

Kidderminster & Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group



WRH Oncology Unit Staff

Left to right: Dr. James Best (consultant oncologist), Daniel Bloomer, Richard Cormie (both therapeutic radiographers), Claire Bode (radiotherapy manager)

SUPPORTER

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EDITORIAL



We're back live with 5 events since the last Supporter Magazine – open evenings with guest speakers in Pershore and Kidderminster in October, 2 coffee and chat events in Malvern and Pershore and a meeting for support contacts in Ombersley. We've moved our monthly committee meetings to Leapgate (near Stourport) and we see out 2021 with the popular Tractor Run (see pages 18 and 19) organised by a dedicated team of volunteers from the Wyre Forest with contributions to KWPCSG.

Members are starting to support such events again, but – understandably, given the large numbers in our age group still contracting Covid throughout the autumn months – there is still much hesitation among others. We're hoping that turn-outs in 2022 will improve, particularly for new ventures such as the Coffee & Chat mornings which we hope to roll out in Worcester in 2022.

Coming up on Tuesday, 18th. January is the AGM. This will not be live from Kidderminster Town Hall, as on previous occasions. Instead, it will be held via Zoom to accommodate those preferring not to venture out in mid-winter. **We hope so much that a few of you out there will be willing to step forward and join the committee, particularly if you have a skill which would benefit the KWPCSG organisation.** If so, please contact Mary as soon as possible at mandmsymons@talktalk.net

In this month's Supporter magazine, we are concentrating on two areas. We are delighted to have worked closely with the Oncology Department at Worcestershire Royal Hospital, who have kindly provided us with a long and detailed article covering the past 20 months since the original Covid outbreak. The key message they are keen to pass on to our members is that, to their great credit, they treated more patients in 2020 than in 2019.

The other main feature looks at the contribution Di Fox is making to our members in offering fitness sessions via Zoom each Monday morning. We are hopeful that our coverage and Di's appearances at recent open meetings and the Malvern Coffee & Chat will lead to more members joining up for her sessions. In connection with fitness, we are also focusing on opportunities in the county for more leisurely sport (see Walking Sport Festival Poster on page 11).

One member who is leaving the committee is John Mills, who has been instrumental in collating all the material handed over to him into the pages of the magazine. John has been involved in the Supporter Magazine since 2017, and we would like to thank him for his efforts, particularly in 2021 when the size of the magazine doubled to 24 pages. We are one of few PC support groups who print and distribute to every member a magazine dedicated to informing, educating, supporting and occasionally entertaining its readership.

John's departure means that we urgently need someone to replace him – either a KWPCSG member, the partner of a member or someone you may know who has time to contribute several hours over a week-long period every 3 months to turn the articles and photos into pages and, ultimately, into an attractive magazine. If you can help in this search, please contact me at editor@kwpcsg.co.uk or on 07876 556466 for more details.

Peter Corbishley

SO GREAT TO BE BACK LIVE

After a two-year break due to lockdowns and Covid concerns, it was great to be organising our first KWPCSG event at the Kidderminster Town Hall on October 19th. It was extremely well attended, and it was so wonderful to be greeting old friends again.

Di Fox, our first speaker, gave us a short taster of her exercise classes while staying seated, and everyone joined in. Di's classes suit my problems (I have an arthritic left knee), and I feel very safe and benefit from the exercises that she teaches the class. I would recommend anybody who wants help with fitness to join this class on a Monday morning at 9.30. The link can be found on our website.



Left to right: Clare Arthur (Macmillan Information and Support Lead), Di Fox (personal trainer), Mary Symons (KWPCSG Acting Chair), Claudia Waterhouse (Urology Cancer Co-ordinator for Worcestershire), Penny Templey (CNS Nurse)

Following on, I then introduced the audience to Claudia Waterhouse and Clare Arthur from Macmillan. They explained their roles within the County organisation and stressed all the services they can offer anybody with cancer. Many people think that their work is just for patients with terminal cancer, but that is not the case.

They can help you to obtain counselling if you are struggling with your diagnosis or the opportunity to communicate with other people online for help. They can give you help and advice where to get assistance if you have financial issues, or need support with symptoms, etc. Their work is invaluable, and they have been very supportive of our role in caring for men with prostate cancer.



Peter Spencer (new KWPCSG committee member) and new KWPCSG member Trevor Albutt

We then asked everyone to help themselves to the buffet lovingly prepared by Margaret Shakespeare and Hilary Brothwell and get another drink and return for the entertainment from 'Ukes on the Edge' from Kinver. Their leader was John Henley (at the front in the blue shirt in the photo (bottom left), and the songs they sang for us were a tapestry of our youthful days. I loved it and was pleased, when talking to members, to find out that they had also enjoyed it.

It was an evening of new, and important knowledge from our speakers and wonderful relaxing entertainment from Ukes on the Edge, who have promised to come back in the future. At their request we had a bucket passed round for donations to Pancreatic Cancer, which generously filled as a thank-you for the music.

Mary Symons



FIRST OPEN EVENING FOR TWO YEARS

I would like to offer a sincere thank you to SWPCSG for arranging the first evening meeting in Pershore since the Covid pandemic swept through the country. I was apprehensive about attending because it was the first evening meeting since my joining the support group in January 2020. I need not have been concerned. The ice-breaking ukulele band was an excellent starter and soon had those attending singing or foot-tapping as the songs were played. I looked around me at one point and everybody was participating - it put a smile on my face.

We had a short presentation from Di Fox about exercise which quite literally had everyone sitting on the edge of their seats as we were invited to undertake some seated exercises, a taster from Di's regular on-line session via Zoom on Monday mornings.

The talk given by Peter Tomlinson was excellent and pitched at exactly the right level without all the gory details of treatment and the after-effects. It also resonated with my own experience of palliative high dose radiotherapy to my prostate, as Dr Capaldi said "to control local disease and reduce complications later on." Like Peter, I only had 20 fractions. All the things that Peter talked about brought back memories, including trying to hold the water in, then the mad dash to the toilet to empty the bladder and the frequent trips to the toilet, sometimes very urgent in the morning. It was obvious that Peter was passionate about PSA testing for all men from the age of 50. He had no symptoms of his cancer when he was first diagnosed with PC. It was regular PSA testing and monitoring, along with his wife offering encouragement, that saw his cancer caught at an early stage.

Mark Howard

MARY'S CORNER



Autumn is finally arriving; leaves are falling off trees. It is wet one day and sunny the next, and temperatures are slowly going down. However, it has been an exceptionally warm October, and we expect the temperature to drop in November. I do quite like autumn, with the lovely colour in the trees and watching the squirrels collecting things to store in their dreys. It is the shorter days and long nights that I dislike, and once Christmas is passed, then we have the dullest time of the year - winter. Bare trees and the shortest days, frosts and maybe snow, which can make it difficult for older people to get out and about.

I remember when we started our Zoom keep fit classes in lockdown earlier this year, and how just seeing other people was so uplifting. These are still going strong but not so well supported as they should be. Di Fox is a very good teacher and works with members one to one if necessary, and helps each individual. Please link in to one of our classes the link is on our website, and you can do whatever you feel comfortable for you, there is no pressure.

At our last committee meeting we made the decision to continue to use our Zoom kit and hold the AGM on Tuesday 18th January by Zoom. The reason for this is the concern that our members have to come to the Town Hall, in one of the coldest months of the year and the fact that there are still high numbers of Covid cases, and potentially other viruses.

At our recent Town Hall meeting in the Town Hall on the 19th October, a bucket was taken around the attendees who generously donated a total of £160.00 for Pancreatic Cancer UK at the request of the Ukes on the Edge. Thank you so much for your support, and we will certainly invite them back in the future to entertain us again.

The good news is that we have booked the dates for all the Kidderminster Town Hall meetings, and this will be entered on the Calendar of Events 2022. The first meeting on the 19th April our main Speaker will be Mr. Makar (our President) and hopefully Dr. Lisa Capaldi from Oncology. It will be confirmed in the March Supporter magazine, with information also about the July meeting.

Mary Symons

The advertisement features a small white and brown dog sitting in a wooden chair, looking directly at the camera. The background is dark and slightly blurred. In the top right corner, there is a red rectangular logo with the text "Allan Morris" in white, bold letters, followed by "Sales and Lettings" in a smaller font. At the bottom left, there is contact information for the Worcester Office: "Worcester Office" and "Sidbury House, 32 Sidbury, Worcester, WR1 2HZ". At the bottom center, there is contact information for the London Office: "London Office" and "Mayfair Office, 15 Thayer Street, London, W1U 3JT". At the bottom right, the website "allan-morris.co.uk" is displayed.

LOGAN WALCOTT : A LONG WAY FROM HOME



'It took 17 days on a cargo boat to get to Britain,' was how Logan Walcott began to describe his journey to a new life in 1955. So where was he sailing from and why?

Logan was born in 1932 in Westmoreland in Jamaica, growing up in the care of his grandmother and great-grandmother. He seemed set on a career as a teacher but decided instead to train to be a tailor. His work led him to develop an interest in politics, and he was a supporter of Norman Manley's People's National Party.

With political unrest in the country (which finally gained its independence from Britain in 1962) and a wish to join up with his best friend in Birmingham, Logan decided to join the growing exodus to the U.K., settling in Handsworth where his uncle lived. Having to contend with the infamous signs in windows of rooms to let ('No Irish, no Darkies, no Gypsies') and racist attitudes of some landlords made finding accommodation a challenge.



Wedding Day for Logan and Ethel (1960)

Although his early days in the city would be spent 5 to a room, he managed to save enough money to buy a house after just 2 years, working on building sites and in factories. Being eligible for National Service he applied for the Navy, was turned down (few members of ethnic minorities were accepted into the Navy in those days), reapplied for the Army but failed the medical.



With friends in Birmingham (1959)

Life changed for Logan in 1959 when he was recruited as a bus conductor with Birmingham City Council. Now he had his first secure job, a home in Handsworth and, from 1960, a wife, Ethel, who had come over from Jamaica to work as a midwife in 1956. Their daughter, Charmian, was born in 1963 and their son, Michael, 5 years later.

In 1978 he left his job on the buses and put his love of mathematics and his interest in the stock market to good effect. 'I used my brain,' Logan said, cashing in at the time of the privatisation of the utilities. 'It was the time of 'Tell Sid', a reference to the advertising campaign to get members of the public to invest, as Logan did, buying, for example, shares in TSB at just 50p.'

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Two years later the family moved to Kidderminster after Ethel had applied successfully for a midwifery post at Kidderminster Hospital. They soon became regular worshippers at St. Mary's Church, just a 5-minute walk from their house.

In 1998 prostate cancer was detected but Logan remained under observation until 2002 when he was treated with radiotherapy at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton. He joined KWPCSG soon after and attended some of the meetings at Kidderminster Town Hall.

Although he had not played cricket since captaining his school team in Jamaica, Logan loved to travel to matches to watch the West Indies when they toured over here, including test matches at Lords, Nottingham and Edgbaston. He also still retains a deep interest in reading about the history of empires, from the Syrian and Persian through to the Spanish and French.

Although Ethel passed away in 2015, Logan feels he has plenty of support, with Michael living at home with his father and Charmian and her family also living locally. He claims to have not encountered any issues of prejudice since moving to Worcestershire and feels his understanding of countries and empires through his reading has helped him to settle a long way from home.

Peter Corbishley



Logan, Ethel, children and grandchildren

Logan's son, Michael Walcott, added these lines:

I was diagnosed with COVID-19 in September 2020. Having rushed to Alexandra hospital, Redditch, I was initially placed on a CPAD ventilator. Despite the gravity of my condition, I can remember being very calm when the doctor told me that my blood oxygen levels were not improving, and the ventilator was not working for me. I must have gone to sleep at some point because when I awoke, I was in an ICU side ward with tubes attached to me. I later learned that I had been put in an induced coma for about 11 days, fighting for my life.

My father was taken to the same hospital a week after I had been admitted. It is my understanding that he was put on a CPAD ventilator with a 'Do Not Resuscitate' order. By the time I came out of ICU we were both re-united in a small COVID ward. As I was still very weak, I was not able to talk to him, but we were able to wave to each other. Despite my father's age, his recovery was a lot more rapid than my own, and he was discharged after three weeks.

Although my father has not returned to his active self-prior to COVID, he still has an active mind and is able to do a lot of things for himself. Since being discharged hospital, I have been struggling with the effects of Long COVID. This includes fatigue, brain fog, difficulties with communication and breathlessness.

DI FOX : KEEPING OUR MEMBERS FIT



A number – but far too few – of our members know Di Fox as the fitness coach appointed by KWPCSG at the beginning of the year to help improve our wellbeing during lockdown through a series of Monday morning Zoom sessions. Those members who attended either the Pershore or Kidderminster open meetings in October will have caught a flavour of Di's methods in the 10-minute seated taster exercise sessions she provided.

Offering online fitness sessions to groups such as KWPCSG, the Stroke Association and those recovering from breast cancer who are linked to the Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven is a far cry from Di's original career path. She was born and brought up in Stockport, attending Priestnall School before moving on to Aston University to study French and German. Her time at university included one year attending the Interpreters' School in Zurich with students from all over the world. Simultaneous translating from German into English and vice versa would become part of her skills set when she left university to seek relevant employment.

Her first job took her to Ruislip in Middlesex, where she met her future husband, Dave, on a training course in Worcester. Both of them were working for K3 Software Services Ltd., a company which was subsequently bought out by IBM. They married in 1993 and moved to Fennhill Heath.

Di gradually became disillusioned with her work in the technology sector, having had little opportunity to employ her language skills and getting increasingly less job satisfaction. The turning point came with her father's diagnosis of cancer in 2010. 'What am I doing here when I should be looking after my father?' she thought, so within a matter of months she had quit IT and was busy retraining to become a personal trainer.



Di participating in the Cotswold Duathlon

In 2015 another health issue took her career in a slightly different direction. Di was diagnosed with breast cancer and required chemotherapy, radiotherapy and a small operation. At one point her mornings were taken up with radiotherapy and her afternoons involved taking her Cancer Rehabilitation qualification down in Stroud. It is here that she heard from the Macmillan representative that there would soon be a Macmillan funded vacancy in Worcester with Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

Di was successful in applying for the post, which involved working with cancer patients to help them increase their activity levels. Once the funding ran out, she decided to set up Active Always with one of her colleagues from Active HW, Tom Howard. Di specialises in working with those with long-term health conditions, whereas Tom concentrates on working with older people, which he still also does for Active HW.

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Di summed up the focus of her work by saying, 'My main message is that it's my job to make sure there is an appropriate option for every participant, so if anyone is concerned about whether the session is for them, I would encourage them to get in touch and we can talk it through. Similarly, I'm happy to answer any questions anyone may have around physical activity.'



It's not surprising that many of Di's interests lie in the field of sport. In badminton she represents the county at masters' level, while she is a member of Worcester Tennis Club, playing regularly for their teams in mixed

doubles. Running is also a passion of hers, including park runs and half-marathons. Just a few weeks ago she came first in her age group at the Stourport Almost 8 (km) event.

Another keen interest is genealogy. As a Stockport girl she is particularly proud of the fact that her great, great, grand-aunt, Amy Cattrall, was married to John Henry Davies, one of 4 businessmen in 1902 prepared to invest money in the ailing and heavily indebted Newton Heath FC. In that year he became club president and the club's name was changed to Manchester United. The rest, as they say, is history.

In order to join Di with the KWPCSG fitness session, you will need to visit our website (www.kwpcsg.co.uk). There you will find the meeting ID and password for the Zoom sessions. The unique feature of these sessions is that they are tailored towards the health issues frequently experienced by prostate cancer sufferers.

If you wish to find out more information about the Monday morning Zoom fitness session (09.30-10.30), please contact Di via email (di.activealways@gmail.com).

Peter Corbishley

Keeping on the move

OK, so you have not played football since your late 40's, and that was despite the amusement of the grandchildren on the beach.

Christmas is coming and the goose - and granddad - is getting plumper. Someone has unkindly pointed out that you need a larger size of trousers for your Christmas present.

What to do – or, realistically, where to start?

All the evidence is that exercise – however little - is good for you. Try a little test: can you go upstairs without taking a breather?

Your Support Group is committed to helping everyone assess their needs. Di Fox, who runs our Monday weekly Keep Fit sessions on Zoom, makes suggestions for us all. You know it makes sense, so do contact her on di.activealways@gmail.com

Gordon Kingston

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VIEWS OF A PARTICIPANT

I started exercise with Di during the first lockdown of 2020. I had just finished chemo and radiotherapy and was in a low state, both physically and emotionally. I was aware that age and hormone therapy would impact my muscle strength and fatigue levels. Various cancer charity booklets indicated that regular exercise would slow the decline and help me be active for longer.

Starting slowly and safely, I found myself looking forward to the weekly exercise session with Di. There was no looking back as Di pointed me towards other activities - walking tennis, Pilates and walking football. I was then introduced to another adaption of tennis. It's called Touch Tennis, where prior tennis ability is more likely to be a handicap than advantage.

My new exercising week reads as follows:

- Monday am: KWPCSG Fitness Session (online with Di Fox via Zoom)
- Tuesday am: Pilates (online with Di Fox via Zoom)
- Wednesday pm: Walking Tennis (Worcester Tennis Club)
- Thursday am: Walk-and-Talk (Priory Park, Malvern)
- Friday am: Touch Tennis (Pershore Tennis Centre)
- Friday am: Walking Football (Perdiswell, Worcester / last Friday of month)

I know that I am happier and managing my side effects well, always getting a "buzz" when exercising. Do phone me on 01386 424132 for more details of any of the above sessions.

Mark Howard

ACTIVE ALWAYS



Knee Raises

Standing tall, raise one leg (knee to hip height) and reach up with the hand on the opposite side. Lower your arm and leg and repeat on the opposite side. Adapt by performing from seated if required.



Sit 2 Stand

Sit in the front part of a chair and move your feet forwards so you are sitting with your knees bent. Lean forwards and begin to stand (use a band or weights to progress). Once you are standing sit back down slowly and with control.



Wall Press Up

Place your hands against the wall and slowly lean forwards. Bend your elbows slowly lowering your chest towards the sofa. Try to maintain a straight line from your heels to head. Having lowered as far as comfortable push yourself back up.



Half Jack

Stand tall. Tap out to the side with the right leg, raising the right arm out to the side at the same time. Come back to the centre and change sides.



Bicep Curls

Sit in the front part of your chair, middle of the band beneath your feet and one end in each hand (held like an ice cream cone). Tuck your elbows into the side of your body, move hand up towards shoulders (imagine taking a drink) and slowly lower hands back down to your side. Repeat 8-12 times.



Spotty Dog

Tap back with one foot and raise one or both arms up towards the ceiling. Lower back down and change legs. Repeat for 60 seconds. To progress hold 1kg weights in each hand.



READERS LETTERS

I must apologise. Your fabulous newsletter has been on my desk for the last few weeks, with the intention of me emailing you to tell you how much I enjoyed receiving it and reading it last month. It is a really useful and informative magazine, and a great example of what groups could do.

All good wishes for tonight's meeting (SWPCSG meeting in October). I am so pleased you are venturing to restart face-to-face meetings. As great as Zoom meetings are, there is nothing like being in a room with people, is there?

Sarah Gray

Tackle Prostate Cancer
National Support and
Development Manager

Perdiswell Leisure Centre

Thursday 9th December 1-3pm

WALKING SPORTS FESTIVAL

Come along to this free event and try a variety of Walking Sports
Rugby - Cricket - Football - Netball - Basketball - Hockey - Short Tennis
Everyone welcome. No experience required.



More information:
tom.howard@worc.ac.uk
01905 542260

I was given a copy of the September publication on Friday and have just spent a very pleasant half-hour in the garden reading it. I just wanted to say how thrilled I am with the LAC article and all of the photos are brilliant. We are particularly proud to adorn the front cover.

It's not easy putting a publication together and I'm sure it's sometimes a thankless task being an editor!

Well done and many thanks for all your kind words and support.

Michele Handley

Leapgate Activity Centre trustee

KEEPING CALM AND CARRYING ON IN THE ONCOLOGY UNIT

Rebecca Bourne, Head of Communications at the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, reflects on 20 months in the Oncology Unit as Covid-19 swept across the county.

At the height of the pandemic when there was disruption all around us, the nation found solace in clapping every week for NHS and other key workers who ensured that vital services continued.

With our local hospital staff working tirelessly to care for growing numbers of patients being admitted to wards and Intensive Care beds with Covid-19, many non-urgent services had to be put on hold to ensure that bed capacity and healthcare staff could be freed up to deal with the pandemic.



Entrance to The Worcestershire Oncology Centre

However, cancer care and other urgent and emergency care continued - aiming to ensure patients in need of treatment could be looked after and cared for in spite of the challenges faced.

In the year from April 2020, our local hospitals in Worcestershire saw 19,744 patients with suspected cancer (compared to 18,981 the previous year). Of those, 3,070 went on to receive treatment, including over 1,240 who started new courses of radiotherapy (totalling more than 14,000 treatments), and more than 400 patients who underwent surgery.

These figures include nearly 200 prostate cancer patients starting radical courses of radiotherapy, receiving more than 4,500 treatments in total. Dr James Best, an Oncologist at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "I think there was a misconception that cancer care was stopped during the pandemic, but that is not the case at all in Worcestershire.

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Waiting area inside The Worcestershire Oncology Centre

"As a Trust we followed national and specialty guidance about what tests and other procedures should and should not be carried out in an NHS hospital setting during the Covid-19 pandemic. In that context, we made a huge effort to ensure that where possible cancer patients continued to receive the care they need. For large numbers of patients this means they have had the tests and treatment they needed, when they needed them, in as safe a setting as possible."

And huge efforts have been put in place to ensure that hospital settings are following rigorous infection prevention and control guidance to ensure that patients, visitors and staff are kept as safe as possible. This is particularly important to reduce the risk of coronavirus infection to clinically vulnerable cancer patients.

Dr Best added: "Staff now routinely wear surgical masks whilst working within hospital and social distancing measures remain in place. Additional measures are put in place if a patient contracts Covid-19 at any point during treatment.

"We are encouraging all of our staff within the oncology department to get vaccinated, and all colleagues are undertaking twice-weekly lateral flow tests and asked to stay at home and take a PCR test if this is positive. We have a Trust Covid 'swab pod' which has been great as this means staff usually know their PCR results on the day that they take the test and can come back in if it is negative.

"Many appointments also continue to be carried out as telephone consultations where it is appropriate to ensure patients do not need to come on to the hospital site unless it is necessary. Where it is necessary for a patient's care, we are continuing to see patients face-to-face in clinic."

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Dr Best added that there had been challenges - particularly with staffing – but that colleagues had pulled out all the stops to ensure any disruption to patients had been minimised. “A small number of staff were shielding at home at the start of the pandemic – but they are all now back at work with risk assessments in place to ensure that they are working in a safe environment,” he said.

“Of course, we still have members of staff isolating at home due to household members testing positive, but colleagues have been brilliant throughout and have continuously pulled together to put patients first.”

While the risk of becoming seriously ill from Covid-19 has reduced thanks to the successful vaccination programme, rates of Covid-19 in the local community are still high and our county’s hospitals are still treating an average of around 60 inpatients with Covid-19 at any one time.

This means that while we have seen restrictions eased in our local communities, the infection control measures put in place in hospitals and healthcare settings at the start of the pandemic have remained in place to a large degree. For example,

patients with appointments at the Oncology Centre at Worcestershire Royal Hospital will notice that the waiting room is still different – there are only half the number of chairs within the waiting area to enable social distancing, and patients are also asked to turn up at their appointment time only to facilitate this.

Relatives and carers are also still only able to attend if patients require ongoing care or assistance whilst they are in the department, and the café and shop facilities within the department are still currently closed. Prostate patients who need full bladders for treatment are asked to drink before they leave home, rather than drink in the waiting room.

Dr Best added: “Some of this has been hard because it has meant that the friendships and camaraderie that formed between patients in the past are not so easily made, and staff miss the chatter and banter between the patients, but I would like to assure patients that we are keeping the situation under constant review and will begin to ease the restrictions as soon as we are safely able to do so. We know that the most important thing is keeping our patients as safe as we can.”



CT Scanner inside The Worcestershire Oncology Centre

Looking to the future beyond the pandemic, staff within the department are looking forward to the introduction of Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy (SABR). There has been significant investment in updating our radiotherapy machines (Linacs), additional staffing and software. This has also been supported following a fundraising campaign by Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity to raise £24,000 needed for additional equipment which was reached in late October.

SABR is a highly focused radiation treatment that gives an intense dose of radiation concentrated precisely on a targeted area of cancer while limiting the dose to surrounding organs. SABR delivers radiotherapy in fewer, higher-intensity visits, improving patient experience and clinical outcomes including overall survival.

Dr Best said: "For prostate patients we are hopeful that this will include being able to take part in a trial comparing surgery, conventional radiotherapy and stereotactic radiotherapy for localised prostate cancer (PACE). The trial compares SABR to either conventional radiotherapy or surgery for men who have been diagnosed with prostate

cancer that has not grown outside the prostate gland.

"As with previous studies in prostate cancer such as CHhip, this has the potential to reduce the number of radiotherapy treatments required for some patients with prostate cancer whilst maintaining the effectiveness of treatment."

Claire Bode, Radiotherapy Service Manager at the Trust, added: "We are so grateful to our local communities – not only who have helped us raise the additional funds needed for SABR so quickly, but who also clapped for us week in and week out at the start of the pandemic, and who also rallied round to support us and our fellow colleagues across our hospitals with care packages and donations that really helped lift our spirits and boost morale at what was the most extraordinary time any of us had worked through".

Worcestershire Royal Hospital Oncology Fund is part of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity and raises money to support enhancements to patient experience within the oncology services at Worcestershire Royal Hospital.



Two members of staff L-R
Daniel Bloomer - Therapeutic Radiographer
Richard Cormie - Therapeutic Radiographer

You can donate directly to the Oncology Fund by text:

To donate £5 text
ONCOLOGY5 to 70085

To donate £10 text
ONCOLOGY10 to 70085

To donate £20 text
ONCOLOGY20 to 70085

Or cheques can be made payable to Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity (please write "fund number 4711 Oncology" on the reverse of the cheque). More information and address details can be found at www.wahcharity.org

PETER TOMLINSON : CANCER, POLITICS AND A NEW HOME

In our September Supporter Magazine we looked at the life of Peter Tomlinson, from his early life in Bristol to a varied career in broadcasting, including years working for Harlech TV, ATV and a number of commercial radio stations.

In 1996 Peter moved to live near Ombersley with his new Ali. Ali was a community paediatrician with 3 sons from her first marriage who had been at school with Peter's two daughters. They shared a passion for music – Ali having played double bass for the Birmingham University Orchestra, the Wyre Forest Symphony and Chandos, while Peter was into rock and roll, jazz and played the drums. The American classics provided the ideal crossover of their musical appreciation,

A new challenge beckoned in 2001 when Saga Radio was created, launching in the West Midlands with Peter as managing director and a presenter. This ties in with one of Peter's passions – combatting the misconception that the over-60s had little to offer, particularly in the world of commerce but also in the wider community. He laments, for example, the closing of the Mature Workforce Project (financed by the European Social Fund) just a few months ago.

When Saga Radio was put up for sale, Peter left and now, in 2001, found himself out of work, but not for long as Birmingham Children's Hospital nabbed him as a director to lead on marketing, communications and fundraising. In 2007 he was elected to the office of High Sheriff of the West Midlands – about as far removed from Tiswas as was possible in this country.

In 2009 Peter and Ali considered retiring, but there was another twist in their lives. From 1998 Peter had undergone annual PSA checks. In 2009 a rise to 5.7 did not seem to trouble his GP, but it did Ali, who insisted that he saw a consultant. It was Mr.Chen in Droitwich who informed him he had prostate cancer.



Still a keen drummer!

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Peter taking over the chairmanship of Worcestershire County Council

In 1989 Peter had become a member of the Wyre Forest Cancer Research Committee and, when he became chairman, he got to know a number of experts in the field of cancer research, including Professor Nick James in Birmingham who recommended hormone therapy leading to radiotherapy at the QE in Birmingham. Peter elected to go on the Chipps clinical trial, which meant a reduction from 37 to just 19 sessions in 2010.

'I just cannot believe why every male over 50 should not have a PSA test each year', he stated, bemoaning the opposition of many GPs to such a development. He feels that breast cancer screening has shown the way forward and is passionate about extending annual Wellman tests over the entire male population to include PSA tests.

In 2015 he was approached to stand as a Conservative candidate for Ombersley in the Wychavon District elections, then stood successfully for the county council the following year. In May 2019 he was duly elected as Chairman of Worcestershire County Council – a daunting set of achievements at any age, never mind mid-70s.

Sadly, his life had taken a turn for the worse when Ali was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2015. Unusually for this cancer it was operable, and she recovered until the cancer returned in 2019. The chemotherapy treatment had been going exceptionally well, only for it to be discontinued in 2020 when, like so many cancer treatments, it was suspended due to Covid. Ali passed away in October last year.

With a house move now imminent it is not surprising that Peter should admit, in his words, to 'finding it very difficult to move on to the next period of my life.' I suspect he will not only 'move on' but thrive as new challenges come his way. If Timon Colegrave thinks the new middle age for men will be their 80s, Peter, with his passion to change and improve services, particularly in the NHS, will find plenty to occupy him in the years ahead.

Peter Corbishley

COFFEE & CHAT SOCIALS

PERSHORE COFFEE & CHAT - 24 September

After an inaugural ‘Coffee and Chat’ morning at The Cube in Malvern back in July a second venture took place at the Angel Hotel in Pershore on September 24th. Those attending came from as far afield as Storridge and Malvern and it was heartening to see several regulars at pre-pandemic SWPCSG events such as Harvey Vivian and Ian Haywood.

The restaurant at the Angel was the ideal venue, and those who attended were in good spirits, delighted to be linking up again with fellow SWPCSG members. Numbers, however, were still disappointing and it’s becoming increasingly obvious that more has to be done to encourage other members or – even more importantly – recently diagnosed PC sufferers who may be seeking more information, support and companionship but have yet to join our organisation.

MALVERN COFFEE & CHAT - 12 November

We returned to the really pleasant venue of The Malvern Cube on 12 November and had a lovely discussion with the added bonus of a 20 minute session with Di Fox. The small group were energised and enthused by our Support Group super-star who gives us so much encouragement to keep ourselves fit and well. Although small in number, those attending are always so keen to carry on with Di’s exercises – let’s have more, is the cry!

Of course we natter about the usual – comparing notes about the side-effects of treatment and our “afflictions”, but everyone is very clear about the benefits of peer group discussion and encouragement. The key task remains: how do we get our message about peer group support to a wider audience? We plan to carry out more promotion via our enhanced website, articles, radio and local community organisations in the coming year – so let us know if you have ideas and can help.

WORCESTER COFFEE & CHAT - 5 April? Suitable venue?

We are embarrassed that we have yet to stage a Coffee & Chat in our capital city! It seems an obvious place to stage one of our Coffee & Chat “Specials”, particularly as we have quite a number of KWPCSG members living in and around the city.

So, please let us know – would you like to come along to a free and easy informal morning for a natter with friends and members? Just ring Gordon on 01386 462253 and let us know what you think.

Gordon Kingston

THE MENS SHED

The Men’s Shed was formed in 2018 as a social wing of the Support Group and we have recently changed the name to The Shed in recognition that there are, in the main, two people that are directly involved when prostate cancer is diagnosed – that’s the guy himself and his partner, and we wish to offer them both support during and after their treatment regime. Also they will be welcome to join in any future activities of The Shed.

SABR APPEAL SUCCESS – FIRST COMPRESSOR ORDERED

In the September Supporter magazine we reported on a government commitment to place abdominal compressors in the Oncology departments of NHS Acute Trusts up and down the country – but only through money raised locally.

In Worcestershire the appeal was launched in August 2021 to purchase two compressors at a total cost of £24,000, to improve stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR) for patients receiving their treatment in the Oncology Centre at Worcestershire Royal Hospital

Basically, the compressors work by pressing on to the patients' abdomen, reducing their movement as they breathe. This means a more targeted area can be treated and that this reduces the potential side-effects during radiotherapy. This treatment will be of great benefit to prostate cancer patients with tumours in the abdominal area.

The great news is that one of the compressors has now been ordered as over £13,000 has been raised within just a few weeks. This

was thanks to two large donations with links to prostate cancer.

Leading the way has been the Chaddesley Corbett Classic Car Club which donated over £7000 to the appeal after its highly successful Classic Car & Bike Show on 30 August at the Swan Inn in the village. The KWPCSG was also keen to support the appeal and has made a similar donation to the appeal.

Finally, the Friends of Pershore Hospital expressed an interest in supporting the appeal and a donation is on the way to the charity – this means there will soon be sufficient funds to purchase the second machine.

Further information about the appeal and the SABR equipment can be found on the KWPCSG website.

An update will be provided in the next issue as to when the machines will be installed and available to use on patients.

Nicky Langford

CPR TRAINING AT LEAPGATE

At our first formal get together following lockdown we were treated to an excellent demonstration of the use of CPR (Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation) by retired GP Dick Herbert. Dick with a fellow local GP set up the first flying doctor service in Worcestershire.

We had 25 members including partners attend the gathering. Dick demonstrated the technique of CPR and the use of a defibrillator on a blow up dummy that he had brought with him. The attendees were able to practice on the dummies afterwards. Refreshments were then provided including a variety of cakes that had been kindly donated by the Leapgate Activity Centre.

Paul Markall



BOXING DAY TRACTOR RUN BACK ON TRACK

Last winter's lockdown meant the popular Boxing Day Tractor Run, which always finishes in Bewdley, had to be cancelled. This year – and barring another Covid peak – the expected cavalcade of about 100 tractors, including many classic tractors, will set off from the Far Forest Sports Pavilion in Callow Hill at 10.00.

The Tractor Run is in memory of Harry Bray, the first organiser of the event, which started from his farm. In 2007 Ray Attwood was invited to help run the event. Since 2014 over £ 10,000 has been raised for KWPCSG. Ray is happy to continue the fundraising for our PC group and pleased with the support he received from our former chairman, the late Paul Brothwell, and Paul Markall, the support group's treasurer.

I met up with Ray and his fellow volunteer, Tony Pain, at the Far Forest Sports Pavilion early in November. The pavilion, which is situated on the A 456 between Bewdley and Cleobury Mortimer on the edge of the Wyre Forest, is maintained by Ray and his team who are busy at present creating a new attic storage space.

On Boxing Day every tractor driver is asked to pay a minimum fee of £ 10. They meet at 9.00 for a bacon bap, cup of tea and a chat before setting off at 10.00 on their run which varies every year but which is always set to finish at about midday on Severnside South



in Bewdley before returning to Far Forest. The team encourages spectators and well-wishers to meet up with them at the pavilion or cheer them on en route.

If some of our readers are willing to show their support for this venture and wish to thank the Far Forest team for their efforts over the past 20 years, their presence on Boxing Day morning in such a beautiful part of the county will be greatly appreciated.

Peter Corbishley

Please are there any volunteers to help with a bucket collection during the Tractor Run on Boxing Day, just for about an hour in Bewdley from approximately 11 .30am until 12.30pm. Also could anyone help with collections at the Far Forest Pavilion which is the start of the Tractor Run between 9.00am and 10.00am.

For details contact Paul Markall. 01562 751355.

MAKE A NOTE OF OUR OPEN MEETINGS

TUESDAY 22nd. MARCH (6.30 for 7.00 pm start)

Wychavon Civic Centre, Pershore WR101PT

SIMON ADAMS (Healthwatch CEO)

CLARE ARTHUR (Macmillan Information & Support Lead)

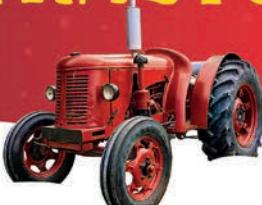
TUESDAY 19th. APRIL (7.00 for 7.30 pm start)

Kidderminster Town Hall, Vicar Street, Kidderminster DY10 1DB
ADEL MAKAR (Consultant Urologist for Worcestershire Hospitals Trust
and President of KWPCSG)

BOXING DAY 2021

SUNDAY 26 DECEMBER

TRACTOR RUN



£10*

Minimum entry fee
for each tractor
(additional donations optional)

*In aid of the
Kidderminster and
Worcestershire
Prostate Cancer
Support Group

Leaving from

FAR FOREST SPORTS PAVILION, Callow Hill, at **10am prompt.**



All welcome at Far Forest Pavilion from 8am for registration, breakfast rolls and hot and cold drinks.

Route: To be provided on the day, this may have to be varied subject to weather conditions – finish in Bewdley Town Centre on Severnside South approximately 12noon.

The Mayor of Bewdley, Councillor Paul Harrison will start the proceedings.

FANCY DRESS PREFERRED

Prizes for the best dressed seasonal tractor and occupants

CONTACT:

Ray Attwood

07973 790214

attwoodraymond@gmail.com

Support Contacts Meet Up Again - Come and join us

Have you had a telephone call from someone in the KWPCSG team recently?

A crucial part of our Support Group activity is the offer of continuing contact for all members. If you have not heard from us, please give me a call.

After a long break due to Covid lockdowns, 15 Support Contacts met in the convivial surroundings of Ombersley Golf Club at the end of September to chat about how we have coped with communicating with all our members during this difficult period. It was great to meet face to face and share experiences of any issues arising from Covid.

It was good to learn that most members had been able to organise delivery of their groceries and other essentials through family friends and the supermarket schemes. Inevitably, some colleagues had serious problem to cope with and our heart goes out to those who have lost loved ones or had deteriorating health to deal with.

What our discussions highlighted is the continuing need to improve our communications with some members. We are concerned that we have lost track of a few, and changes of telephone number, address or circumstance mean our Support Contacts may have had difficulties in contacting you. Should you be unsure of who your Support contact is, just give me a call.

What all Support Contacts agreed is that we would double-check our contact details. **Improving the accuracy of and using our data base to better effect means we would welcome an extra pair of hands to support me, ideally someone with a background in data collection and protection.**

The role of Support Contact is so crucial that Mary has produced a short guide to ensure that SC's can deliver the best possible service. The guide also contains the details of our partners in Macmillan's, the CNS (Clinical Nurse Specialists), local hospitals and other sources of assistance.

We plan to continue with regular meetings of Support Contacts. What we hope to do is harness the goodwill and capabilities of our own membership, so if you feel you could join this like-minded group of volunteers, please let me know. Telephoning a group of about a dozen fellow members usually about twice a year takes little time but can be rewarding to both parties.

Derek Scully(Support Contact Co-ordinator / 01886 833236)

REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS

Annual subscriptions of £5 are due on 3rd January 2021

If you have not completed a standing order with your bank, payments can be made either by cheque or cash to any member of the committee. If you no longer wish to remain as a member of the Group, please inform a committee member in order that we can amend our records.

In order that we can claim **Gift Aid** it is essential that the donor must have paid enough annual UK income or Capital Gains Tax to cover all of their annual charitable donations and not just the donation made to us. Other taxes such as Council Tax and VAT do not qualify. If you have in the past completed a Gift Aid declaration to our Group and you now no longer meet the above requirements, please contact the Treasurer, Paul Markall Tel: 01562 751355

LAUNCH OF NEW KWPCSG WEBSITE

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new website! Our publicity officer, Richard Langley, has worked closely with local web designer, Dan Cook, from WebHQ, to completely rework the website to suit the needs of our members in 2021.

We've made it easier to get support, both from KWPCSG and from other useful sources such as Tackle, Prostate Cancer UK and more.

You might recognise a few familiar faces introducing the website – we have a video from both Nick Owen (a local TV presenter) and our very own Mary Symons.

On the front page, you will find a list of upcoming events and meetings (complete with times and locations), featured stories of people's experiences with prostate cancer and a link to read our magazine.

If you would like to receive regular emails from our committee, please join our mailing list using the form provided on the website. This can be found at the bottom of the front page.

The blog has been re-engineered so that we can better present charity updates, content on the latest medical news and the experiences of our members.

We would love to share more stories and experiences of prostate cancer on our website. If you are comfortable to share your journey, please email us at contact@kwpcsg.co.uk

We're looking forward to hearing your thoughts on our new website! It is our hope that it will help get our message out to newly diagnosed patients so that we can better support them.

To visit the new site, simply visit

www.kwpcsg.co.uk

Daniel Cook



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2022

FITNESS WITH DI FOX (BY ZOOM)

EVERY MONDAY MORNING (09.30 – 10.30)

Go to www.kwpcsg.co.uk for login details

ZOOM AGM MEETING

TUESDAY 18th. JANUARY (7.00 pm)

LINK AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE FRONT PAGE

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 865 9107 3214 Passcode: 359866

SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE PCSG

Wychavon Civic Centre

Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore WR10 1PT

TUESDAY 22nd. MARCH (doors open 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm start)

SPEAKERS: SIMON ADAMS (Healthwatch CEO)

CLARE ARTHUR (Macmillan Information & Support Lead)

WORCESTER COFFEE & CHAT

TUESDAY 5th. APRIL (10.30-12.00)

VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED IN MARCH MAGAZINE

KIDDERMINSTER & WORCESTERSHIRE PCSG

TUESDAY 19th. APRIL (doors open at 7.00 pm for 7.30 start)

Kidderminster Town Hall, Vicar Street, Kidderminster DY10 1DB

SPEAKER: ADEL MAKAR

(Consultant Urologist for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust
and President of KWPCSG)

FUTURE DATES BOOKED

TUESDAY 19TH JULY AT KIDDERMINSTER

TUESDAY 18TH OCTOBER AT KIDDERMINSTER

(speakers to be confirmed)