

# PHAROS

*A beacon of hope in the darkness*

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

*Issue 77: March/April 2018*

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

## **THE MARCH MEETING**

The March meeting was intended to be the AGM, but unfortunately there was a large fall of snow on that day, and it decided to cancel the meeting. The AGM was planned for the April meeting instead, to follow the guest speaker.

## **THE APRIL MEETING**

The guest speaker at the April meeting was Roger Wotton. He introduced himself as the Chairman of the charity 'Tackle Prostate Cancer', and also the UK patient representative of the European Cancer Patient Coalition.

Tackle is an organisation that helps local Support Groups, of which there are now 90. Tackle will hold their AGM and Conference in June 2018, at which their motto will be 'Healthy Mind and Healthy Body'. They are driven by members' wants. They have a strong relationship with the charity Prostate Cancer UK.

Often the psychological effects of the disease can be more debilitating than the physical effects.

The objectives of Tackle are:

- Spreading awareness of prostate cancer.
- Growing support groups. The number of local groups has grown over the last 3 years from 60 to 90.
- Campaigning on issues.

Roger talked about a letter from him to The Times that was recently published. He wrote in response to a previous letter from a GP, who claimed that having one PSA test is a waste of time and causes more harm than good. Roger agreed with PSA testing for diagnosis, but said that we need more informed PSA tests, by having discussions with GPs about the risks, lifestyles, hereditary information etc, and also using PSA tests in conjunction with MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scans. Roger said that it could be too late to carry out testing when symptoms occur. More lives can be

saved by testing before symptoms appear and thus finding cancer at an early stage.

Roger said that GPs are now much more informed about prostate cancer than was the case a few years ago, and that GPs say that there is now no risk of over-diagnosis and over-treatment, in cases where there is access to mpMRI (multi-parametric MRI) scans before a biopsy. Presently, only 30% of men have access to mpMRI scans before their biopsy.

The organisation NICE has made some changes in treatment policies over time. The Stampede trial has resulted in Tamoxifen being available in conjunction with hormone therapy. Enzalutamide and Abiraterone are now available before chemotherapy.

Roger wrote to NHS England following the move of the EU Medicines Agency from London to Amsterdam, fearing that this may lose UK access to clinical trial data. He is awaiting a reply.

The number of centres offering radium 223 treatment has reduced, leading to patients having to travel farther.

Roger then told us of his personal experiences of prostate cancer, PSA tests and treatments over the past nine years.

Roger then talked about the 'Cycle To The Moon' initiative. Local groups are encouraged to arrange their participation in the event, and an incentive is that the local groups can each retain if they wish, 25% of the funds raised. Suggestions for organising an event can be found in the 'Tackle' website. This initiative is in conjunction with their 'Save a Dad' scheme, that will involve secondary schools. Tackle hopes that awareness of prostate cancer will be a part of the national curriculum in the future, just as breast cancer currently features in it. The aspiration is to educate the next generation.

Finally, Roger showed two short videos, one featured members of the Chorley Wood prostate cancer support group, and the other

concerned discussions between members of the Leicester Tigers Rugby team.

Roger was thanked for his talk and presented with a gift of appreciation.

You can see a photograph and brief resumé of Roger, at the top of this Tackle web page:

<http://www.tackleprostate.org/trustees.php>

The AGM followed Roger's talk, and you can see the minutes of the AGM in our web site under the 'Newsletter and AGM' tab.

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You can find a summary of the Stampede trials on page 5 of this Tackle publication:  
[http://www.tackleprostate.org/uploads/files/ProstateMatters\\_latest.pdf](http://www.tackleprostate.org/uploads/files/ProstateMatters_latest.pdf)

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### **PROSTATE CANCER FUNDING**

During his talk, Roger mentioned that deaths from prostate cancer now outnumber those from breast cancer. Prostate cancer is now the third largest cause of death, behind lung and colorectal cancers. This topic has recently featured in the press, which show that in 2015 (the most recent data available) the deaths from prostate cancer were 11,819 against breast cancer of 11,422. Further, the number of deaths from prostate cancer since 2009 has increased, whereas for breast cancer it has reduced. There is some concern because the amount of money spent by Government and charity research since 2002 has been £227 million on prostate cancer, but a much greater figure of £529 million on breast cancer. Hence there is a great concern that prostate cancer research is under-funded.

A set of figures has been released by Prostate Cancer UK, and these can be seen in this Daily Mail web page:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-5342347/Prostate-cancer-bigger-killer-breast-cancer.html>

This article suggests that prostate cancer research and treatment is between 10 and 20 years behind that of breast cancer, and that greater spending should significantly improve the prostate cancer situation.

The following article in The Guardian is a similar story, and contains a quote from Roger Wotton:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/02/prostate-cancer-now-kills-more-people-than-breast-cancer-uk-figures-reveal>

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### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**4th MAY 2018**

The guest speaker at this meeting will be Michelle Hunt, Continence Advisory Service Manager.

**1st JUNE 2018**

The June meeting will see Shirley Jackson as the guest speaker, of the Macmillan 'Move More' physical activity programme.

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