

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group Newsletter Issue17, August 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 or, alternatively, write to the Chairman at his home address.

New Members

Welcome to Michael Linstead who joined the Group in August.

Activities in the last month

In the middle of July Chairman Steve and the Pharos Editor visited the Oxford Prostate Cancer Support Group (OPCSG) and attended one of their meetings.

They have been running for about two years now and earlier in the year some members attended one of our meetings, so this was the return match. It was interesting to see that they had taken away some of the good things we do such as name tags and Chairman Steve's electronic "news show" on the screen at our Meetings.

For RPCSG members who find getting to our regular meeting a bit tedious – traffic wise, Oxford at 6pm is, as they say "interesting", not quite gridlocked and I am not sure if the 20mph zones really do help.

The location was really nice, the Golf Club, with the bar not being too much of a distraction.

The whole feeling of the meeting was quite different to ours with much emphasis on fund-raising, they have a raffle at every meeting and you will be pleased to know your Editor won, despite my protests they insisted I kept the prize.

In a way they are still finding their way, for example, they do not have regular monthly meetings as we do, they seem to be a bit more "on the hoof", but they do have a Website and Twitter and things of that nature.

At our meeting on the 3rd August we had Linda Bowman from MacMillan; Linda is one of their Benefits Team members, based in the RBH, where they are available five days a week.

Linda and her colleagues play a key role in helping people who have cancer, not just PCa to obtain the appropriate State Benefits to help them financially in this "challenging" time.

Linda explained that it was a very hands-on job and whilst there are no Benefits available which are specific to cancer, the team invariably find a way to make the Benefits that are available applicable to those with cancer.

Linda described many of the Benefits which could be applicable and their idiosyncrasies, with Bill Forfar acting as Projection Assistant - he held up the big sheets of paper.

The Benefits System is progressively changing, with many changes coming into effect next year; hopefully they will become more coherent, as what we have at present has grown over the last 50 years with layer being added on to layer.

Linda is very much on the side of the "victim" and it seems that the best thing to do is to book a chat with her next time you are at the RBH.

All in all, a very useful talk.

Awareness

By the time you read this Ivan Peacock and his helpers will have attended the Erleigh Green Fair where we have a "stand" with our banner, information etc. to drive home the Awareness message. How they got on will be reported in the September issue .

Forthcoming Events

9th and 10th 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."

16th 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. There is still space available so please contact Chairman Steve if you wish to attend, phone no.

below

7th September – At this meeting we will have Helen O'Donnell from the RBH. Helen is a Consultant Oncologist at the RBH, as always a very interesting talk is expected.

Something different

One of our Members, who has far greater poetic skills than I, has produced three sets of prose over the last year, this is the second.

My Hospital Tests

I had to go to the hospital for these tests,
Taking all of my clothes off, well down to my vest
The pretty young nurse had to fiddle with my bits,
But we did have a laugh, she had me in fits.

Tubes were inserted here, and then inserted there
But it's all to the good so I didn't care.
It was when the fluid that they started to pump
I started to get fed up, I got the hump.

More and more she pumped into me
I couldn't hold out much longer, I wanted a wee
My teeth were clenched, my eyes did water
But I was resolute, I didn't falter.

I was fully charged and ready to go
It was then that I had to let the nurse know
She said "You have passed you did not fail"
Now go in the corner and fill up that pail

With the tests complete, I put my clothes on
I was out of there, I had to be gone
I could not hang about, I could not lurk
I had to get home to change ready for work

Support

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

Medical

As advised in a recent email, the RBH have been asked what is their policy regarding Pelvic Floor exercises; you may recall that doubt was expressed at the presentation on MAPS at the July meeting.
regarding their effectiveness.

Bev has advised that as long as you obtain the correct "how-to" information from the Urology team, the exercises may well be beneficial.

Some breaking news; it appears that scientists at Edinburgh University have pinpointed a gene they say could lead to improvements and diagnosis and treatment of PCa. They have identified one known as Decorin, which is one of several which control the formation of the prostate gland and, compared with normal prostate cells, the presence of this gene is reduced in tumours

Researchers now hope that that measurement of Decorin could become a **reliable** diagnostic test for PCa.

Who knows, one day our Grandsons will ask "what was PSA testing"?