

# PsAZZ News

## **PUPPY LOVE**

....more than just a pet?  
one reader finds out!

## **Cardiff in a Teacup**

Meet our tea-lovin' blogger

## **Creative therapy**

Using arts & crafts to help  
ourselves in the fight against  
chronic pain

# Welcome

...to the first 2015 edition of PsAZZ News!

It seems to me that around about the end of January it can all start to feel like a bit of a slog - maybe some of that's down to the fact that our aches & pains increase with the cold and, once the sparkle of Christmas has been put away, it goes a bit flat and we get a bit weary. However...we are about to make up for the gloom with a unapologetically creative & slightly romantic edition of PsAZZ News - the first one for 2015!

In this issue we are focussing on things we LOVE... things that give us pleasure or might if we were to try them. To start with there's the tale of Puppy Love on p.6 and we meet a new PsAZZ group member who uses her love of tea as a positive focus away from her arthritis on p.20

We are looking at the therapeutic benefits of being creative on p.10 and there's a little papercrafting project to inspire you on p.14 PsAZZ updates are on p.4 and we are making our first new connection of the new year with a feature on NASS - the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society - which you can read all about on p.16


In the spirit of new year I am setting myself some new challenges which you can read about on p.26 and don't forget to try our simple culinary Valentine's treat on p.24 (even better shared over a bottle of fizz?!)

I hope you find this issue uplifting & inspirational and, if you too are still making resolutions for this year, please make one of them a promise to send something into PsAZZ News... it's your stories that make it!



Mel

contact me at: [psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)

 PsAZZ  
Psoriatic Arthritis Support Group

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*\*\*Thanks to Nic & Debbie for help with proof reading and sanity checking this issue*

# UPDATE

NEWS AWARENESS ACTIVITIES INFORMATION



Pssst... the annual PSA Information Day is taking place on Friday 27th March at Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution, Bath - check your emails for all the details!

## MOSAIC HAND ART

Great news is that our 2014 PsAZZ Awareness 'Mosaic Hand' artwork went up in Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (aka The Min) back in November! It has gone on display in the 'Parry Patient Room' on the first floor. All the pics are on our 'PsAZZ Awareness 2014' Pinterest board.

Thanks to Kate & Mandy who helped set it up and everyone who sent a picture - did you spot yours?

PsAZZ News is a free e-zine published by and on behalf of PsAZZ Psoriatic Arthritis Support Group.

Occasionally we will feature 'Ads' i.e. promotions, announcements or advertisements from other groups and individuals (or businesses that would like to share a special offer with us!)

If you are interested in placing an ad in a future issue of PsAZZ News simply get in touch via our email address [psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)



*tweet tweet!*

If you are not already connected to us on Twitter you really are missing out on all the great links and interesting finds we come across! We are not only gaining new followers and connecting to other groups but also people are finding and joining us (meet one new group member who found us on twitter on p.20)

We not only tweet PsAZZ related stuff, we share news, links, events and occasionally random things just for fun! Other times we use twitter to source & share interesting articles on themes we are interested in (check out all our tweets on the Microbiome and how gut health has an impact on inflammation) You can follow & tweet along with us @PsAZZGroup



*Having our say!*

*Last year WSUN invited PsAZZ to take part in a rheumatology focus group with Shelley Watson from the Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Shelley wanted to meet with us to find out what we think of the care we receive, what is good about it and what isn't - and if there were any service changes we would like to see.*

*It was a very lively Q&A session and we were told Shelley found the session very useful - we have got back in contact to ask how things have progressed since then and will let you know when we hear more...*



email [psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)

PUPPY L





# LOVE...

is there more to our pets than we realise?



**When** my husband started to get 'broody' for a puppy I was sceptical say the least... after all neither of us had ever owned a dog and I had managed to resist my daughters pre-teen nagging for a furry friend for years (she ended up with guinea pigs as a compromise!) The nearest experience we had of looking after a canine buddy was the fact that there had been a family pet when my husband was growing up but he was the first to admit he had never really had much to do with it .

Why the sudden craving I wondered - wasn't life busy enough as it was without adding anything extra? The arguments were woolly at first - something vague about how a dog can be good for things like exercise. At this point my daughter was holding her breath with anticipation... would her deep longing for a pooch finally be fulfilled? My son was equally 'psyched'.

We talked at length about the pros & cons - to begin with mainly practical ones such as who was going to take general care of it, walk it, pay for the vets fees and what would we do if we wanted to go on holiday. By this time my husband had started looking at pictures of cute fluffy bundles on the internet and constantly showing me in the hope that I would cave in. However, we decided we should live with the idea for a while before committing ourselves, and the poor pooch in question, to a hasty decision.



Fast forward several months and still the lingering idea of owning a dog hadn't gone away. It got to the point where I actually started to think we might get one but was adamant that this would not become my 'job' - if I'm honest, I think in part because some days I barely have the energy to sort myself out let alone an energetic puppy! Anyway, I began to try and seriously consider the pros because I guess at the end of the day you want your family to be happy and if this was going to bring happiness then who was I to stop it?!

The first thing I thought would be quite good was the exercise element of having a dog in the family - all those walks would be good for my husband who tends to spend many hours sitting in front of a screen in his line of work. I also thought it might be a sociable thing to do - I always see dog owners talking to each other and I noticed there was a good few regular walkers in our area who appear to have an almost Masonic type relationship with other dog walkers (what do they know that I didn't?!). And then of course there was the stress relief benefits to pet owning in general and this, it turned out was the clincher for me.

A quick bit of research revealed lots of benefits to pet ownership. To begin with they can act as a sort of mood elevator for not only for stress & anxiety but also depression, loneliness or simply helping to diffuse a bad mood. Stroking a pet is known to stimulate the release of oxytocin - a 'feel good'







hormone that is also a neurotransmitter that helps to send signals from the brain to your body. I discovered oxytocin helps to lower blood pressure, heart rate and cortisol levels so good for you in multiple ways. It's the same kind of effect you get from being hugged by another human or when a mother holds their baby.

With a younger child in the house it was also good to discover that dogs can have benefits for them too (beyond the obvious fun factor). It can help them to learn to be responsible and kind. It's also said that children who grow up with pets have better resistance to allergies and asthma due to the exposure of various bacteria they will inevitably experience.

For those who are isolated or lonely the companionship element of owning a pet can be massive not to mention acting as an alert - and not just as a virtual security system but sometimes medically such as in the case of dogs trained to detect epilepsy. I even discovered that airports allow special \*service dogs to accompany people on flights under certain circumstances such as medical conditions and they can help lessen flight anxiety.

*\*I recently spotted a news article about 'Man of Steel' actor Henry Cavill on route with his service dog ....which only goes to prove even 'Superman' needs a bit of support sometimes (full link here: [www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2914267/Henry-Cavill-holds-trusty-service-dog-arrives-flight-LAX.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2914267/Henry-Cavill-holds-trusty-service-dog-arrives-flight-LAX.html))*

Pets can also have a calming effect on those who live with chronic pain and can help take you off into a state similar to that of mindfulness or they simply keep you company on a day when you know you need to rest (I can vouch for both!)

So, as you can see from the pictures, after months of resisting, I did finally give into the idea (still with the proviso that I wouldn't end up the main carer & walker!) and 'Teddie' the Cavachon puppy joined our family. We've had him a couple of years now and he's definitely considered a member of the family. He loves to have a nosy at whatever you are doing and watches you with big brown saucer eyes when you are eating. Because he is very fluffy and he gets mucky on his walks he can get a wee bit whiffy when it's coming up to wash time but that doesn't stop him deciding to plonk himself down on your lap when he's in the mood. He's like a small child really - he makes us laugh with his silly antics, gets over-excited barking noisily at the big fat woodpigeons in our garden (and when he hears our letter box rattle!) but, all in all, it's kind of worked out OK and I have to admit there is a big fluffy dollop of pleasure in having Ted's company during the day :-)

***Do you have a loving, furry companion - send a pic to share in the next issue to [psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)***



A close-up photograph of a person's hands painting on a white card. The person is holding a paintbrush with a red and white handle. They are wearing a ring with multiple bands on their ring finger. The card is placed on a light-colored wooden surface. The text "Creative Therapy." is overlaid on the top right of the image.

# Creative Therapy.

The new year is a catalyst for many people, spurring them on to get fit, improve their diet, take up new challenges or interests but did you know that a new creative hobby might just be what the Dr ordered...





**In an early edition** of the PsAZZ newsletter there was a little piece called 'The Arts & Crafts of Distraction' which talked about creative pursuits being used as distraction from chronic pain. With it being a new year and, for many, a symbolic prompt to start something new we wanted to revisit the value of creative pursuits and how it may help people living with chronic pain.

Why might doing something creative help? Well, put simply, being totally absorbed in doing an enjoyable task can kind of 'take you away' from those repeating nudges of pain. There's much evidence out there that says doing something creative can increase our sense of wellbeing and help lift low mood as pleasure stimulates our brains to release dopamine, a natural anti-depressant.

Last September, through our link with WSUN, I went along to an 'Arts & Health in Wiltshire' conference in Devizes that featured speakers from Wiltshire Council, the RUH Bath, Healthwatch Wiltshire, Wilts CCG and many others from a variety of organisations. A GP from Gloucester, Simon Opher, gave a very interesting talk on how arts therapies can sometimes be as effective as anti-depressants and there was an interesting mix of presenting groups all using creative arts as therapy for different target areas such as hospital in-patients, special needs, elderly, mental health and so on.

The trouble with a chronic disease like inflammatory arthritis is that it can sometimes mean you become less able to do the activities you used to enjoy. And, always having aches & pains can get you down which in turn can lead to anxiety and depression.

In particular, Psoriatic Arthritis often affects the hands & wrists which can make traditional hobbies such as cooking and gardening difficult to pursue (although we do keep finding & adding great gadgets that can help with these sorts of activities on our Pinterest page so make sure you check them out!)

What we are really talking about here are 'creative' hobbies - and don't be put off by the label as you don't have to be fantastically artistic or talented to enjoy them! Just remember the emphasis on doing it for distraction & pleasure, not purpose (although that would be an added bonus).

If you haven't done anything creative since your school days you could start with something easy - like doodling - most of us have paper & pencils around and the fact

that doodles are, by their very nature, often 'nonsense' can be liberating. Or, even the least artistically talented person can have a go at colouring-in and there are an increasing range of adult colouring books appearing in the shops so you don't have to resort to childrens books.

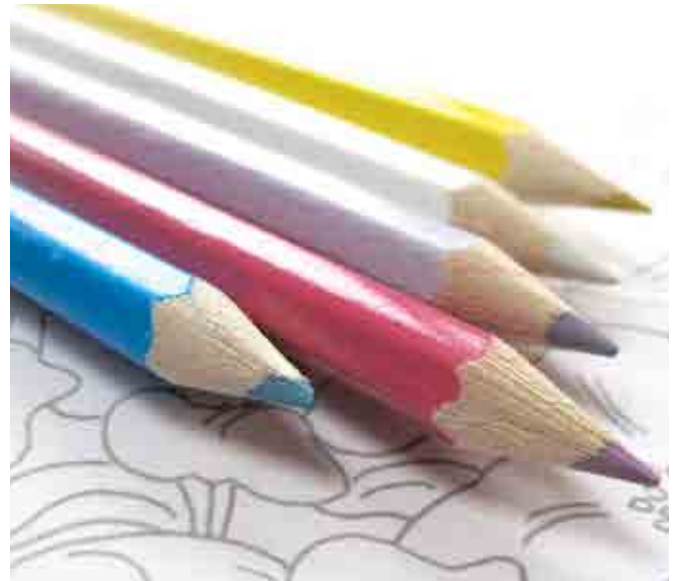
How about having a go at painting? You don't have to be van Gogh to enjoy splashing paint around - think abstract and just mix & slosh on colours that appeal to your mood right now. Forget perfect lines or shapes.. use your brush to dab it on, flick it on... simply let go and have fun. Alternatively, water colour pencils are great because you can doodle or sketch out the picture first then turn the strokes into water colour paint as if by magic!

Buttons and beads can be used for more than just sewing or jewellery making - try gluing them onto card or fabric to make a collage or picture. Add lots of different textures by adding ribbons, sequins and even recycle things like bottle caps. It may feel a little primary school at first but it can be surprisingly absorbing too.

If you are tempted by textiles but feel that sewing or embroidery is too fiddly for your hands why not have a go at machine embroidery or simple quilt making with just strips of fabric joined together? It can be a great way to recycle old clothes too.

Perhaps crochet or knitting tempts you? Large hooks, knitting needles and chunky wool can make it easier to work - and don't be put off by complex patterns - try using just basic knit stitches to make a simple scarf or squares that can be sewn up into a big blanket as an heirloom or even to donate to the homeless (the act of 'giving' is very rewarding).





It's believed there are specific mental health benefits to \*knitting - it is even given to people suffering with PTSD because the repetitive nature of knitting can activate the parasympathetic nervous system which works to calm us down. Although largely thought of as a women's hobby in recent times, it's interesting to note that knitting was historically used by Monks to make socks and by sailors & shepherds as a pastime - and Medieval knitting guilds were for 'men only'!

Papercrafts, making a collage or your own greetings cards is a tactile way to spend a couple of hours (see p.14 for the first in a new 'PsAZZ Crafts' step-by-step project feature for 2015!) And not all pastimes rely on you being creative, there are plenty of ready-to-make kits around and some hobbies, such as doing puzzles, can be enjoyed electronically on a computer or tablet.

Of course, we have by no means exhausted the list of creative pursuit possibilities here

but hopefully it's got you thinking?

Last but not least, how about trying some creative writing or even just writing to get something off your chest (a rant or outpouring can be satisfyingly shredded or deleted after!) If you've always fancied having a go at writing, why don't you send something to PsAZZ News - it could be a poem, short story, true life experience, a piece about places you've been to or just something you enjoy.

**We would love to hear about your hobbies and how they help you..**  
**email us at**  
**[psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)**



*\*If you would like to learn knitting or crochet turn to page 28 as we have a very good teacher among us who is willing to run a class!*



be mine



# A heart for my Valentine...

Indulge in a bit of creative therapy of your own and make this sweet 'n' simple papercraft heart card for the one you love...

You will need some scissors, glue, heart template or craft punch, selection of card or pretty paper, a small card & envelope

**1.** Use a craft punch or make a heart template from card and cut out 5 paper hearts

**2.** Carefully fold each paper heart shape in half.

**3.** Apply a little glue along one side of a heart.

**4.** Press a second paper heart onto the glue, matching the edges and fold line at the back .

Repeat the process with the rest of the paper hearts.

**5.** Position and glue the paper heart 'fan' to the front of a card (make your own or use a ready made blank)

**Optional...** add your own sentiment to the front of the card with rubber letter stamps or simply handwrite a message. You could even leave it blank to add an air of Valentine mystery...



Making connections with....



**The National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society** or 'NASS' for short, is a charity that began life at The Min (Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases). It was started by a group of patients, doctors and physiotherapists back in 1976 and is now a well established UK registered charity.

*Spondyloarthropathy* is the umbrella term for a number of chronic joint diseases to which Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) belongs, along with psoriatic arthritis. It's not unusual for someone to have one or more of these conditions.

AS is an inflammatory arthritis that affects the spine, with pain & stiffness running from the neck to lower back, bones can even grow and fuse together causing all kinds of postural difficulties.

For unknown reasons, it seems to be more common in men than women with a typical onset quite early on in adult life. It's also a systemic disease, like PsA, meaning other symptoms such as fatigue or general malaise can affect sufferers.

NASS has their own website - <http://nass.co.uk> - which clearly states it has 3 main aims:

- To seek a cure for ankylosing spondylitis and related conditions, and improve their treatment in the UK
- To promote awareness of these conditions in the UK
- To provide guidance, advice and information for people affected by these conditions including their families, their carers and their employers

NASS believe it is not enough to rely on medication and are big on promoting exercise to help maintain good posture, ability to do everyday tasks, keep a





good range of movement as well as helping to reduce stiffness and pain. There are over 90 NASS branches providing regular physiotherapy and hydrotherapy sessions throughout the UK. They say:

*“ Exercise is the single most important thing you can do to help yourself. AS is a condition for life and during its course it may affect you differently at different times. The fitter and more flexible you are, the better able you will be to deal with the stiffness and pain. “*

About a year ago I had the pleasure of meeting Debbie Cook who has been Chief Exec of NASS for the last 3.5yrs and I spoke to her again recently about the future vision & direction of NASS. It's clear that Debbie is very passionate about NASS and works hard to help them achieve as much of their goals as possible.

Debbie got involved with NASS in 1997 when she was diagnosed with 'something in the AS family' and joined her local branch. She applied for the role of CEO in 2011 because she wanted to see NASS as a vibrant charity which appealed to people of all ages and saw a particular challenge to engage young people diagnosed with AS.

She is particularly proud of the NASS **Back to Action** App, the first ever NASS Research Strategy driven by patients and the GP education programme that NASS has delivered reaching over 20,000 GPs, physiotherapists, chiropractors and osteopaths.

You can read about the NASS 5 year strategy via the website (it's full of useful information and publications you can download/ order with a twice yearly magazine for members!) which, in addition to continuing with their current activities, outlines new areas they want to focus on which are:

- **Early diagnosis**
- **Patient empowerment & self management**
- **Access to physiotherapy & exercise**
- **Awareness**



## Making Connections...

In 2015, for the first time, NASS will be holding volunteer manned bucket collections at certain train stations to help raise funds towards continuing awareness/information. They have also just announced the launch of a new Research Fund and Educational Bursary Fund so it looks like it will be a very busy year indeed and we look forward to catching up with them again!

If you would like more information on AS or you'd just like a chat do call the NASS Helpline on 020 8948 9117 between 09:00 and 12:00 Monday to Friday. Alternatively you can email Sally on [sallyd@nass.co.uk](mailto:sallyd@nass.co.uk) with your questions.

*Debbie tweets as @NASSchiefexec and you can keep up with her thoughts via her blog <http://nass.co.uk/NASS/en/loose-leaf-pages/directors-blog/> You can also find NASS on Facebook, Pinterest or on Twitter @nassexercise.*

*Special thanks to Debbie, Jill & Sally at NASS*



We've been seeking out blogs to share - here's a few we think are worth a visit..



**[myskinandi.wordpress.com](http://myskinandi.wordpress.com)**

A blog devoted to one persons experience of skin condition, Psoriasis

**[www.thehurtblogger.com](http://www.thehurtblogger.com)**

Autoimmune arthritis with humor, sarcasm, and community.

**[cardiffinateacup.wordpress.com](http://cardiffinateacup.wordpress.com)**

A tea loving girl with PsA (read about this blog on p.x)

**[synovialjointsblog.blogspot.co.uk](http://synovialjointsblog.blogspot.co.uk)**

The blog of Dr. Antoni Chan, MD PhD - sharing his thoughts and opinions on all things arthritis and rheumatology.

**[runningforarthritis.wordpress.com](http://runningforarthritis.wordpress.com)**

A blog that tells what living with someone suffering from arthritis is like and how they are raising money for Arthritis Research UK.

**[nass.co.uk/loose-leaf-pages/directors-blog/](http://nass.co.uk/loose-leaf-pages/directors-blog/)**

Thoughts from the desk of NASS Chief Exec Debbie Cook

**[www.theflakyfashionista.com](http://www.theflakyfashionista.com)**

A blog about fashion and psoriasis - great for tips!

**[psazzgroup.wix.com/psazz](http://psazzgroup.wix.com/psazz)**

Occasional extra thoughts from PsAZZ HQ :-)

Do you have or know a great blog we can share?



## Readers Story

Jaye is one of our newest PsAZZ group members who joined us after finding us on Twitter - we noticed she also blogs about her love of tea so we asked her to write about it for us...

# Cardiff ...in a Teacup!



I was first diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis at the age of 24. I had been suffering with joint pain in a wide range of joints for a few years but it was when my plantar fasciitis meant that I had to use a walking stick I really pushed to get a diagnosis. At the time I wasn't fully aware that I had psoriasis as it had been previously misdiagnosed. It was when dactylitis (sausage digits) started in my toes and I pointed out a small patch of psoriasis to my GP that PsA was suspected.

I try not to let  
it affect my life  
as much as it could  
because I just  
live my life in a  
different way

A referral to a rheumatologist later confirmed the diagnosis. I started off on Naproxen and it has since progressed to me currently being on a range of painkillers and medications including tramadol, prednisone and methotrexate. I'm currently waiting to start on anti-TNF treatment but there have been some complications which has caused quite a big delay.

Despite it being over 18 months since my diagnosis I'm finding that it's continuing to affect me more and more socially, emotionally and physically with exhaustion and fatigue being as hard as the physical pain at times. Saying this, I try not to let it affect my life as much as it could because I just live my life in a different way. I

plan things in advance more and I factor in rest periods.

I got married when I was at my worst physically and I'm so glad I did because I don't want my psoriatic arthritis to control my life.

One hugely positive thing that has come around as a result of my illness is my love of both tea and blogging. I discovered my love of tea at roughly the same time my joint pain started at a local specialist teahouse in Cardiff. It was a cup of Vanilla Black tea that started what has now become an obsession. I'm constantly looking for new teas to try and new teaware to drink it from. It's an interest that my husband and I have developed together and it's perfect because it doesn't take too much physical or mental effort to pursue.

I eventually started a blog called 'Cardiff in a Tea Cup' last year in order to explore my love of tea even further. I was off work with a particularly bad flare at the time



## Readers Story

and I just set up the blog one day without putting much thought or planning into it.

The idea was that I would have something I could do from home to take my mind off things if I wasn't well enough to do anything else. I could write what I knew about teas, teas I had tried or teahouses I had visited. It also gave me things to look forward to and I started making a huge list of places I wanted to visit for tea. The blog has evolved a lot since then. It has enabled me to meet new people both online, and in person, who love tea and didn't know me before my health was affected.

I've made some fantastic new friends who I can meet up with for either a quick pot of tea or a special afternoon tea and they know my limits from the outset. I've also met other people who suffer with chronic illness and I have seen how well they cope once they have become used to living with it. It's really helped me to rebuild any confidence that was initially knocked by my diagnosis and gives me lots of hope for the future.

The idea was that I would have something I could do from home to take my mind off things if I wasn't well enough to do anything else

Blogging has also done a lot for me that doesn't relate to my health in any way. I've been able to try lots of new teas, with the latest being some particularly interesting black teas grown in Georgia. It has also meant that I have been able to develop my writing skills. I've always wanted to write and my blog has given me an outlet to do so with my love of tea giving me a subject I'm passionate about to write about.

The fact that I have been shortlisted for the UK Blog Awards 2015 means that I will definitely continue to blog as it has become more than just a distraction from illness. It's become my main hobby. Psoriatic arthritis may have changed my life but in some ways it has actually changed it for the better!



Thankyou for sharing your story Jaye and Good Luck with the UK Blog Awards!

You can check out Jaye's blog here:

[cardiffinateacup.wordpress.com](http://cardiffinateacup.wordpress.com)



# Dear PsAZZ...

...comments, tips and emails...

**Q:** I'd like to pass on an old but useful tip for anyone suffering with backache! Recently a friend told me to take a bath in Epsom Salts and... it worked great!

**A:** *Thanks for telling us - I certainly remember Epsom salts being talked about as I grew up - I wonder if anyone else has had success with them?*

*(\*As much as we like to try different remedies it's wise to run ideas by your Dr first too - and you never know they might have even more great tips to share!)*



***If you have any questions, comments or good tips for our group members please email them to us at:***

***[psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)***



# wsun

**Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network**

**Supporting service users to speak out**

**[www.wsun.co.uk](http://www.wsun.co.uk)**

# *Sweets for my sweet....*

**I**t wouldn't be Valentine's without chocolate but with sugar getting so much bad press and being touted as a cause of inflammation, maybe it's best to make sure your cacao fix is of the dark variety!

Chocolate has long had a reputation for aphrodisiac qualities and was highly revered by ancient civilisations such as the Mayans and the Aztecs who thought it was 'food of the Gods' and even used it as a form of currency. It's said that one of the famous Cadbury brothers were first to make a box especially for chocolates and thereafter, it seems, a new tradition was born!

We can find other good reasons to eat dark chocolate too (and not just on February 14th) as it's packed with good stuff like antioxidants, flavanoids plus vitamins and minerals such as potassium, copper, magnesium and iron (it also contains caffeine).

Some people do find the bitter taste less palatable than sweeter milk chocolate varieties (which are usually packed with sugar) so we have come up with a suggestion to not only help





you choose the best kind of chocolate, but get a sweet kick too from a fruit that also has the surprising reputation for being a bit of an inflammation fighter... strawberries!

Strawberries contain Vitamin C, flavanoids (healthy compounds) and are said to block certain enzymes involved with inflammation and help to lower levels of C-reactive protein in our blood (a common marker of inflammation that you are probably already familiar with). They also contain fructose which is a type of natural sugar but is a better kind than the processed white stuff and, as it goes, strawberries have lower levels than some other fruits.

So.. what's not to love? Warm melted chocolate, scrummy strawberries... mmmm...yes please!

Have a Happy Valentine's Day xxx

*\*No strawberries were harmed in the making of this feature (although a few might have been eaten in the name of research!)*

*\*\*\*Some people can be sensitive to certain fruits or vegetables so avoid them if you know this to be the case! Always use your common sense and talk to your health care provider for advice\*\*\**



# These little things..

(my New Year's Resolutions)



I couldn't really put together the first 2015 issue of PsAZZ News without mentioning NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS and I feel I should try and set a good example (plus it may even inspire you!) So, I am taking the plunge and sharing mine with you.... it also means I will really have to try and stick with the plan or look like a complete flake (<- I promise that was an un-intentional psoriasis pun!)

So here goes...

1) Like many of you I am very interested in good nutrition so I am embarking on a course to get a proper basic understanding of the principles with the aim of adding as many 'good' arthritis foods into my diet as possible!

2) I know NASS are right about exercise (p.16) ...but I also know from experience that getting going is one of the biggest stumbling blocks to exercising with arthritis - especially this time of year and when you only have yourself to motivate! But I'm setting myself a challenge that has cost nothing more than the price of a pedometer (in case you are interested I got mine for £1 from a well known high street shop that happens to sell everything for...£1) plus a pen & paper to write down my daily steps total. I am going to start recording my average daily steps for a while and then aim to increase them. This is the basic challenge:

**Day 1:** March 1st 2015

**Target:** increase my total daily steps by 50% by end of the month

Ok....I can do this...I hope....keep your (crooked?) fingers crossed for me!

-Mel

***I would love to know if/what New Year challenges you have set yourself... drop me an email at [psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)***

**\*Remember: always a good idea to check with your health care provider first before embarking on any new exercise plan!\***

# Want to learn knitting or crochet?

We are lucky to have among us an expert knitter and crochet guru who would be willing to teach a class the basics of getting started with these fabulous hobbies.

If you are interested all you need to do is email us and we will put you on our list to contact when the session is arranged.

Now you can really  
get that new  
hobby started...

email [psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)







# Nutritional Bytes....

Those who follow us on twitter & facebook will have seen how we are always trying to add 'the good stuff' into our lunches at PsAZZ HQ.... whether that be through warming turmeric soups, cups of herbal tea, snacks or quick 'n' easy throw together salads like this kale, avocado, celery, walnut & extra virgin olive oil mix.... mmmmm...crunchy & nutritious!

If you have any good suggestions send them our way to try out - just email us at [psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)

# LINKS

**[www.papaa.org](http://www.papaa.org) - Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Support (UK)**

**[www.savethemin.org.uk](http://www.savethemin.org.uk) - sign up to support the RNHRD (aka 'The Min')**

**[www.arthritisresearchuk.org](http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org) - Arthritis Support UK**

**[www.arthritiscare.org.uk](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk) - Arthritis Care**

**[www.livingwithpsoriaticarthritis.org](http://www.livingwithpsoriaticarthritis.org) - online support group**

**[www.psoriasis-association.org.uk](http://www.psoriasis-association.org.uk) - Psoriasis foundation**

**[www.foodhospital.channel4.com](http://www.foodhospital.channel4.com) - looks at how foods affect diseases**

**[www.psoriasis.org](http://www.psoriasis.org) - US based National Psoriasis Foundation**

**[www.psoriasisrx.com](http://www.psoriasisrx.com) - mainly information about psoriasis**

**[www.psorinfo.com](http://www.psorinfo.com) - a psoriasis support website**

**[www.psoriasis-help.org.uk](http://www.psoriasis-help.org.uk) - psoriasis support website**

**[www.birdbath.org.uk](http://www.birdbath.org.uk) - Bath Institute for Rheumatic Diseases**

**[www.rnhrd.nhs.co.uk](http://www.rnhrd.nhs.co.uk) - Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases ('The Min')**

**[www.ilc.org.uk](http://www.ilc.org.uk) - the Independant Living Center**

**[www.psoriasense](http://www.psoriasense) - Psoriasis and PsA Information**

**[www.livingwithpsoriaticarthritis.org](http://www.livingwithpsoriaticarthritis.org) - online support group**

**[www.wsun.co.uk](http://www.wsun.co.uk) - The Wiltshire & Swindon Users Network**

**[www.uclh.nhs.uk/OurServices/OurHospitals/RLHIM/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.uclh.nhs.uk/OurServices/OurHospitals/RLHIM/Pages/Home.aspx)**  
- Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine

**[www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk](http://www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk)** - The Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group website

**[www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk)** - Healthwatch Wiltshire website

**[www.arthursplace.co.uk](http://www.arthursplace.co.uk)** - Arthritis Support for young adults

**[www.nass.co.uk](http://www.nass.co.uk)** - National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society

**[www.psazz.wix.com](http://www.psazz.wix.com)** - The PsAZZ website

**[www.facebook.com/pages/Psazz/433368290108744](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Psazz/433368290108744)** - PsAZZ Facebook

**[www.twitter.com/PsAZZGroup](https://www.twitter.com/PsAZZGroup)** - PsAZZ on Twitter

**[www.pinterest.com/PsAZZ/](https://www.pinterest.com/PsAZZ/)** - PsAZZ on Pinterest

If you have any useful links to add to this page please email them to us at

[psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)





*Join us next time...*  
*for updates, news and more!*

We are a self-supporting, volunteer run group and we would love you to help us - we currently rely on goodwill gestures for everything we do but together we could do so much more...

**Do you think you might be able to help?**

[email psazzgroup@gmail.com](mailto:psazzgroup@gmail.com)

