

# PHAROS

## *A beacon of hope in the darkness*

*Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group Issue 16, July 2012*

### **Editorial Comment**

To ensure the Newsletter continues to be relevant, feedback is welcome from Members. You may do this by email to the Editor at [ken.davik@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ken.davik@yahoo.co.uk) or, alternatively, write to the Chairman at his home address.

### **New Members**

Welcome to Clive Mayo who joined in July

### **July 2012 Group Meeting**

This meeting was a little unusual as we had two speakers; Karen Willmott a research nurse from the RBH and Brian Flatley a Ph.D. researcher from the University of Reading.

Karen was first to bat and out-lined the type of research she was involved in; covering Commercial trials, Department of Health trials, In-house trials and University collaborative trials. These trials cover topics such as medication, operations, exercise and biomarkers.

Karen then described some of her current trials. The first one she mentioned is BEYOND, which stands for "BEYOND", but more seriously, it is a trial to compare new and current treatments for an over-active bladder. The second one, which resulted in quite a few questions was a "patch trial". This trial is to compare the benefits of skin patches versus injections in the application of hormone therapy for the treatment of PCa. It is anticipated that the skin patches will work just as well, but with fewer side-effects, but maybe not reduced flushes – it's a hormone thing! More information on this trial can be found on the Cancer Research website – just Google it.

The next trial mentioned was MAPS (Men After Prostate Cancer Surgery) in which several Members have participated. It was primarily directed at establishing the benefits of pelvic floor exercising after surgery to men suffering from incontinence. The trial involved gathering data from volunteers and comparing the results of those taught pelvic floor exercises by a trained therapist, such as Karen, over 3 months with those given life-style advice only.

The report was published in the Lancet in February 2012 with the main finding being that pelvic floor exercises made little difference to incontinence issues and is almost certainly not cost-effective.

Brian then took the stage and it was quickly obvious that the Committee should have issued a

"health warning", since it soon became clear that a degree in advanced chemistry was a minimum requirement for the audience.

The research project is entitled "Utilising Mass Spectrometry in the quest for Cancer Biomarkers"

In the unlikely event that there is uncertainty in the readers' mind with respect to the meaning of a biomarker, Brian kindly and wisely provided the following definition.

**"a characteristic that can be objectively measured and evaluated as an indicator of normal biological process, pathogenic process, or pharmacologic response to a therapeutic intervention."**

The objective of the research is to ultimately find more effective and efficient tests at least for PCa, thus potentially replacing the PSA test.

He described his work as a bit like looking for a needle in a haystack, in his case the magnet is a Mass Spectrometer - at last you may say! Brian described it as the world's tiniest weighing scale, which can determine the mass of a molecule.

With his gadget Brian will be conducting an in-depth protein analysis of plasma and tissue samples of patients undergoing radical prostatectomy.

Brian is using two groups, a benign one and one with PCa, this one subdivided by Gleason score. Brian then showed us a Mass Spectrum, which is a little like one of those "spikey" graphs you see on BBC4 when they are trying to prove something.

At the present stage there are no obvious candidates, particularly as Mother Nature has developed very subtle biological variances. To be fair Brian is now at the sample collection stage in preparation for in-depth analysis.

All in all a well presented set of work by someone who is clearly very enthusiastic and working at a very high intellectual and scientific plane.

### **Awareness**

As reported last month RPCSG Member Ivan Peacock is coordinating our presence at the "Earley Green Fair;" the promised further information from Ivan is as follows

***"It is to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> August at "Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve" which is on Beech La, Earley. Access is in the "dip" midway along Beech Lane between Rushey Way (police station) and Wilderness Rd. It is open to the public from 10am to 3pm but stall erection is from 8.30am. Parking is in local roads and can be***

*difficult. Be careful not to block driveways, the bus route or the police vehicles!!!!!!*

Ivan will be in touch individually with volunteers specifically to man our Stand, but please pop along to give him and his team your support. Our stand is reputedly opposite the Bowel Cancer stand, the good news is they may have tea-making facilities!

### **Fund-raising**

The sterling efforts reported last month leave, not surprisingly, little to say this month, but...would anyone like to volunteer to persuade a banker to donate some of his/her severance to PCa research, even though they did resign!

### **Forthcoming Events**

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2012 – We will have Linda Bowne from the Macmillan Centre speaking to us. Linda will be speaking about the Macmillan Centre in general, plus some specifics regarding their financial activities. ( Please note this is a change of the speaker previously notified)

4<sup>th</sup> August 2012 – For over ten years Earley Town Council have supported the Earley “Green Fair”. Many of the stalls are related to ‘green’ issues and the environment, but there is also an opportunity for other organisations, such as ourselves, to be involved. The RPCSG has always been actively involved in promoting both the support that the Group can give to those affected by a diagnosis of prostate cancer and also encouraging awareness of PCa , the commonest cancer in men.

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012 – At 3pm on both days you will be able to see Bev Skelton's daughter, Katie, perform on TV in the British Synchronised swimming team, at the London Olympics. Bev says “Katie is the little one at the front.”

16<sup>th</sup> August 2012 – This is the **revised** planned date for the Summer Social. See Chairman Steve's “flyer” on the last page of this Pharos for a replay of information sent out in June. At the July meeting quite a few Members signed up and paid up, but there is still plenty of space, we can have a big room.

7<sup>th</sup> September – At this meeting we will have Helen O'Donnell from the RBH. Helen is a Consultant Oncologist at the RBH.

2<sup>nd</sup> November – Does the Higgs Boson really exist, or do the Hadron team at CERN merely wish to continue living in Switzerland and to be obsessed with a 17 mile tunnel? – a discussion led by Chairman Steve.

### **Something different**

One of our Members, who has far greater poetic skills than I, has produced three sets of prose over the last 12 months. I have been a little reluctant to publish

them for fear of “offending”. Having said that, on reflection, my view is that if we bow our heads PCa has won, at least mentally. I understand that our anonymous poet has had at least one response from his Consultant also in rhyme, so the technique must be NICE approved.

Please read, hopefully smile as I did , if not and if I have caused any offence or distress, I apologise.

### **Prostate Cancer–Men Beware**

Diagnosed with cancer, aged 61  
I felt rather sad, I felt rather glum.  
I had a cry, I started to sob,  
Then I was told I had lost my job.

On a scale of 1 to 10, prostate cancer's not that bad  
But being told you've got it can make you mad.  
“Why was it me”, I asked my wife,  
“Don't worry dear, just get on with your life.

The choices and treatments were given to me,  
Advantages & disadvantages for me to see.  
I decided upon a radical robotic, Robbie by name  
Not to give him the experience seemed a shame.

With Mr Adam Jones in the driving seat  
I had to lay on the table and put up my feet  
The tools and probes went in and twisted about  
And 6 hours later my prostate was out.

My recovery was painless and short  
Within two days, back home I was brought.  
Whilst recuperating a new job I had got.  
To work with the military at Aldershot

Through a tube to a bag, I have to pee,  
But I still retain my dignity.  
I don't want trousers all smelly and wet,  
Like some moth eaten cat waiting for the vet.

A pill or a pump I utilize,  
To make my willie a useful size.  
But a loving wife, with lots of caring  
Makes me still feel that love is for sharing.  
For men over 60, 1 in 4,

Prostate cancer will knock at your door.  
But treatment, help and advice is free  
You never know Gents you could end up like me!

### **Support**

As you should be aware from previous issues of Pharos, there is a set of ‘phone numbers on a credit card size laminated card, available for Members to take at the

monthly meetings. These are for Members' use for seeking support.

For those who do not have the card, the names and numbers are: -

- Steve Allen 0118 9266 747
- Bill Forfar 0118 9619 655
- Ian Forrester 0118 9789 857

- Keith Jackson 0118 9842 999
- Paul Sefcick 01635 34778
- Graham Cook 0118 969166

### **Corrections**

There were no corrections to Issue 15 for May/June 2012

Reading Prostate Cancer  
Support Group

**SUMMER SOCIAL**  
**Thursday 16th August**

*Please note change of date!!*

**7.30pm drinks in bar**  
**8.00pm food served**

**£16.50**  
**per head**

**Sonning Golf Club**  
**Duffield Road**  
**Sonning**  
**Reading RG4 6GJ**

*Off the A4*  
*just outside Reading*



**Put the date in your**  
**diary NOW!!**  
**Names and money will**  
**be taken at next**  
**RPCSG meetings**  
**July 6th & Aug 3rd**  
**(Cheques payable to**  
**S C Allen)**  
*Final numbers and money by August 3rd*

**HOT**  
Japanese King Prawns  
Goujons of Plaice with Tartare Sauce  
Mini Beef & Yorkshire Pudding  
Glazed Salmon Skewer with a Sweet Beetroot Dip  
Mini Chicken Kebab with a Lemon & Mint Dip  
**COLD**  
Melon Wrapped in Parma Ham  
Smoked Salmon Bruschetta  
Crispy Duck Wrap with Hoi Sin sauce  
Goats Cheese & Baby Onion Tartlets  
Mixed Fruit Platter  
**DESSERT**  
Chocolate Eclairs  
Mixed Fruit Tartlets  
Coffee & Mints

**and**  
**chips!**



**2 course buffet meal with coffee**  
**Choose some or all of the above!!**  
*Let us know if you have special diet requirements*  
**Cash bar available all evening**

If you cannot get to one of the meetings and still want to come, then send your cheque to  
Steve Allen, 9 Kennedy Gardens, Earley, Reading, RG6 5RN