

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

Issue 91: June 2019

Website: www.rpcsg.org.uk

THE JUNE MEETING

Committee member Alex Miles introduced the evening, welcoming all to the meeting with a particular welcome to three new members. He reminded the meeting about three items - the Summer Social occasion, the Awareness stand on the 29th June, and another awareness stand on the 11th August. Details of all of these can be found later in this newsletter. Alex then introduced the guest speaker, who was Mark Foulkes.

Mark Foulkes introduced himself as a Macmillan Lead Cancer Nurse and Nurse Consultant in Acute Oncology at the RBH. The nurse consultant role is the most senior nurse role and in the event of emergency treatment Mark would be the most likely person to be seen. Using a useful set of slides, Mark gave a very interesting wide-ranging presentation on the challenges of cancer with particular reference to prostate cancer. The following is a summary of his presentation:

Cancer is caused by damage to the DNA of cells when they divide, this damage being a mutation. The body's immune system destroys these damaged cells but sometimes the damaged cells are not recognised and they continue to grow uncontrollably and form a tumour. These genetic faults can be passed on or be caused by exposure to contaminants. The main cause of death from cancer is secondary infection sites (metastases) and about 60% of patients have metastases on diagnosis. Four common sites of secondary tumours are the liver, lung, bone and brain.

Mark listed four types of cancer that account for more than one half (54%) of all cancers in the UK, These are:

Breast cancer accounting for 16% (31% of all cancers in women)
Prostate cancer accounting for 12.4% (25% of all cancers in men)
Lung cancer accounts for 13.3%
Colorectal cancer accounts for 13%

Cancer survival rates are normally defined as the 5 year or 10 year survival. He showed a list of the 5 year survival rates for seven types of cancer:

- Pancreatic 3%
- Lung cancer 7% (men) 9% (women)
- Oesophageal 8%
- Bowel cancer 50%
- Prostate 77%
- Breast Cancer 82%
- Testicular cancer 98%

Mark then said there are factors that are known to cause cancer, and avoiding these could prevent about 50% of cancers. He showed a graph of the proportion of cancer deaths linked to

environmental and behavioural factors in the UK. The causes are as below, with the more adverse factor of Tobacco listed first at 30%, UV light being the least at about 1%:

Tobacco
Diet and obesity
Hormones
Alcohol
Infections
Ionizing radiation
Occupation
Pollution
Ultra Violet light

Mark talked about the challenges of cancer, that include:

- Men are 16% more likely to develop cancer and more likely to die from cancer than women. Possible explanations are the smoking and alcohol habits of men, and them bring less willing to seek help.
- Paying for long term care.
- The number of people living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK is set to double from more than 2 million in 2010 to 4 million by 2030.
- The number of men with prostate cancer and women with breast and lung cancer are expected to more than double from 2010 to 2030.
- Follow-up after cancer treatment.
- A significant minority of cancer survivors (around 20-30%) carry long term health problems.
- The impact of disease and treatment.

Mark described the main treatments for cancer:

- Surgery: excision of localised tumour. Gives best chance of a cure in early stage disease but can have more side effects.
- Chemotherapy (SACT) the use of cytotoxic or immunotherapy drugs to kill cancer cells. Can be used before or after surgery.
- Radiotherapy: for both localised and tumours often used in combination with other cancer treatments to kill cells with radiation. Brachytherapy may be better than surgery for certain types of prostate cancer.

Other treatments include:

Hormonal Therapy:

- tamoxifen, arimidex, zoladex, casodex (Prostate, Breast)

Targeted and immunotherapies:

- Monoclonal Antibodies: (Breast, Lymphoma)
- Tyrosine kinase inhibitors: (Chronic Leukaemia, Renal Cell)
- Anti Angiogenesis drugs: (Myeloma)

Stem Cell transplants:

Haematological diseases
Combined treatments.

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



Photograph of Mark during his talk

THE SUMMER SOCIAL : GROUP MEETING 5th JULY 2019

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. If you would like to be at this social event and have not yet reserved your places, please send an email as soon as possible to Roger Bennett at the email address saroban@btinternet.com. Payment can 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.

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

Please note that the closing date for requesting places is the **28th June** as we then need to confirm the number of places to the caterer.

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.

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

11th August 2019

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 July walk will take place on Tuesday **2nd July 2019** and will start at 10:40 at the Wokingham Waterside Park car park. To get to the car park drive towards Reading on the A329M/A3290 and continue to the very end of the road which ends at a roundabout. Turn right at the roundabout onto Thames Valley Park drive and the entrance to the free car park is about 20 yards on the left. If the car park is full you can continue past the car park entrance and park on the roadside free between 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. We will return well before 4:30 p.m.

The address of the car park is:
Wokingham Waterside Centre
Thames Valley Park Drive
Earley, RG6 1PQ

The walk will go along the Thames and into Reading. There will be a refreshment stop along the way at a riverside pub and we will return to the car park walking partly alongside the river Kennet. The total walk distance will be about 6 miles.

All members are invited to this walk. Just arrive at the starting point before 10:40.

PREVIOUS WALK.

The walk on the 4th May from Hambleden to Skirmett was very successful with good weather for most of the walk, it rained during the last few minutes of the walk back to the car park. The Frog at Skirmett had reserved places at tables for all 17 people that took part in this walk, and they served a very good lunch.

Photographs taken during the walk to Skirmett:



Lunch inside The Frog



JAKE HARDESTY'S MARATHON

In the March 2019 edition of the newsletter I mentioned that fact that Jake Hardesty, a great-nephew of committee member Richard Brown was raising money for Prostate Cancer UK by running in the London marathon. He has completed the run, has raised a substantial amount of money and has sent his thanks to the RPCSG members who donated to his cause. The following is an extract from an email to Richard giving some detail of the event:

"Yes we are extremely proud of Jake, he has trained so hard to achieve this, and such a brilliant time too.

Jake's latest total is getting towards £9k, with still some money to come in, I will let you know once finalised. Prostate Cancer UK advised us on the day that they were hoping to raise between £300-350k in total, Jake was 2nd highest out of 180 runners in sponsorship raised, second only to someone who works at Liverpool football club!

We were advised that the monies raised will be used on research to develop a definitive test to diagnose prostate cancer, and then to roll the test out as a nationwide screening programme.

Thank you so much to you and Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group for all your amazing help and support, we are all very grateful".

TOILET CARDS

The charity Macmillan has produced a 'toilet card' that can be easily attached to a key ring. The card explains that due to your medical condition you may have an urgent need to use a toilet. This card could be very useful in some circumstances. We occasionally have a small number of these cards at our monthly meetings for members, otherwise you can obtain one free of charge by visiting the Macmillan web site.

Macmillan is interested in evaluating the effectiveness of the cards as they may be discontinued if thought not to be effective. If you obtain one of these cards, or already have one, will you please advise Macmillan of your experiences with the card, whether the experience was good or bad.

SINGING GROUP

Singing has been found to be a very good aid to recovery from treatment and is good for all-round health. One singing group is based in Tilehurst and has invited any of our members to join their group. The social aspect of this group is also very attractive. The following is an extract of an email inviting anyone to join this singing group:

The singing group meets in Tilehurst and we are looking for more members especially men. Wives and partners are also welcome.

It is a singing group not a choir. You do not have to have an audition. You do not have to be able to read music. You have the song sheets for the words in front of you all the time. The first visit is FREE! Then there is a £2.00 charge from then on.

It is beneficial to your health. Some members have been recommended by the Royal Berks if they have had a stroke, breathing difficulties, asthma, COPD, etc to join us. Some people look forward to the gathering all week.....like a social event.

We meet on Thursdays, 10.30am to 12.30pm, sing from 11.00am to midday, at the Methodist Church, 26 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading. RG31 5AN.

We sing songs from all different years, popular songs, songs from musicals, etc.

We have a chat over a cup of tea or coffee with a biscuit or doughnut after we have sung. A sing song gives you a feel good factor. It's fun!

If you have any queries about this singing group please send them to me.

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 services.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

29th JUNE 2019

An awareness stand in
Broad Street, Reading.

2nd JULY 2019

This is the walk from Waterside Park
to Reading.

5th JULY 2019

This is the Summer Social occasion.

2nd AUGUST 2019

This group meeting is being arranged.

11th AUGUST 2019

We will hold an awareness stand at
the classic car show at Newbury
Racecourse.