

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

Issue 82: September 2018

Website: www.rpcsg.org.uk

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

Graham Cook, our Social Secretary, introduced the meeting and welcomed five new members to the group. The meeting was an Open session, at which the Uro-oncology nurse specialists Beverley Skelton and Tessa Martin answered questions and requests for information from members. Most of these questions had been submitted before the meeting, and several points raised during the meeting were also answered. This session was extremely successful and much appreciated by the audience.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the meeting on account of being away on holiday. One of our members, Peter, very kindly offered to take some notes during the meeting, and he wrote an account of the proceedings as follows:

"This was advertised as an "Open Meeting", with two experts Beverley and Tessa answering questions that had been submitted in advance.

And what a meeting it was: incredibly well attended and very well received. Some senior members went as far as saying it was the best – or one of the best – meetings they had ever attended.

The meeting started with the welcome of five new members. And regular attendees were delighted that the normal fire drill (your seat belt is fastened and unfastened as follows) was skipped.

The first two questions related to "What does PSA actually measure?" and "How does the Gleason score actually work?" This latter aspect explained the difference between 3+4 vs 4+3, something about which many of our Members had been slightly confused. Beverley and Tessa went through all the numbers that were displayed on the screen.

Then we moved on to "What can I do to reduce my hot flushes?" Eliminating eating a hot curry before retiring to bed was one of the humorous answers from the Floor.

A discussion followed about the serious issues of nerve pain following chemotherapy.

After that we got down to some basics: "What can I do to reduce the number of visits to the loo at night?" It was noted that some members were disappointed to be told one solution might be to stop drinking alcohol. One counter intuitive aspect was to drink two to three litres of water a day to ensure urine is not too concentrated.

A question about the genetic link in prostate cancer led to information about the BRAC1 and 2 genes that have shown links to prostate, breast and ovarian cancer. There is a great deal of research happening to look at other chromosome links and more importantly their relevance to all sorts of cancers in the future.

The penultimate topic was Erectile Dysfunction also known as ED. Sadly this is a typical by-product of solving prostate cancer. One key point was that although ED is related to heart disease, this doesn't apply when ED is due to prostate cancer treatment.

The answer to the final question from the floor produces much merriment. The question was "Can you masturbate too often?" and the short, non medical answer was "No". Phew. That's a relief.

The general fact that was repeated over and over again was "Everyone is different." What works for your neighbour might not work for you.

Beverley and Tessa were presented with a bouquet of flowers as a token of our thanks for this brilliant meeting".

Even though many of us have appointments with consultants, the Open meeting showed that there is an additional need for Open sessions in which questions can be answered without the formality of a consultation. Very many thanks to Beverley and Tessa for their efforts; I know that they spent some time together doing research and preparing a set of slides in order to provide the excellent answers to our questions.

If anyone would like to see again the set of slides that were presented, you can view them in our web site under the 'Library' tab.

Beverley has provided this link to an interesting web page concerning prostate genetics:
<https://www.cancer.gov/types/prostate/hp/prostate-genetics-pdq/>

RPCSG WALKS

The walk in Aston on the 4th September was very enjoyable, and again I was sorry to miss this walk due to holidays. A record number of twelve people took part. Now that the walks are becoming established, we propose to hold a walk on the first Tuesday of each month.

2nd OCTOBER 2018

The October walk will take place on Tuesday **2nd October** and will start at 10:30 in a car park near to Aldermaston railway station. We will walk for 2 miles along the river Kennet to Woolhampton, where there will be a stop for refreshments at a canal side pub. Then we will continue on for a further 3 miles to Thatcham where there will be another stop for refreshments at a canal side pub. We will return to Aldermaston by a short train journey from Thatcham.

This total walk will be about five miles. If anyone would prefer a shorter walk, they can do the first leg of the walk to Woolhampton and then after the refreshment break, return to Aldermaston either by bus (there is a nearby bus stop) or by train from Midgham station, which is about a five minute walk from the pub in Woolhampton.

Approach Aldermaston on the A4 Bath Road, then take the A340 Basingstoke Road for about 500 metres then turn right into Station Road. Then take the first left turn into Mallard Way and immediately on the right is a free car park. If you use a sat nav put in RG7 4JN and this should take you to the vicinity of Station Road, just ensure that you turn off the A340 into Station Road.

All members are invited to this walk. Just arrive at the Mallard Way car park before 10:30.

Here are some photographs taken during the Aston walk:



Must be some kind of ancient ritual

Photographer Steve is usually behind the camera



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

2nd OCTOBER 2018

The October walk will start at a car park near to Aldermaston station and visit Woolhampton and Thatcham.

5th OCTOBER 2018

The guest speaker will be Fawaz Musa, who is a Consultant Histopathologist at RBH.

2nd NOVEMBER 2018

The guest speaker will be Charlotte Robinson, Consultant Radiologist at RBH.

7th DECEMBER 2018

The Christmas Social

Steve Parkinson
Newsletter Editor.
NewsEditorRPCSG@yahoo.com

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 services.