

Derby Depression Club NEWSLETTER

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From the Editor

Welcome to another bumper 6 page edition together with a new feature called Swop shop. The hours of daylight are getting longer, and first flowers of spring are raising their heads, so summer should be not far away. Don't forget to keep the articles for the magazine rolling in. All contributions welcome.

2 New Additions to the Library

St. Johns Wort (Your Natural Prozac) .

For those of you who prefer to try an alternative to conventional medicine this book kindly donated by Dave Waldram, gives a good overview of the history, mythology and application of this beneficial herb.

Whilst being entitled St. Johns Wort, it covers self diagnosis, various depression types and combined self help ideas. It also identifies where outside (conventional) help might be needed. The book therefore serves as a useful introduction to people who have become depressed, as well as giving the detail and facts about St. Johns Wort.

How to Survive Christmas by Jilly Cooper

A little late for last Christmas, but a valuable book to arm yourself for the next one. Jilly Cooper takes you on a lighted hearted ride through some personal reflections of Christmas. I am sure that some of the experiences outlined will ring some bells for many people (No Christmas pun intended). If you are hoping the book will provide all the answers on how to survive Christmas, you will be disappointed. However it should make you smile, and perhaps realise that maybe your own Christmas was not that bad.

Our thanks to Christine Roberts for donating the book to the Club.

Spread the Word

It's now 9 years since the Club was founded, during which time many people have joined us, gained confidence and strength, and moved on. There are however many more out there who need support and encouragement to help them cope with the effects of anxiety and depression. The current recession is causing people to loose jobs and homes, which are significant contributory factors causing depression. Derby Depression Club has brochures, miniposters and business cards to promote the organisation, so why not ask for some and let other people and organisations know about us. Drop them off at community centres, doctors surgeries, local libraries etc, and spread the word.

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Our Group's Basic Aims

- Caring
- Sharing
- Supporting
- Helping
- Self-Help
- Understanding
- Non-condemning



Depressed Celebrities

Everyone thinks I'm very strong and together,' says actress Sylvia Syms. 'I have always had this ability to put on a very powerful exterior, but in reality I'm a great mess inside.

'I've suffered from depression all my life - I've just had to learn to cope with it.'

'Cope' seems something of an understatement for a woman who's enjoyed a long and successful career. Although perhaps best known for her roles in films such as *Ice Cold In Alex*, Sylvia hasn't stopped working since she left the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (Rada) in London at the age of 19.



Unstable childhood:
Sylvia Sims was evacuated in the war aged four

Now 75, she is still plying her trade, and stars with Michael Caine in the film *Is There Anybody There?*, which was released this month. Later this year she will be appearing in a *Miss Marple* adaptation and a new ITV drama, *Collision*.

Her life remains busy and full, and self-deprecating laughter fills her West London home. Yet the outward success and happiness belie a lifelong struggle with depression.

'My childhood was very unstable,' she recalls. 'That's not surprising, as I'd been a war child evacuated from London aged four with my brother and sister. My beloved mother suffered a severe head injury in an air raid. She developed a brain tumour and suffered from terrible epileptic fits.

'She died when I was 12 - a loss that was not properly dealt with at the time. No one spoke about it. Then two years later my father remarried. My stepmother, Aunt Dorothy as we called her, was a good woman who adored us children, but at the time I didn't see that.

'When I left school at 16, I was all over the place emotionally and had a near breakdown. Dorothy saved the day, sending me to a revolutionary place in the West Country, where I did art therapy - making pottery and painting - and spoke to a therapist every day. It was an extraordinary concept in 1951. It meant that at last I could express all my feelings. It was wonderful - I was able to sail into Rada in a strong frame of mind after going there.'

But that was just the first of many episodes of depression in her life, with particular low points when her children, the actress Beatie Edney, and Ben, a teacher, were young, and again when she divorced her husband, Alan Edney, in 1989.

She explains: 'It was very bad when the babies were small and I was working. Then it went away, but got bad again when I got divorced.

'I saw a therapist when my marriage was going wrong. But as I spoke about our life together, I knew that if I went on going it would become clear I should leave my husband.

'So I didn't go any more. I didn't want to know the truth. I buried it again - at least for a while.

'The triggers for my depression are fear and insecurity. I could always find the courage to climb a mountain, but when the washing machine went wrong I'd weep.'

The sign of an impending depressive episode is little things upsetting her. 'I know it's getting bad if I cry at stupid things,' she says. 'Such as if I'm in a hurry and the traffic lights go against me, and tears start running down my cheeks. It's ridiculous, but I fear I'm going to be late.

'At my worst I've been through the thing of staying in bed, unable to do anything. But I don't let myself do that now - it's defeatist. Fresh air is a great antidote.

And I love chatting to people in the streets and parks. I find great joy in others. Fortunately, I have a very understanding and careful GP, and nowadays I take an antidepressant pill - Fluoxetine [a mild form of Prozac] - every day. I'm happy to take it. It calms me down and takes the edge off my anxiety.

'I've been on the tablets for about 12 years. There are no side-effects and I won't take the stuff that makes you feel doopy. I'd rather have the worry than feel drugged and stupid.

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'I don't regard myself as a serious case, but I do think that people who have serious depression should be treated with the same care that's given to someone with cancer or heart failure, because if you get it badly, it's terrible.

'I'm a survivor - one of the lucky ones. And I'm so much better than I used to be. I see the humour in it all now. I think: "OK, so I broke something - so what?" I think it's just getting older and learning to deal with things. I look around and realise I'm luckier than most

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'And I didn't let my depressive periods affect my children. I think, in a way, that may have been half the trouble. I didn't let on - as with the loss of my mother. My feelings were buried and hidden.

'It's easier for me to talk about it now because why would you worry about what other people think when you are 75?

'In the old days, I'd hide my depression when I was working. That's why I've got a reputation for being very outgoing. I cover my terror with being positive, which irritates people sometimes, I think. And I'm the bossiest person on set!'

Apart from the depression, Sylvia's health, she says, is 'pretty good'. She was, however, seriously ill the winter before last when a bout of bronchitis turned into pneumonia.

'Having pneumonia was a big surprise. I didn't realise it was anything unusual. I felt slightly unwell and was always used to working on when I had flu or bronchitis. Thankfully, I have a highly intelligent daughter who realised it was serious.

'I kept arguing with her about whether I was really ill or not and I was still arguing when the ambulance came to get me. I don't remember much about the next three days, but I was really quite dangerously ill. It was dicey.'

Her illness has meant giving up cigarettes. 'The doctors were furious about my smoking, and I have to say I've stopped now. It would be ridiculous not to. I must be a good girl. But I only ever smoked a little - off and on - and only started very late in life, when I got divorced.

'Alan hated smoking, so after the divorce I thought: "Now I'll do what I bloody well like."'

The actress also suffers from diabetes, although she is as robust about dealing with this condition as she is about her depression.

'It's a nuisance,' she says. 'It started more than ten years ago. I felt peculiar, terribly thirsty and I started putting lots of sugar in my tea - which I'd never done before.

'I mentioned the symptoms to my brother, who had already been diagnosed, and he told me to have myself checked. I controlled it for a long time with diet. Then I went on Metformin pills to balance my blood-sugar levels. But they didn't agree with me at all and I felt dreadful.

'Finally, I went on to insulin, which suits me perfectly. I inject myself every day. It's fine.

'I should lose weight, of course, but it's difficult. I have a rather painful back, which means I can't do that much exercise. It's an old injury. Years ago I was doing stunts in a rubbishy Italian film, *The Virgins Of Rome*, and cracked a vertebrae. It has caused arthritis in my spine.

'I don't take pills for that. I just put up with it. I also see a cranial osteopath, and I try to keep moving. I walk every day with the dog - not huge walks. I'm slower than I used to be and can't go as far.

'But frankly - exercise aside - I eat too much. I'm a wonderful cook, and like one decent meal a day. But I can suddenly find I'm feeding a lot of people, so I tend to eat more than I should. They just seem to turn up, and I've almost always got somebody staying. Friends ring up and say: "I'm in town!" It's lovely.

'But I don't like getting old. It's a bore. You are just beginning to get the hang of life - and then your body starts letting you down. I would like to be going for those long walks I used to go on, and I'd like to go horse-riding again.

'I used to be beautiful, but I gave up. I never valued my looks when I was young. I'd dress up if I had to go to a premiere, but I was always very lazy about grooming. Going to hairdressers and having manicures just bored me. I'd always rather be off doing something.

'But never mind. I remember a brilliant director, Lewis Gilbert, saying: "Don't ever get your face done because you'll always work. We'll always need some old people." And he was absolutely right.'

Let us know of any famous people you know that have had anxiety/depression. The more you think about it, and the more you find out about other people, the more common you will find it to be. Try and remember even in the lowest periods that you are not alone, and many people recover.

Make do and mend !!!!

The Clubs meeting on 29th January had as it's theme 'How to Economise'. Given the cut backs in funding and benefits, together with rising costs, what could be done to make life a bit easier, and your money go further.

A lot of really good ideas came, and a request made to put them in the newsletter. However please bare in mind that not all of the ideas may morally, ethically or legally correct. Never the less there is plenty of 'food for thought'.

Make do and mend—lost a button don't throw away, sew another one on.

Don't buy dish cloths—cut up and use an old towels and sheets.

Use old cooking oil in diesel car as fuel (filter first)

Try not to use or take out credit— It's an expensive option.

Collect sugar salt etc from coffee shops (I'm sure Mc Donalds wont miss a couple of sachets)

Don't be wasteful — do something with leftovers even if its only feed the dog.

Check for free delivery on items.

Eat out less.

Cook enough for several dinners that be microwaved in the following days.

Share with others— car transport, or bulk buy like a co-operative.

Walk or cycle instead of car or public transport. —It's better for you mental and physical health.

Drive sensibly (Economically)—Avoid harsh braking and acceleration, reduce speed and save fuel.

Shop around, and be prepared to bargain. It's not a British thing but you might be surprised if you try.

Consider getting a water meter fitted.

Beware of false economy—An item may be £2 cheaper in Nottingham, but its cost £5 to go there to buy it.

Use a shower instead of a bath full of water.

Use economy and low temperature washing machine settings, and wash with full loads

Try not to use dishwasher especially for only a few items.

Don't leave electrical things on standby—They still use some electricity.

Re-use paper and envelopes for shopping lists etc.

Get travel passes—Family railcard, Mango card, multiple journey tickets

If you have or use a car use a smaller more or more economical one (More mpg, less road tax)

Use charity collection bags as bin liner bags.

Make rag rugs.

Grow your own food.

Food for free —Collect natures harvest Blackberries etc

Look for bargains on Amazon, e bay Parabay.

Buy second hand.

Go compare—use internet search sites like Money Supermarket for mortgages, loans, insurance, holidays

Beware of cons—Doorstep selling is rarely a bargain If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't.

Recycle —One mans waste may be another mans treasure. Use internet sites like Freegle.

Join a library.

Buy better quality as it should last longer.

Buy early for Christmas (in January just after Christmas).

Look for reduced food as it approaches its use by date. Remember tin/jars of past best before dates are still edible .

Happy economising Let us know of any tips that you have found useful



A sad Loss

It is with regret that we are reporting the sad loss of Andrew Hare who died on 5th January 2011 at the age of 54. A large number of people attended the funeral at Markeaton Crematorium on 18th January.

Andrew was an active member of many mental health organisations including Derbyshire Voice, Derbyshire Mind, and the Mental Health Action Group where he was an area Rep for Derby City. He was a service user of both mental health and physical health services, and an active member of his local Church, St.Alkmunds on Kedleston Road, Derby. He was also a member of Derby Depression Club since 2008. A wreath and flowers were sent from the Club.

Andrew will always be remembered as a person who never gave in to his mental and physical difficulties.



Advertisement

The Marlowe Players will be featuring one of our members in their next production SILHOUETTE, an ingenious modern thriller by Simon Brett. Paul Makinson will be starring as Fisher.

The Play takes place in the Darley Abbey Village Hall from Tues 1st to Sat 5th March 2011 with performances starting at 7.00pm.

All tickets are £6.00, and can be obtained in advance on 07961 607373 or online at www.marlowe-players.co.uk Why not make note in your diary and join some other members of the Depression Club who hope to go and see it.



Congratulations

Congratulations to Professor Paul Gilbert, who was honoured in this years New years Honours List with a gong. Hopefully unlike the Beatles he will not

be returning it. He was awarded the OBE for services to the medical profession. Well done. Will you be showing it off the next time you come to talk to our Club ????



Club Committee Vacancies

Derby Depression Club is looking for volunteers to take over the Roles of Treasurer and Newsletter editor. Maybe its not for you, but you may know someone who is interested. Full support/training will be given, so why not give it a try.



Beat the winter blues with bird song

Spending 5 minutes a day listening to birdsong may help beat the winter blues scientists say.

The National Trust has compiled recordings of bird songs to remind those fed up with the cold and dark that spring is just around the corner. The Nation Trusts ecologist Peter Brash said "Birdsong is one of the most distinctive sounds from the natural world and gives us a warm glow inside when we hear it.

A similar effect is said to happen with whale sounds. Perhaps it is just the comforting feeling of being closer to nature?

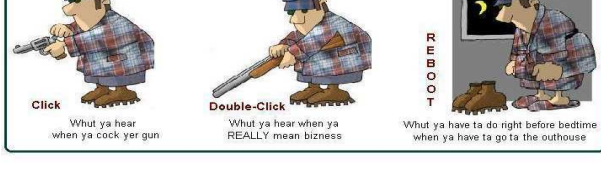
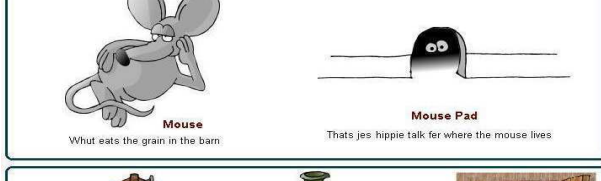
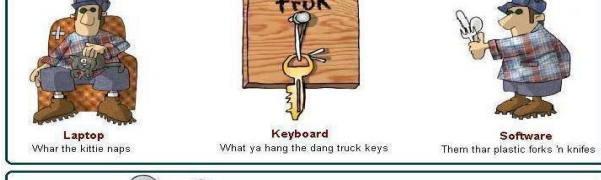
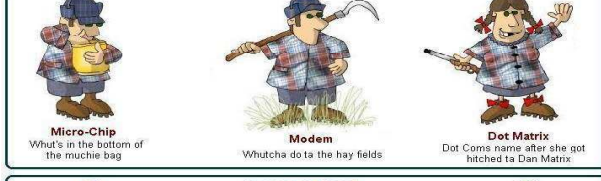
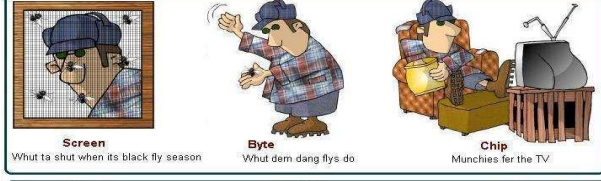
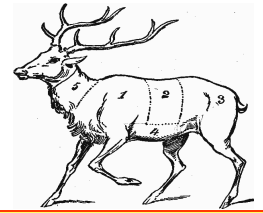


The Fun Page

TECHNOLOGY

For Country Folk

Why is Venison so expensive?
Because it's Deer meat !!!



I'm not really depressed

Wanted or free to a good home

Following the meeting on the 29th January 2011 it was suggested that the Club could have a swop shop. People could "advertise" surplus items they had no use for, or make a request for items they needed. If you like it could be a sort of recycling scheme.

To start the ball rolling has anyone got a cassette play for a partially sighted member of the club so she can listen to the self help tapes the Club has.

Pass any requests to the Newsletter editor (David Musk) for inclusion in the next magazine or just bring the items or requests to the regular Monday meetings.

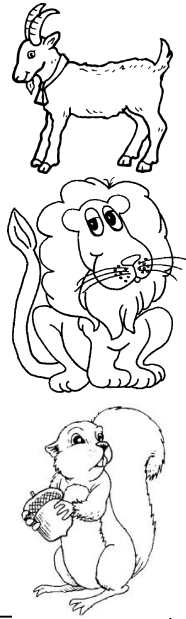
- FUTURE DATES**
- 7th March 2011
 - 21st March 2011
 - 4th April 2011
 - 18th April 2011
 - 9th May 2011
 - 23rd May 2011

LOST ANIMALS

G I R A F F P E C V G I
T E Y A S E L A H W O U
P K T F B Z E O G S A Z
N T N H Q T R D O G T X
R R A N H I R O N S G T
E X H K R G I N A O R A
E A P Q Q E Q P T K Y K
D C E V N R S W T I D R
Q I L L D N F L I O N E
Y N E G W X R A O B S E
G N H A Y Z O V C S N M
K H B A B O O N L I K H

Can you find the lost animals. They are in there somewhere?

- Baboon
- Goat
- Boar
- Lion
- Deer
- Meerkat
- Dog
- Elephant
- Tiger
- Whale



Editorial Note Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Derby Depression Club or the Depression Alliance