, said anti-depressants cost around £530 per person for a year.

Based on his findings, if poetry helped 7% of people with depression or anxiety come off medication that could amount to a potential saving of £190,000 annually for the NHS.

The study was sparked by a letter to the British Medical Journal in 1994 in which Dr Philipp and colleagues asked if reading or writing poetry helped people with mental health problems.

Dr Philipp received hundreds of letters from the general public, from people of all ages and all walks of life, as well as healthcare professionals.

"To my great surprise the letters I was getting were full of testimonies about their personal lives and experiences and the way they had found poetry very beneficial," he said. "I was taken aback by that."

He used 196 of the people who wrote to him to study the impact of reading and writing poetry on people with psychological difficulties.

He said there were several reasons why poetry could be beneficial and it is linked in with therapies in which people were encouraged to talk about their problems.

"One person told me, if you had a whole batch of things you had to do and felt all tense and irritable about it, you would write a list."

"You would feel better about it because it was more ordered and I suppose poetry is an extrapolation of that."

Dr Philipp is a founding member of the organisation LAPIDUS (the Association for the Literary Arts in Personal Development) which is supported by the Arts Council.

National Poetry Day is held annually in October and each year it has a theme. In 2016 the theme was 'Celebration'.

During that day events to celebrate poetry are held up and down the country.

I couldn't help thinking how useful this would be for people with tinnitus. I have always been interested in poetry and going back to my school days, if I was in a particularly boring lesson I would jot down poetry as it floated into my mind. One day I was caught out by the teacher but instead of getting in trouble, the teacher suggested I have my poems printed in a magazine. I didn't but I was more careful where I penned my poetry in the future.

A few years ago I wrote a poem called "Forget-me-not" describing the lives, thoughts and feelings of people

diagnosed with the terminal asbestos cancer, mesothelioma. A thread in their lives, I realised, connected them as we listened to their stories during our home visits. Joanne used my poem at several events including Leicester Cathedral and it was also requested for translation into Japanese. However, in 2016 it was put to music and used on two occasions; one at an awareness event in Derby in July (sang Acapella) and the



second time Jemma's auntie Jane (who is a Country and Western singer) sang it at DAST's Memorial event in Lincoln Cathedral. Photograph above of Simon Ball singing "Forget-me-not" at Action Mesothelioma Day in Derby.



Jemma's Auntie Jane Foggin singing "Forget-me-not" in Lincoln Cathedral (November 2016)

So you never know where your poetry will get to. Many years ago an elderly gentleman who had lost his wife joined our group. He was very shy and only came along to one meeting but he regularly sent me his poetry, some of which he allowed me to publish in our

newsletter. It was obvious that he was using this medium to let go of his emotions and deal with his loneliness.

Why not try to put your feelings and expressions into words; doesn't matter if it doesn't rhyme nor if you don't share it with anyone. Just putting your emotions into words can help you a lot.

You will have seen Muriel's poem in our 30th Anniversary booklet in which she says goodbye to her tinnitus.

Life's Journey

Do not undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others. It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Do not set your goals by what other people deem important. Only you know what is best for you.

Do not take for granted the things closest to your heart. Cling to them as you would your life, for without them, life is meaningless.

Do not let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past nor for the future. By living your life one day at a time, you live all of the days of your life.

Do not give up when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

It is a fragile thread that binds us to each other. Do not be afraid to encounter risks. It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.

Do not shut love out of your life by saying it is impossible to find. The quickest way to receive love is to give love. The fastest way to lose love is to

hold it too tightly. In addition, the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Do not dismiss your dreams. To be without dreams is to be without hope. To be without hope is to be without purpose.

Do not run through life so fast that you forget not only where you have been, but also where you are going.

Life is not a race, but a journey to be savoured each step of the way.

What a beautiful poem and one that will resonate with many people I am sure. Sadly the author is unknown but the words are so true!

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

It is now time to renew your subscription if you wish to remain a member of our group.



The appropriate form is enclosed with this newsletter for you to complete and return to us. We hope you will wish to continue your membership.

TINNITUS WORKSHOPS

We plan to run the Tinnitus Workshops again this year, commencing at the beginning of September. If you are interested, would you please complete and return the "Expression of Interest" enclosed with this newsletter. Alternatively, you can either email us or ring Joanne on 01246 380415.

MINDFULNESS

Whilst looking after Joanne's cat recently when they were away, I noticed how he would sit and stare into space for about ten minutes and then finally lay down and go to sleep. Maybe this is the cat's version of Mindfulness.

I decided to look on the internet and sure enough I found a site which said



“how to relax like a cat”. Here are a couple of Cat Mindfulness techniques:-

This is Whiskey, Joanne’s cat – looks good for 105 years old

Be compassionate with yourself: Cats don't beat themselves up over not being beautiful enough, acceptable enough, tidy enough, rich enough, healthy enough, or clever enough. They don't stress about foolish things like bad luck. Cats just get on with loving themselves the way they are.

Meditate: Cats take time out to contemplate the world around them and to just be. Time to be a copycat.

Practise cat yoga: Ever wondered why some exercises require you to "stretch like a cat"? The reason is simple - cats really and truly know how to stretch for benefit. A cat stretches to relieve tension and restore suppleness in an instant. A cat stretches the right way; follow their lead.

OTHER MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES FOR YOU TO PRACTISE

Creating space to come down from the worried mind and back into the present moment has been shown to be enormously helpful to people. When we are present we have a firmer grasp of all our options and resources which often make us feel better. Next time you find your mind racing with stress, try the acronym **S.T.O.P.**

S – Stop what you are doing, put things down for a minute.

T – Take a breath. Breathe normally and naturally and follow your breath coming in and out of your nose. You can even say to yourself “in” as you’re breathing in and “out” as you’re breathing out if that helps with concentration.

O – Observe your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. You can reflect about what is on your mind and also notice that thoughts are not facts and they are not permanent. If the thought arises that you are inadequate, just notice the thought, let it be, and continue on. Notice any emotions that are there and just name them. Recent research from UCLA (public research university in America) says that just naming your emotions can have a calming effect. Then notice your body. Are you standing or sitting? How is your posture? Any aches and pains.

P – Proceed with something that will support you in the moment. Whether that is talking to a friend or doing something you enjoy.

Best Wishes, Audrey