

# PHAROS

*A beacon of hope in the darkness*

*Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)*

*Issue 76: Dec 17 / Jan 18 / Feb 18*

*Website: [www.rpcsg.org.uk](http://www.rpcsg.org.uk)*

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## THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

The Chairman Ted Goodhew introduced this event and as ever, it proved to be a most enjoyable occasion. Our usual caterers, Mange Bien, provided an excellent buffet meal. During the evening there was an entertaining quiz, and a raffle.

Many thanks go to all involved in the arrangements, including Beverley for running the raffle, and Graham Cook for arranging the quiz.

We were pleased to welcome three new members at this occasion, and were delighted to see that they all opted to remain and enjoy the evening.

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## THE JANUARY MEETING

As usual for January meetings, there was no guest speaker. There was a good attendance and the meeting gave members ample opportunity to talk to other members in an informal setting.

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## THE FEBRUARY MEETING

The meeting was well attended by 50 people. We welcomed two new members at the February meeting, and hope that these members will visit us again at future meetings.

At the start of the meeting there was a short introduction by a member of the Reading Lions. He spoke about the forthcoming free PSA test events that are being held, and encouraged us to spread the awareness of these testing events to family and friends who may benefit from the test. Details of the testing events can be found later in this newsletter.

The guest speaker at the February meeting was Rebecca Hilbert. She is a Senior House Officer at the RBH, and gave us an account of her visit

just before Christmas 2017, to the Kisiizi hospital in Uganda, along with RBH Urology consultant Mr Adam Jones.

Rebecca illustrated her talk with slides, some of which were spectacular photographs of the scenery and wildlife in Uganda, whilst others were photographs taken inside the hospital, that gave us a good impression of the conditions and patients. One photograph was a spectacular waterfall that feeds a hydroelectric system and helping to maintain electricity supply to the hospital.

The Kisiizi hospital has a catchment area of 60km and many patients travel to it on foot. It has wards for psychiatric, isolation, maternity, paediatric, and four theatres. There is one full time surgeon, and typically about 30 patients for operations in each week. Most of the prostate related surgery was for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (LUTS). There is no robotic machine, and there are very few operations available for prostate cancer in Uganda, it being mostly treated by castration. Patients have their prostates examined, and if they appear to be lumpy then the permission from the patient is obtained for castration. Hormone treatment is available but is very expensive.

Most of the operations are carried out to treat enlarged prostates. The amount of tissue removed is as much as can safely be taken, and in the case of a very large prostate, most of the prostate may be removed. In the case of prostate cancer, the prostate cannot be removed as it is not possible to remove the surrounding tissue.

Rebecca said that we take for granted many things that are difficult if not impossible to obtain in Uganda. For example sterilised water for surgical irrigation has to be obtained by the very slow process of condensation. However many of the drugs that we use at home are also available in Uganda.

Ugandans can take out health insurance for the equivalent of about £5 per year. An operation

would then cost about £15, against £100 without insurance.

Patients are not given antibiotics after treatment, instead they remain in the hospital for a few days, so that it is fairly certain on discharge that they have no infection.

Rebecca was in a group of three medical people who made the visit to the hospital. Most of the cost was funded by the British Association of Urological Surgeons who fund many visits such as this. Rebecca funded her own flight and paid a small amount for board at the hospital.

The visits are fairly regular, and whilst she was at the hospital there were 10 other medical people including doctors, paediatric and midwives. Also some engineers were visiting in respect of the hydro electric generating station. Rebecca said that both the hospital staff and patients were very grateful for their visit, and without these visits it would be difficult for the hospital staff alone to treat the quantity of people arriving at the hospital for treatment.

Rebecca was thanked for her interesting talk, and presented with a gift of appreciation.



*A photograph of Rebecca during her talk.*

## **AN APPRECIATION FROM THE MEDICAL DETECTION DOGS**

The guest speaker at the November 2017 meeting was Geoff Richardson of the charity Medical Detection Dogs. He was accompanied by his own dog Pip, and gave a very interesting talk on the work and finances of the charity. The RPCSG made a donation to the charity of £100, and there were some generous donations from members after the presentation, amounting to £77.53. The charity has since written to our Treasurer expressing their thanks for the donation. You can see their letter reproduced at the foot of this newsletter.

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## **FREE PSA TESTING**

The Lions organisations hold occasional PSA testing events, to spread awareness of prostate cancer and give easy access to a PSA test. The PSA tests are free and available on demand - it is a walk-in service not needing an appointment. Every man having a free test will be informed by post of the results, and in the case of abnormal readings, will be advised to seek consultation.

Will you please spread information about the free tests to anyone who may benefit - friends, colleagues, relatives, etc. Especially in cases where there has been some occurrence of the disease in the family line. There are three local events, at the Circle Hospital in Reading on 3rd March 2018, in Maidenhead on 1st March 2018, and in Windsor on 26th April 2018. The age guideline is for men over the age of 45, but this is unlikely to be enforced - if in doubt you could check with the organisers beforehand. The following links provide further information:

Reading:  
<http://www.readinglions.org.uk/>

M Maidenhead:  
<https://www.maidenheadlions.org.uk/prostate-awareness>

W Windsor:  
<http://www.windsorlions.co.uk/prostate-awareness-and-check/>

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## **PARKING FOR PATIENTS**

Parking for the Royal Berkshire Hospital can be quite expensive for people attending for extensive periods of time. However, for patients whose appointments are expected to last for some time, there are exemptions from parking charges. The following link takes you to the parking charge information. I would advise anyone visiting the hospital to leave plenty of time for parking, as this may take some time and could lead to late arrivals for appointments.

<http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/Car%20parking%20and%20on-site%20facilities>

Please note that the RPCSG parking permit that you can display on your dashboard, only applies for parking in the evenings of the days of our monthly meetings, and not at any other time.

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **1st MARCH 2018**

This is the 'Free PSA test' organised by the Reading Lions and will be held in Maidenhead.

### **2nd MARCH 2018**

This is the next RPCSG group meeting. The AGM will firstly be held, and the remainder of the evening will be available for informal chat with other members. The RPCSG committee will be grateful if you will complete a voluntary questionnaire at the meeting, to help to find out the format and venue of RPCSG Social Events that you appreciate the most.

### **3rd MARCH 2018**

This is the 'Free PSA test' organised by the Reading Lions and will be held at the Circle hospital.

### **26th April 2018**

The final local event of PSA testing will be held in Windsor.

Steve Parkinson  
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### **DISCLAIMER**

*This newsletter does not offer medical advice. Nothing contained in the newsletter is intended to constitute professional advice for medical diagnosis or treatment or to advocate or recommend the purchase of any product or use of any service or guarantee the credentials or appropriateness of any health care provider. Members are strongly advised to consult with an appropriate professional for specific advice tailored to their situation.*

*This newsletter may refer to named providers and their products or services, and such reference expresses no inference upon any aspect of any provider's business, services or products, and expresses no recommendation or preference for any such products or service.*

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# Medical Detection Dogs



Patron: HRH the Duchess of Cornwall

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18 November 2017

Dear Mr Bennett

Thank you to everyone at Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group for your recent donation of £177.53. I hope you all enjoyed learning more about the work of Medical Detection Dogs from one of our key volunteer speakers, Geoff.

Our work also includes the training and placement of specialist Medical Assistance Dogs that alert their owners prior to a medical emergency allowing them to lead a more normal life with increased independence and confidence. We have trained and placed 80 Medical Alert Assistance Dogs.

Your donation will also help us to continue our ground-breaking charitable work to investigate the potential of dogs to assist clinicians in the early detection and diagnosis of cancers and other diseases. We have recently started a study to examine our dogs' ability to detect Parkinson's and will shortly be looking at new projects including Malaria and colorectal cancer.

As a charity that receives no government funding, your support is most appreciated

Yours sincerely

Daniel Howard OBE  
Chief Operating Officer  
Medical Detection Dogs