



Awareness Support Information

Registered Charity No. 1108384
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Patron: Martin Bell O.B.E., President: David Haines

*a Founder Member of the Federation of
Prostate Patient Support Groups, known as 'TACKLE'*

Newsletter No. 73 - March 2020

Our New Chairman - John Ladd



I feel very honoured to be elected as the chair of the Support Group, but with sadness owing to the death of the previous chair, **Nigel Gardiner**, who was an inspiration to all of us and will be a hard act to follow.

I was born and brought up in London. My first career was as an electrical/mechanical engineer with the GPO Engineering Department in London. During this time, I met my wife, Kathy and we were married in 1968. We have two grown up children and two delightful grandchildren.

While working for the GPO I graduated with an honours degree in social sciences with the Open University. After eleven years commuting into London, I needed a change. I applied, and was accepted by Keswick Hall College of Education in Norwich, to study for the post graduate Certificate of Education. I spent thirty-two years as a teacher at Wymondham High

School teaching a variety of subjects. The last position I held before retiring in 2009 was Head of Information Technology. My hobbies include reading, travelling, music, I play the piano and am a chorister at Christ Church Eaton. I am also a keen photographer and help run the partially sighted photography club at the Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind.

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer at the end of 2015, and fully understand the trauma this can cause. The biopsy indicated a high Gleason score and after discussion with my consultant and support from my wife I decided that a radical prostatectomy was the best option. This was carried out at the end of January 2016. However, in late spring my PSA score started to rise and I was put on a seven week course of radiotherapy combined with hormone treatment. After the radiotherapy my PSA score has been untraceable. I have now finished the hormone treatment and fingers crossed I should be OK.

During my tenure, I would like to see our Group further develop the use of social media. We have recently revamped our support group website. It is much easier to navigate around and the response from this has been very positive so far. We have also recently instigated a Facebook page which is reaching a wider audience. At the moment we are putting out information to interested parties but I think we ought also to create a dialogue whereby interested parties can feed back to us their needs, fears and problems etc. Our 'Meet and Chat' sessions are very well attended and feedback is positive. The format of these meetings has been the same for quite a long time and it might be useful to explore different approaches. Our meetings with a guest speaker are well attended and provide a useful way of disseminating new ideas and research. We have also recently had more general interest speakers, which have proved to be very popular, and I would like the balance between the medical and general interest to continue.

I feel we need to be more proactive in making sure all GP surgeries are aware of the Group and that health professionals inform patients of the help and support that we can provide. This is another of my objectives.



47,000 radishes pushed nearly 5 miles to help us - see page 3



Toftwood couple who lit-up at Christmas for us - see page 3

The prostate test that you can take at home

by **Victoria Allen** - Science Correspondent
(This article appeared in the Daily Mail of November 29th. 2019)

MEN could soon be able to take a simple test at home to find out if they have prostate cancer.

Instead of seeing a doctor for a painful biopsy, they may need only to post off a urine sample and get their results within three days.

The test tracks 38 genes which can indicate if men have aggressive prostate cancer and need immediate treatment.

It is hoped the test will be available on the NHS within three to five years, and that it will be less invasive than the current blood test for prostate specific antigen (PSA).

If the urine test is a success, it would also spare men the painful biopsy they are given to confirm if the PSA result is accurate.

More than 11,000 men a year die from prostate cancer in Britain. The Daily Mail is campaigning for diagnosis to urgently be improved, as it lags behind that of other diseases, including breast cancer.

As well as being easy to take at home, the urine test also separates men with aggressive prostate cancer from those with slow-growing tumours, who need only 'active surveillance to keep an eye on the disease.

Dr Jeremy Clark, from the **University of East Anglia**, who led a study into the urine test, said: 'Using our at-home test could in future revolutionise how those on active surveillance are monitored for disease progression, with men only having to visit the clinic for a positive urine result.

'This is in contrast to the current situation where men are recalled to the clinic every six to 12 months for painful and expensive biopsies.'

The urine test was previously available only in a clinic, following an uncomfortable rectal examination. This was done to push chemical 'messengers from the prostate into the urethra so they would be flushed out in the urine. Scientists could then examine the messengers to see if the cancer genes were active or not.

But scientists have now discovered this uncomfortable procedure is not necessary, as men's first urine of the day naturally contains high levels of the chemical messengers, with no help needed to release them.

The urine test is now being trialled in a larger study, which will recruit 1,500 men in Britain and around the world, according to the journal 'Biotechniques'.

Donated model of male pelvis

In the December Newsletter we told you how **Waveney Valley Lodge of Mark Master Masons** donated £1,250 to enable us to buy a projector and a model of a male pelvis, to be used at seminars aimed at decreasing some of the anxiety around coming into hospital and to provide additional support for patients undergoing radical prostatectomy.

The complete, life-size male pelvis model, is made of synthetic bone-like material with a highly detailed, carefully coloured pelvic floor, which is made of very flexible plastic and can be removed from the pelvis for inspection and demonstration.

The pelvic floor model includes a removable section of the bladder with prostate and seminal vesicle. The pelvis model dissects into 3 parts and is now being put to good use at these seminars and is proving to be an invaluable teaching aid.



Thanks to Adrian Raeside for his permission to reproduce his cartoon

Radish Push in aid of Prostate Cancer

A group of men have laid strong roots for the fight against prostate cancer by pushing wheelbarrows of radishes through their village.

Members of the Men's Breakfast Club of Feltwell wheeled 47,000 of the vegetables nearly five miles, from the village's Love Radish factory to the Wellington Pub on the other side of Feltwell, during the unusual charity challenge last September.

The project was organised in support of Prostate Cancer UK's 'March for Men' initiative. Club co-ordinator Paul Garland said it was a cause that was close to home for many of the group's members, had either been treated for prostate cancer or, like himself, had had a scare.

He said: "My father died of prostate cancer two years ago. He was diagnosed late and it had spread to his bones. This was a sobering lesson so I asked my local surgery for regular blood tests for PSA, a prostate cancer indicator protein. One test earlier this year came back very high and I was referred to West Suffolk Hospital where a biopsy of my prostate was taken.

Fortunately, it came back negative and my PSA levels fell over the next few weeks. It transpired that I had had a urine infection. This experience strengthened my resolve to do something to make men more aware of their health. My message to other men is, if you have had prostate cancer in your direct family blood-line, then ask your doctor for a PSA test".

Club members wheeled their barrows along a 4.7 mile route from the Love Radish factory, Southery Road to the Wellington pub, on September 28th.

This fine effort by the lads of Feltwell raised £2,445.52 and in the photo Paul Garden (left), chairman of the club, presents the donation cheque to our Support Group's committee member, Roger Bassham. Well done guys, we appreciate your helping the work of our patient support group.



Lighting-up Toftwood at Christmas

For many years, over the festive Christmas period, Dennis Firmage and his wife Mandy treat the folks of the village to a wonderful lighting display, which adorns their home and garden in Farm Way, Toftwood, near Dereham.

Last Christmas it took them several weeks to erect the lights display, in the lead-up to the switch-on on Saturday 7th December.

Each year Dennis and Mandy choose a Norfolk-based charity to benefit from the donations which the viewing public make, to show their support and appreciation of their efforts to

brighten the Toftwood Christmas scene. Last Christmas the Firmages choose our Support Group as the charity to benefit from their seasonal display and a total of £ 667.10p was raised to aid our work.

Thank you for choosing us, Mandy and Dennis; congratulations on a wonderful display of lights. All your hard work did us proud and we very much appreciate this.



Dennis & Mandy's Christmas 2019 display



On page 2 is an article telling how **Waveney Valley Lodge of Mark Master Masons** generously donated the funds to enable us to purchase a projector and pelvic model for use at the informative sessions for patients who are intending to have, or are considering whether they wished to opt for a radical prostatectomy.

Our chairman of trustees, Ray Cossey, was invited to join Lodge members at their Harleston Masonic Rooms for the handover of the cheque. *"They were very generous and hospitable hosts and we very much appreciate their support of our Group"*, said Ray.

In the photograph (left to right) are **Ray Clarke** - Deputy Provincial Grand Master, **Robert Wood** - Worshipful Master, **Ray Cossey** and **Colin Clements** - Immediate Past Master.

Notice of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NORFOLK & WAVENEY PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

to be held on **Monday 6th. April, 2020** at the
Big C Centre, Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital
(Immediately following the 7pm Committee Meeting)

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM, held on 8.4.19
3. Matter Arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Secretary's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Nominations & election of Executive Committee Officers
Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer
8. Nominations & election of Committee Members
9. Re-appointment of Bankers (Barclays plc) & Auditors (M+A Partners)
10. Re-affirm the re-appointment of : - Roger Bassham, Ray Cossey, David Haines & Edward Hare as Trustees
11. Any Other Business

Nominations are invited to serve as Committee members

Signed nominations, with the name of a member-seconded should be submitted in writing to :- **Noel Warner, Swan Meadow, Low Road, Forncett St. Mary, Norwich, NR16 1JJ**
to be received by 31st. March, 2020. Nominations will be accepted from the floor, with the nominees' agreement..

MEETINGS for 2020

Free car parking Light refreshments

Monday 2nd. March - Open Meeting with Speaker (7 pm - 9 pm)
Benjamin Gooch Theatre, Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Monday 6th. April (A.G.M) After the 7.00 pm Committee Meeting
'Big C Centre', Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Saturday 25th. April - Meet & Chat Meeting (11.45 am - 1.15 pm)
Louise Hamilton Centre, James Paget Hospital, Gorleston.

Monday 4th. May - Meet & Chat Evening (7 pm - 9 pm)
'Big C Centre', Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Monday 1st. June - Open Meeting with Speaker (7 pm - 9 pm)
Benjamin Gooch Theatre, Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Saturday 11th July - Meet & Chat Meeting (11.45 am - 1.15 pm)
Louise Hamilton Centre, James Paget Hospital, Gorleston.

Monday 3rd. August - Meet & Chat Evening (7 pm - 9 pm)
'Big C Centre', Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Monday 7th. September - Open Meeting with Speaker (7 pm - 9 pm)
Benjamin Gooch Theatre, Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Sat. 17th. October - Meet & Chat Meeting (11.45 am - 1.15 pm)
Louise Hamilton Centre, James Paget Hospital, Gorleston.

Monday 2nd. November - Meet & Chat Evening (7 pm - 9 pm)
'Big C Centre', Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Monday 7th. December - Open Meeting with Speaker (7pm - 9pm)
Benjamin Gooch Theatre, Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

MEET & CHAT MEETINGS - When prostate cancer patients can meet & chat to fellow patients and a specialist nurse

OUR WELFARE TEAM ARE GEORGE & JILL SIELY

who live in Happisburgh and are always available to give help and support to any member, and/or their family, who requests it. They have a contact list of fellow members of our support group and are able to put you in contact with someone who has been on the same prostate cancer treatment journey as you.

Call 01692 650617 if you would like to have a chat with either of them.

How To Contact Us

Specialist Nurses:

Sallie, Claire, Rachel & Elaine
Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital - 01603 289845

Wendy, Siji & Velda-Sarah
James Paget Hospital, Gorleston - 01493 453510

Sally, Clare & Anne-Marie
Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn - 01553 613075

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www.prostatesupport.org.uk

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