

## NEWSLETTER NO. 16 (May 2004)

### MARGARET HILLS

Margaret Hills passed away peacefully at home on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003 following a rapid deterioration in her heart condition. She had coped very well with her enlarged heart since the onset of rheumatic fever when she was 21 years old.

Margaret led a full, varied and happy life, which included bringing up a large family and becoming well known for her work in natural treatment for arthritic conditions.

**MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.**

Her professional legacy encompasses her published books and her Clinic which will continue under the guidance of her daughter, Christine Horner, who had worked alongside her since 1986 and is a qualified Nutritional Medicine and Scenar Practitioner.

Further details of Margaret's life and work are included on a separate sheet.

Such a lot has happened since my last newsletter, as you might imagine. The time leading up to my mother's death was very difficult; organising the funeral, and since then dealing with all the estate issues including the sale of her home. It has been naturally emotional and, above all, time consuming. Dealing with such matters is one of the privileges of being the oldest daughter in the family! Still, life goes on and between us all at the Clinic we have managed to keep on top of things (just about). I will now endeavour to bring you up to date.

*Christine Horner*

## **EU Legislation**

On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2002, from our Health Food Shop we presented a petition signed by over a hundred of our customers protesting about the proposed European legislation. We received a visit from our local MP, Andy King, at our shop in Millar Court, Station Road, Kenilworth, along with a journalist from our local newspaper. He agreed with the Petition and felt that this legislation should not go ahead. The general public and various campaigners have been fighting a ban on the future availability of thousands of vitamins and food supplements. Various celebrities have given the problem a higher profile including Jenny Seagrove, Belinda Lang, Tracey Childs, Gordon Newman and others.

Despite all such protests, the EU issued the Food Supplements Directive in July 2002, and in July 2003 Parliament transposed the Directive into UK national law. This new law regulates vitamin and mineral supplements, aiming to bring the rules of all EU countries into line. In brief, if an ingredient is not on the "Positive List" it will not be allowed after July 2005; this is in contrast to normal UK practice which is based on the principle that anything not specifically banned has been permitted. The "Positive List" ensures that all the standard vitamins and almost all the major minerals will still be available. However, many superior nutrients - developed to be better tolerated and more easily absorbed - have been overlooked.

In addition, the EU is yet to rule on what level of each vitamin or mineral will be allowed as a daily dose. It is already apparent that a cautious approach means that most may be limited to well below current levels. These maximum levels will be negotiated over the next few months with the aim of being implemented probably during 2006-2007. In the UK the daily dosages have been based on safety but most European countries are keen that these levels should be very much lower.

A challenge – backed by many manufacturers, distributors, retailers and trade associations in the UK, Ireland and several other EU countries - was mounted to this new legislation due to come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2005. The grounds given were that the Food Supplements Directive is disproportionate, inappropriate and an affront to human rights. This challenge was heard in the High Court in London on January 30<sup>th</sup> 2004 and resulted in both permission for a Judicial Review and a ruling that the legislative powers of the European Commission should be examined by the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. In other words, is it legal? Even now, the Food Supplements Directive could be revoked. The worry about this legislation is that it threatens people's ability to

take charge of their own health. It is also dangerous as it is designed to further increase people's reliance on pharmaceutical companies by eliminating options to their prescription drugs. It is my belief that these directives and laws to regulate supplements are being promoted and encouraged by the pharmaceutical industry. We are watching closely to see what happens next and remain hopeful that our treatment will be largely unaffected by it.

**D**oes our treatment work? Well for those of you who might be temporarily struggling, it normally helps to read about how others have got on. Here follows a selection of reports from people who have written since the last newsletter. When you have read them, they should help you to have complete confidence in your treatment. Have no doubts; you will get better. Be positive. Carry out your treatment carefully day by day, and steadily you should improve. I would like to write your story one of these days!

Mrs. M. M. from Porthcawl, started our treatment in May 1994 at the age of 62. She had been diagnosed with arthritis recently but had suffered from sciatica and some eczema too. At that time, she was finding it difficult to get up from a chair or from kneeling down but was able to walk without a stick and was mobile. She also had problems with blood pressure and her weight. She was taking no medication at all. 8 ½ years later, she wrote to us: *"To begin with, I honestly didn't know that I suffered from arthritis, my knees had always "cracked" when I was a child and I believed this was normal. There is no history whatsoever of arthritis in my family and it was only when I was feeling very low and depressed and aching all over that I picked up "Curing Arthritis the Drug-Free Way" ...it was like opening Pandora's Box - each page was a revelation. I now knew what was wrong with me - I had feared the worst - cancer! I now read up all I could about arthritis and decided I would not take drugs accompanied by their side effects. I made an appointment to see the Dr. and he confirmed that I had arthritis in both knees. I stated that I wanted to follow a drug-free regime and his answer was "Good for you!". I began your treatment - some days were an improvement and some days I had to use a stick to walk about even in the house. Climbing stairs was a nightmare, having to haul myself up one step at a time, clinging on to the handrail as I was terrified of falling downstairs. If the weather changed from sunny to wet then I was in agony! Now, I'm free from pain, have loads more energy - have lost weight so I can now walk about freely without a stick, and can play with my grandchildren - the eldest is only 6 - so I'm having a great fun time once more... I hope I haven't bored you witless but I'm so pleased with my recovery that I wanted to thank you personally for all the help and advice I've received."*

## **PROTEIN POWDER**

**H**ere's a tip from Marie P. of Co. Wicklow – just in case you need a change from your normal routine!

Blend your daily dose of The Margaret Hills Protein powder with a banana, natural low-fat live or Bio yoghurt, honey and skimmed milk, adding a little nutmeg if you like it. It tastes delicious. *Thank you, Mrs. P.*

Mr. B.G., (aged 40) from Blackburn started our treatment in April 1995. He was taking Prednisolone for pulmonary fibrosis for the previous three years and had had cortisone injections into his finger joints and wrists three years previously, and again into his wrists six months previously. He writes in December 2002 as follows:

*“In January 1992 I developed arthritis probably after a cold. However, I had been rather run down after several years of loss of sleep whilst our children were small, coupled with overwork and major building works at home. The arthritis rapidly spread from finger and toe joints to ankles, knees, elbows and shoulders. It was so acute that the consultant sent me to Wrightington Hospital in February 2002 for cortisone injections and physiotherapy. By this point I was unable to drive as I could not grasp the steering wheel. The inflammation in my wrists exacerbated the carpal tunnel problems in both hands and without the cortisone injections, I was awoken by cramp and pins and needles in my fingers soon after dropping off to sleep.*

*The injections helped but over-exercise of the hands at any time caused the problem to come back. Furthermore, routine chest x-rays taken in hospital revealed that the inflammation had spread to my lungs resulting in severe shortness of breath. After I returned home from hospital I was referred to a chest consultant who diagnosed pulmonary fibrosis which is similar to asbestosis. The consultant immediately prescribed a high dose of Prednisolone which cleared up both the lung problem and the arthritis within two or three days. Fortunately my lungs returned to normal but in many cases there is a permanent loss of capacity.*

*Unfortunately, I was then unable to successfully reduce the dosage without the arthritis and fibrosis returning. You have identified this classic flare up as very common with steroid treatment. Useful and life-saving though steroid treatment can be, it does fall into the category of “if it looks too good to be true, then it probably is too good to be true”. As a result I was advised by my consultant that I would need to remain on Prednisolone for the rest of my life. Needless to say this prospect was very depressing, particularly bearing in mind side effects such as painful stones in my saliva duct, thin and papery skin resulting in cracking and bleeding fingertips and loss of energy, my sense of taste and smell and muscle tone. After trying a number of alternative treatments including a never to be forgotten brief spell on a zany American regime of raw liver and enemas, my wife suggested that I look at Margaret Hills’ book “Curing Arthritis the Drug Free Way”. I read the book, started the regime and decided to contact Mrs. Hills to obtain the formula and protein which she recommends. I came down for a consultation on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1995 and took on the full treatment of diet, mineral and vitamin supplements, coupled with hot epsom salt baths.*

*I was at a very low ebb when I saw Mrs. Hills but she was immediately optimistic about my being able to get off steroids altogether. She advocated a very slow reduction in dosage (down by 0.5mg per day once a month). She was also confident that I could expect to get over the lung condition at the same time. Prior to coming down to Kenilworth I had undergone wrist operations to ease the carpal tunnel problem which I felt would give me scope to cope with a little more inflammation during any spell of trying to come off the steroids.*

*In the event, the very gradual reduction in dosage caused the arthritis to return to some degree in all the previous places but without the dead hand problems previously experienced. In mid-March 1997 I finally came off the steroids completely. All inflammation gradually reduced so that by 2000 I had minimal symptoms.*

*My chest consultant took a typical, conventional NHS view that alternative therapy was of doubtful benefit and quite literally described the recovery of my lungs and my ability to*

*dispense with steroid treatment as “miraculous”. I have been able to resume all my normal activities and I run, swim, go to the gym and go fell walking. It is worth mentioning that despite lifelong problems with asthma and some dermatitis, I now have no significant problem with either of these conditions. I am conscious that arthritis might return in the future and I am careful to eat a largely organic diet and to keep my intake of vitamins and minerals up to a good level.*

*I cannot thank you and Mrs. Hills sufficiently for your help in restoring me to good health. I would certainly not have achieved this by following the only advice and assistance on offer from conventional medicine.”*

## **EPSOM SALTS**

For some time now, it has become very difficult to obtain epsom salts locally. As it remains a very important part of your treatment, we have had to overcome this problem somehow. It fell to us to order it (by the ton) from the manufacturers, store it, break it down into manageable proportions and then supply it all over the country. What a task that has been, and completely unexpected! Now you will see from our order form that we can deliver it in sizes of 6kg and 10kg. The expense of delivering it is unavoidable as it so heavy, so if you are passing this way by car do feel free to pop into either the Clinic or our Health Food Shop in the town and fill up your boot! It helps if you can phone first just to make sure that it will be there for you. The Clinic (01926 854783) is open from 9-5 Monday to Friday; the Shop (01926-850019) is open from 9.00-5.30 Monday to Saturday.

Mrs. J.B. C., (aged 74) from Prestwick started our treatment in May 2001 and was in good health apart from arthritis in her knees and hands, and a recent torn ligament at the back of her left knee which was very painful and had been using a zimmer frame and walking stick. She was taking no arthritic medication at all. She writes in November 2002: *“My diet has been so beneficial that all I can say is ‘Thank you for being there when I needed you so much’. The days when I could hardly walk because of pain are gone. On holiday I walked every day, some days 3 miles, even climbed a rocky hillside. I know that if I resort back to my original way of eating it will be back to ‘square one’. ... How thankful I am that I tried.”*

## **CURING ARTHRITIS THE DRUG-FREE WAY**

One of the tasks I have been working on for some time was to update my mother’s book. This has now been done; it incorporates information on products that have become highly publicised and explains whether or not they would be helpful adjuncts to our treatment – and why. The new 2004 edition is now available at the Clinic and in health food shops and bookshops: ISBN 0-85969-913-7.

## TRANSLATIONS

**PORTUGUESE** Just as I was preparing this newsletter, a parcel was delivered from our publishers, Sheldon Press. It contained complimentary copies of a new book based on “**Curing Arthritis – More Ways to a Drug-Free Life**”, translated into **Portuguese**, entitled “Como Curar a Artrite e viver sem medicamentos”. This book has been produced by Editora Pensamento-Cultrix Ltda., Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil, ISBN 85-316-0818-X. Well, you never know what is going to happen next! What a lovely surprise that was!

**LARGE PRINT UK** “**Curing Arthritis: More Ways to a Drug-Free Life**” (UK version) is also available in large print – ISBN 1-85089-397-7.

**LARGE PRINT USA** “**Curing Arthritis: More Ways to a Drug-Free Life**” (USA version) is available in **large print** – ISBN 1-56000-459-2. This version incorporates both my mother’s original work with this title and also her “**Curing Arthritis Exercise Book**” which was co-authored with the physiotherapist Janet Horwood.

**LARGE PRINT UK** “**Curing Arthritis Exercise Book**” is also available in **large print** in two versions: hardback (ISBN 1 85695 054 9) and paperback (ISBN 1 85695 083 2).

**GREEK** My mother’s original 1985 edition of “**Curing Arthritis the Drug-Free Way**”, has already been translated into **Greek** and published by a company in Athens, a copy of which we have at the Clinic. Further details of the publisher are available on request – typing the Greek lettering looks a bit tricky!

**CHINESE** The same goes for another of my mother’s books “**Curing Illness the Drug-Free Way**”. Unfortunately, the English version is now out of print but it has been published in **Chinese** – ISBN 957-621-154-0.

**USA** “**Cider Vinegar**” has been published by Ulysses Press, Berkeley, California, USA – ISBN 1-56975-141-2.

With our address given in all these books, is it any wonder we are so busy!

## HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Dr. Thomas Stuttaford wrote in “The Times” on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2004 “*The accepted view of HRT has undergone a fundamental shift. Much of what was considered good medicine two years ago is now thought to be mistaken, and even potentially harmful in a few cases. Entrenched beliefs will have to be rethought and, in large part, disregarded....It had been hoped that, as well as easing gynaecological symptoms of the menopause and reducing the incidence of osteoporosis, HRT would lessen the chance of having heart attacks, strokes, pulmonary emboli and DVTs. In fact, the present evidence suggests that HRT*

*actually increases the incidence of these conditions. The last bit of bad news is that there is increasing – though inconclusive – evidence that any effect HRT has on Alzheimer’s is likely to be undesirable.”*

For years my mother believed that HRT was undesirable and unnecessary with possible long term effects that could not have been evaluated. She encouraged anyone taking it to gradually discontinue it. As in many matters, she has been proved correct. In leaving off HRT, women have mostly found that their original menopausal symptoms reappeared, sometimes worse than they ever used to be. This is because HRT acts like an anti-inflammatory drug in suppressing and masking symptoms, not clearing them completely. By acting in this way, it also masks arthritic symptoms so that by the time the arthritis has become noticeable it is in fact quite deep-seated.

In Newsletter no. 10 (May 1999), there is a lovely recipe for a cake, which provides many natural ingredients that help to alleviate menopausal symptoms. Let us know if you would like a copy.

Mrs. C.B. from Middlesex sent us this tribute. She started our treatment in Feb 1992 having recently stopped the Naprosyn she had taken for 16 years for her back. She had suffered with arthritis in her spine for about 30 years, and had been through a period of over five years of emotional stress and illness. She was taking no prescribed orthodox medication.

*About twelve years ago, I became a patient of Margaret Hills. With a hip that had recently ‘gone’, i.e. I had to resort to using a stick, and the prospect of at least a year’s wait for any NHS treatment, I consulted Mrs. Hills through her booklet ‘Curing Arthritis the Drug-Free Way’. A very worn back as well made me a good candidate and led me to hope - hope that I may not even need a hip replacement.*

*Over a period of time, and as we all know, this is a long-term treatment, gradually my mobility became better and I felt better. What a lot of patience and persistence it required to change the diet and stick to the regime. Still though, I was struggling; struggling for enough mobility and energy to do the gardening and all the things general life throws out to one.*

*I succumbed to allowing myself to be put on the waiting list for a hip replacement, but when I got there the staff told the surgeon that I looked too mobile, and I was sent home just before my pre-med. One elderly patient there commented ‘I have never known anyone to be sent home like that before!’ Again, years later, I had a full bone scan. I felt that things were getting worse, and perhaps more dangerous in the long run. Besides, a little grandson was on the way and I needed to be mobile enough for him. Again I was told that I did not need the operation.*

*At this stage, I had to go private. I had heard of a very reputable surgeon, and done it was, although I was scared at first. Being a rambler, and having forged my way into organising weekends for the Club, I set myself the task of doing just this for about six months afterwards on the Spring Bank holiday. The members expected nothing much, but were amazed. I had chosen Lulworth Cove, Dorset, and if any of you have walked or heard of the Cliff walk to Tyneham, you will know what I mean.*

*Now, four years on I have gone from strength to strength. Just last week I attended the four-year check up at the hospital outpatients. The Consultant/Surgeon was very pleased with the x-ray, including the other hip, and my mobility. "The slim ones do the best", he said, and I thought having reduced from 8 ½ st to 8 st under the Margaret Hills treatment, and stayed there, it had served me well. I am sure that recovery is better from it. Today, and in fact, all this year, I have had a sick husband with bowel cancer, double the work and responsibility, plus another grandchild, taking one whole day a week off to look after them. At the age of 71, it has been tough, really tough, but I am sure that without the treatment and knowledge derived from arthritis through Margaret Hills, I would not have had the same will to cope as I have done of recent years. It has paid off, so anyone just starting the treatment now through her daughter, Christine Horner, do not despair for too long. They are there to help, even through the difficult times and, as they know, there have been quite a few of those.*

*Thank you very much to the Margaret Hills Clinic. I think that in my case, I had not come into contact with it early enough to prevent the hip replacement, or build up my spine as the arthritis had gone too far, but as for the freedom of mobility, the pain factor and wellbeing, I cannot overestimate it enough. As with most things 'you have to catch 'em young'!*

*Mrs. C.B., October 2003*

**I** often get requests from patients for "someone to talk to", which is perfectly reasonable but pretty difficult to organise. The best way is to see if you can identify with the following individuals – and, if you can, let us know and we will ensure your details are exchanged – in whatever way you wish. Where we have been successful, both parties have thoroughly enjoyed the contact. Let us know if you would like to add your name to our next newsletter.

1. Mrs. E.C., Romsey, would like to be put in touch with someone on the treatment in the Romsey (Hampshire) area. She is 73, started the treatment a year ago in June, is diabetic and subject to asthma since teenage years. She was originally diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in 1991 and has taken various orthodox medications prior to our treatment. She was needing a frame or, at times, wheelchair.
2. Mrs. L.R., Durham, would like to speak to anyone, anywhere, on the treatment. She started the treatment in June 2002 at the age of 45 after being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis affecting her hands, fingers, elbows, knees and feet. She is having her ups and downs but now is getting periods where she feels great. She has taken anti-inflammatory medication, but as little as possible.
3. Mrs. K.S., Falmouth, has recently started the treatment – in January 2004. She is 36 and has had problems with her knees swelling since 5 years ago. She needs crutches off and on at the moment and has had to take various anti-inflammatories and antibiotics due to dental problems just prior to starting our treatment. She has four children under 10 and is finding it very difficult to cope.

We will only give names, addresses and telephone numbers where we have been asked to do so. Otherwise, full confidentiality is ensured.

# MARGARET HILLS

*A True Pioneer of "Alternative Medicine"*

In May 2003, Margaret Hills passed away peacefully at home at the age of 78. She has been laid to rest in Oaks Cemetery, Kenilworth, and will be greatly missed by all her family and friends, the staff who over the years helped to run her Clinic and Health Food Shop, as well as her patients, whom she considered as extended family, and many others whose life path crossed with hers.

Margaret's Catholic faith was of utmost importance and during her last weeks she was supported spiritually by her local priest, Father Kevin Hooper, on numerous occasions. He enabled her to express her faith, her fears and hopes, looking beyond death and to a future that would proceed in a different vein, but in which we would all be reunited. She believed that, "Everything that happens in this world is organised from above. The intense suffering I was subjected to in my 21st year was my first initiation to achieve my affinity with the dreaded pain of rheumatoid and osteo-arthritis".

On two occasions in her life, Margaret was given just two hours to live; first of all when she developed croup, and then again when she developed lockjaw. Luckily, the predictions were proved wrong. Margaret then developed rheumatic fever at the age of 21 whilst training to be a nurse in London. Her story is detailed in her first book, "Curing Arthritis the Drug-Free Way", and suffice to say here that she rid herself of both osteo-arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis by the age of 36. By keeping fairly closely to the dietary guidelines and supplement programme she became renowned for, it never reappeared.

It was her heart that struggled in later years; she suffered one major heart attack in her forties and many minor heart attacks that went almost unnoticed. Her heart had been weakened and enlarged by rheumatic fever at the onset of arthritis. She submitted to worried members of the family who urged her to seek medical attention, but could not go against her fundamental principles by taking any prescribed medication. She would have done, if she truly believed it would help.

She had to leave off her work at the Clinic and rest more, which she found frustrating. She was able to spend more time in her garden – another love of her life. Nonetheless, being mentally very strong, she maintained her close contact with the activities at the Clinic up until the end, keeping us all on our toes as much as she could! Her family always came first, but her Clinic ran a very close second. She was delighted that it would continue in her absence and always humble about the effect her writings had had on so many people, not only in this country but all over the world.

Margaret showed her creativity in her writing as evidenced by the various books she had published: "Curing Arthritis the Drug-Free Way", "Curing Arthritis Diet Book"

(originally entitled “Curing Arthritis Cook Book”), “Curing Arthritis – More Ways to a Drug-Free Life”, “Curing Arthritis Exercise Book”, “Curing Coughs, Colds and Flu the Drug-Free Way”, and “Curing Illness the Drug-Free Way”. She would have carried on putting down her thoughts on the way to achieve good health had she had the strength to do so. Indeed, she was working on a book dealing with stress and its effects on arthritis.

Her creativity also showed in different ways; apart from the baking, cooking, sewing and other necessities in bringing up a large family, she painted pictures using oils and watercolours; her subject matter was varied – landscapes, animals, birds, people. She had a couple of pictures exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. She stitched the tapestry of the Last Supper, which hangs in reception at the Clinic. She was always busy and expressed modesty but delight when her creations were praised! She loved big band music such as the Ted Heath Band, as well as Irish music and dancing. At one point Margaret also found time to be President of the Inner Wheel in Kenilworth- the ladies arm of the Rotary Club. You know the saying “Ask a busy person – they will always find the time”!

Through her work at the Clinic, Margaret was asked to participate in programmes on radio and television. In the early days, orthodox medical professionals challenged her work. However, from working as a Theatre Sister, then in the community as a District Nurse and also as a Factory Nurse - and with her own personal experience of arthritis and the difficulties it created - she was able to stand her ground and put forward her point of view. Now, more than twenty years on, natural treatments have gained a certain amount of respect – but still have a long way to go. The challenges to Margaret’s treatment are becoming less; indeed, many doctors, consultants and other health professionals are familiar with her treatment now and quietly suggest to some of their arthritic patients that “there’s no harm in trying”. There is nothing so satisfying as being able to help someone in excruciating pain gradually find their way out of that situation and regain control of their life. With the knowledge that Margaret had, she could never turn her back on anyone in need of such help. It was such rewarding work.

Margaret’s life was spent looking after others: whilst young, it was her brothers and sisters as she was the oldest of eight children, a ninth having died at 3 months. She was brought up in a loving but disciplined family, living off the land in the country. She always maintained contact with many of her relatives in Ireland, America, Australia and visited County Kerry whenever she could. As she married and started to bring her own children into the world, it was her family that dominated her life. As they became independent, she returned to nursing; then finally to helping an ever increasing number of individuals in desperate need of help – through direct contact, through phone calls and letters, but mostly through her books. She developed a presence in her local town, Kenilworth, by opening her health food shop in Millar Court, Station Road in 1989.

Margaret was born in County Kerry, Eire, on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1925. She was known as “Peggy Sheehy” until she moved to England to pursue her career as a nurse. She married Ivan Hills in 1950, produced eight children - fostered another - and had a full and happy life until 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003. **May she now Rest in Peace.**