

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

Issue 90: May 2019

Website: www.rpcsg.org.uk

THE MAY MEETING

Chairman Chris Addison introduced the evening, welcoming all to the meeting and a particular welcome to four new members. I am grateful to Chris for providing the following report on the talk at the May meeting:

Our speaker for the evening was Susan Drew, Peer Support Officer, of the charity Prostate Cancer UK (PCUK). Susan opened her talk by giving a short resumé of how she became involved with PCUK and what a joy and privilege it is to be working for them. She had been at PCUK for a few months and had only given a few presentations, but she soon had the audience warming to her: as she said, a faux pas occasionally slipped out, like ‘in a nut shell’.

The mission of PCUK is supporting medical research and that is where donations to the charity are mainly directed. She particularly liked feedback on the work of PCUK and this was demonstrated on her trip to us on the train to Reading, when talking to a fellow passenger who had volunteered the fact that he had known about prostate matters through a campaign PCUK had run at mainstream football matches throughout the country.

PCUK over the next few weeks would now be concentrating on helping with a 30-second TV advert on prostate matters leading up to Father’s Day on June 16th. TV adverts are generally expensive, but this work was being funded by a generous donor, pro bono, ensuring its affordability.

Susan emphasised the importance of using the PCUK Helpline, not just for information on the prostate, but the charity was there for emotional support, if callers needed that as well. She pointed out that the Peer Support team has taken over the management of the One to One peer support service, and Susan is currently doing the matching of volunteers to men who request the service and are referred by their Specialist Nurses.

To screen or not to screen was still a hot topic nationally and men need to go, and be encouraged to go, to their doctor for a PSA blood test. Although this test is regarded as reliable, interpreting the results takes careful judgment and assessment and this message needs to be reinforced. PCUK are looking at a screening process that they felt needed to be simple and more effective, so they are funding a project, through their Research Innovation Award, being run by Professor Paula Mendes of the University of Birmingham. This project is hoping to revolutionise the PSA blood test using nanoparticle science to make detection much more accurate.

Susan told us that breast screening programmes were 20 years ahead of prostate screening as she felt women had pushed for this more successfully. In her opinion, men therefore needed to be more vocal and proactive on medical matters of a prostate kind.

In terms of charity size compared to others, PCUK was relatively small in that its income was in the region of £25M, whereas Cancer Research UK was about £634M.

She reinforced the statistic that 1:8 white men are likely to contract prostate cancer, but the ratio amongst black men was as high as 1:4.

Susan's talk and presentation provoked many questions from members who were very appreciative of the information they had gleaned from the evening.

NEXT GROUP MEETING 7th JUNE 2019

The meeting on the 7th June will have Mark Foulkes as the guest speaker. He is a Consultant Nurse in the oncology unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and will give a talk about the work of the Oncology unit.

AWARENESS EVENTS

Two more awareness events are planned, at which we will appreciate any volunteers to help to operate the stands.

We will hold a stand on the **29th June**, when our pitch will be close to Marks & Spencer on Broad Street in Reading. This day coincides with the Armed Forces Day in Reading and so we expect more people than usual to be around. We will greatly appreciate anyone who can lend a hand by volunteering to attend at one of our time slots. These are 10:00 to 12:00 p.m., 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you can help out, particularly for the 12:00 until 2:00 p.m. slot please contact Steve Allen by email at this email address: drstephenallen@btinternet.com

Another awareness event will be held on the 11th August at the Classic Car Show to be held at Newbury Racecourse. The time slots will be as above, and again we will appreciate any volunteers to operate the stand. As a bonus, volunteers will be able to view the car show at no cost when they are not helping at our stand. Please contact Steve Allen as above if you can help at this event.

WALKING EVENTS

The walk on the 7th May from Pangbourne to Goring was very successful with good weather and 15 people joined the walk. The walk included lunch in Goring and the return was by a short journey by train from Goring back to Pangbourne.

NEXT RPCSG WALK - 4th JUNE 2019

The June walk will be on Tuesday **4th June** and will start in Hambleton then walk to Skirmett where lunch or refreshments have been arranged at The Frog. We have previously held this same walk in December 2018 and it proved very enjoyable and was very well attended by 16 people.

There is free parking available behind the Stag and Huntsman pub and the walk will start there at 10:30 a.m. Directions to Hambleden are to take the A4 East out of Reading then take the A321 to Henley via Wargrave. Cross the bridge at Henley and follow the A4155 signposted to Marlow. After about 4 miles turn left to Hambleden and about one mile further on bear right at a fork in the road and the village centre is then about 150 yards further on. The sat-nav postcode RG9 6RP will take you close to the centre of the village. About 50 yards after the centre of the village the road turns to the left to Pheasant's Hill, but do not take this turn, instead continue straight on and then turn right into the car park behind the pub. The total walk will be about 5 miles.

Photographs taken during the Pangbourne walk in May:



VISIT TO THE RUTHERFORD CENTRE

Several members took advantage of the visit to the Rutherford Centre in Shinfield on the 24th May. This was a very interesting visit at which the Rutherford staff told the group about the cancer treatments available at the Rutherford Centre and conducted a tour of their facilities.

The photograph to the right shows some of the visiting group in the proton beam treatment room.



After the tour, member Steve Allen gave a short talk to the group of visitors that was an update to a presentation that he gave to the group at the meeting on the 1st February 2019.

THE SUMMER SOCIAL EVENT

The meeting on the 5th July will be our Summer Social. This will be held in St Andrews church hall with arrival from 7:00 p.m. for a meal to be served from 7:30 p.m. The caterer will be our usual Mange Bien who have served us previously on many occasions, serving a hot and cold buffet meal. The evening will also have a quiz, raffle and a guessing game. There will be a complimentary drink on arrival and the cost this year is £17.50 per person. This is always a very popular occasion and places are limited in number so please book your places as soon as possible. Payment can be made to the Treasurer Roger Bennett at the June meeting. Payment can also be made by posting a cheque to Roger made payable to "Reading PCSG" at the address below, or if you prefer to pay by a direct bank transfer please send an email to Roger for details of how to do this, to him at this email address: saroban@btinternet.com

Post to:
Roger Bennett
52 Deanfield Road
Henley-on-Thames
RG9 1UU

Remember that the social events are 'Bring Your Own', at which you should bring your own drinks, whether alcoholic or not, for your own consumption.

SAD NEWS OF PETER SOUL

With great regret I inform you of the sad news of the passing of Peter Soul. He was a well liked member of the RPCSG group for more than 9 years. He often helped at awareness stands and wrote a couple of articles that can be found in our web site under the 'Articles' tab. It is believed that the cause of his demise was not prostate cancer.

There will be a service held for him and all members of the RPCSG are invited to attend. This will be at 2 p.m. on the 7th June 2019 at St Nicolas Church, Sutcliffe Avenue, Earley.

Steve Parkinson
Newsletter Editor.
NewsEditorRPCSG@yahoo.com

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

4th JUNE 2019

This will be the RPCSG walk from Hambleden to Skirmett.

7th JUNE 2019

The guest speaker at this group meeting will be Mark Foulkes.

29th JUNE 2019

An awareness stand in Broad Street, Reading

5th JULY 2019

This is the Summer Social occasion.