

Kidderminster & Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group



Architecture of Hope – Maggie's Care Centres

Maggie Keswick Jencks (left)
Maggie's Aberdeen Centre (top right) Maggie's Dundee Centre (bottom right),

Maggie's Cheltenham Centre (main feature, pages 10-14)

SUPPORTER

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www.kwpcsg.co.uk

EDITORIAL



Until 2020 KWPCSG provided the following services to its members: open evenings in Kidderminster and Pershore with outside speakers, many with expertise either nationally recognised or at county level; a support contact system, which assigns every new member to a trained co-ordinator; and the quarterly Supporter magazine.

Over the past couple of years, the pandemic has forced organisations such as ours to review how it interacts with and what it offers its members. Unable to hold actual open evenings, we transferred to Zoom meetings with limited success. There were fewer attendees at the time of the screening, but all were able, if they wished, to access the talks on our website after the event. The support contact arrangement became more important, particularly to those confined to their homes for months on end. And the magazine doubled in size from 12 to 24 pages.

One innovative development had already been created pre-pandemic. The Men's Shed (now simply called **The Shed**) had set up its base at Leapgate Farm in Wilden, encouraging members to help cultivate half an acre of land and to participate in coach excursions to places of interest. Here the aim was to bring more men together, to keep them active and able to pursue their pastimes and develop new ones.

Down in the south of the county the SWPCSG launched **Coffee and Chat** mornings, again to put members in direct contact with each other in an informal setting. This is a work in progress, with numbers ranging disappointingly between 12-18 at the 3 events in Malvern (twice) and Pershore. We hope that we can double those numbers when our next Coffee and Chat session takes place on **Tuesday, April 5th. at the county cricket ground in Worcester** (see page 3 for more details).

Next month we take another step forward. **Andrew Smith** from Pershore, whose father died of prostate cancer a number of years ago, has generously offered his services and his workshop to between 4-8 members interested in either restoring an item of furniture (think BBC's *The Repair Shop*) or in creating a new one by upcycling items no longer fulfilling their original function.

The offer is an incredible one. **Members can sign up to between 2 and all 6 sessions, starting on Wednesday, April 27th. and each lasting 6 hours.** Andrew provides material in his workshop and, as a former teacher, will guide each individual towards his objective. **There is no fee involved for each member.** All we ask is that a donation is made to KWPCSG at the end of the course (see pages 6-8 for more details).

Finally, may I repeat an urgent plea. **We require 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 our Supporter magazine.** If you can help in this search, please contact me at editor@kwpcsg.co.uk or on 07876 554650 for more details.

Peter Corbishley

CRICKET VENUE FOR LATEST COFFEE & CHAT

One of the country's most iconic cricket grounds is the venue for SWPCSG's latest Coffee & Chat event. Worcestershire County Cricket ground will host what we hope will be a good number of our members on **Tuesday, April 5th. (10.30-12.00)** in its newly refurbished New Road Club Shop & Café.

This is our first event in Worcester and we are delighted to be staging it at the café (formerly known as Foley's) with its magnificent views over the cricket ground and towards the cathedral. If the weather is fine, we can also use the adjoining terrace (see photo).

For those who have yet to attend one of the SWPCSG Coffee & Chat events, can we remind you that **there is absolutely no charge for you and / or your partner for your coffee or tea and your cake or Danish pastry**. No need to show your vaccine passport or the marks made by your two jabs and booster. All we hope you'll do is to enjoy yourselves and meet other members of our group. Feel free to bring along a friend who is not a member but who has prostate cancer.



View from the café terrace towards the Cathedral

While free coffee and cake is the enticement, the main purpose is to provide the opportunity for chatting. After 2 years of on-off lockdowns, shielding vulnerable adults (which may include yourselves) and understandable hesitancy about venturing forth, social contact has been badly affected and has, we feel sure, added to feelings of isolation and even despondency, particularly where one's prostate cancer journey continues to be a troubled one.



Seats reserved for our members



Friendly service at the New Road café

We are extremely fortunate that **our members can use the WCCC parking facilities free of charge for up to two hours** on April 5th. The car park is accessed from New Road. The turning is on the left immediately after the café (now very distinctively painted in the county's green and black colours) which is the last part of the WCCC building complex.

Based on the events in Malvern and Pershore we have organised in 2021 under the Coffee & Chat banner, we feel sure that you will come away feeling better and maybe a few ounces heavier. We'd love to see lots of our members in the Worcester area turning out in big numbers, so please make sure you make a note of the date – **Tuesday, April 5th. (10.30-12.00)**

Peter Corbishley

MARY'S CORNER



We are through the worse part of the pandemic now and can look forward to a normal life. It will always be out there with flu and colds in the future, but the cases throughout December and January were much milder for people who had been fully vaccinated. The people ending up in ITU were predominately people who would not have the vaccination or had only had one or two jabs. I feel confident that with regular vaccinations in the future we should be able to live a normal life.

We are hoping that you will all be joining us at our open meetings starting with the one at **Wychavon Civic Centre, Pershore on 22nd March** and **Kidderminster Town Hall on the 19th April**. Details of all our events can be found on the back page.

One change we have to make later this year involves the venue for the North Worcestershire meetings, because, from September 2022, the Town Hall is closing for eighteen months for a major refurbishment. I discovered this when I attended the Town Hall viewing of the new Town Hall designs a few weeks ago and have been extremely busy since trying to find a suitable place for our future meetings.

I have, finally, decided that the most suitable one for our events would be the Harriers Social Club in Kidderminster. There is room for well over 100 people and a buffet. A bar is also available and there is free parking surrounding the building, which is just behind the stadium. I will give full information of how to get there in our September issue of the Supporter magazine.

As the room at Harriers S.C. is already booked every Tuesday, I have booked Monday 10th. October for our first event there. I felt it is important that we could find somewhere actually in Kidderminster as the central point for our members who come from all over the Wyre Forest area, Bridgnorth, Stourbridge etc., and the parking facility is a bonus. Our meetings for April and July 2022 will still continue to be held at the Town Hall.

Finally, can I alert you to a special event for the KWPCSG community? **On Wednesday, May 4th, we have an opportunity to celebrate the life of Paul Brothwell**, our former chairman and one of the founders of KWPCSG, who sadly died in August 2020. Please turn to my article on page 16 or the Calendar of Events on the back page for more information.

Looking forward to meeting up with you at our open events.

Mary Symons

Live in or near Worcester? Come along to our

COFFEE & CHAT

Tues. April 5th. (10.30-12.00)

WCCC, New Road, Worcester WR2 4QQ

SUPPORT OUR EVENING MEETINGS

Writing this piece in mid-February there are encouraging signs that the worst of the Omicron wave is over, and that people are returning to indoor venues, such as pubs, cinemas and theatres. While fully appreciating that some of our members will either be shielding others or have underlying issues which make them still more vulnerable, it is good to hear from other members that they will be returning to our first evening meetings in 2022.

The first event on our calendar will be on **Tuesday, March 22nd**. Our South Worcestershire satellite group has organised an attractive evening at **the Wychavon Civic Centre (WR10 1PT). Doors open at 18.30 for a 19.00 start**. Coffee and tea are available, and a raffle will be held at the end of the evening.

Starting the evening will be **A Celtic Touch**, a duo of Ledbury-based Scots who have recently started developing a repertoire of light popular and classical music pieces which are certain to get feet a-tapping. These include Simon and Garfunkel and the Beatles numbers, plus Scottish and Irish classics. John Mills is the cellist while Peter McCann is on keyboard.

Clare Arthur is the Macmillan Information & Support Lead in the county and will be explaining the charity's role in supporting those with prostate and other cancers. In October Clare addressed the Kidderminster meeting. Finally, we'll be welcoming our main speaker, **Simon Adams**, the Managing Director of Healthwatch Worcestershire and a passionate leader of the organisation which seeks to find out what the public in this county thinks of health and social care services and helps you hold those service providers to account. Simon has long been a champion of patients' rights and services and we're sure he'll be updating us all on the scale of the challenges ahead as we 'hopefully – emerge from the third wave of the Covid pandemic.

Four weeks later the **Kidderminster Town Hall** is the venue for an evening with **Adel Makar**, consultant urologist for the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust and the President of KWPCSG, and **Lisa Capaldi**, Consultant Oncologist for WAHT. Adel's appearances at events in both Kidderminster and Pershore are always well attended and of great interest and relevance to members. He is forthright in his views and provides members with a good understanding of the PC issues within the county and beyond relating to the treatment of prostate cancer. Many of those of you who have undergone a radical prostatectomy will have been treated by Adel and his team at the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch. Lisa heads the Oncology team at Worcestershire Royal Hospital and will be known personally to many members for her involvement in their post-treatment monitoring and care.



Adel Makar

To ensure you get a good seat we would advise you to turn up in good time. Make a note in your diaries that this meeting takes place on **Tuesday, April 19th. (doors open at 19.00 for a 19.30 start)**. We would encourage our members in the south of the county to attend this meeting.

Peter Corbishley

A UNIQ OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR MEMBERS

Over the past couple of years KWPCSG has diversified to offer its members the chance to improve their wellbeing. The Men's Shed (now simply named The Shed) has created opportunities for some of the support group members to cultivate the land generously made available to them by the Leapgate Activity Centre at Wilden or to work in one of its workshops. On Monday mornings others can join in the Zoom keep-fit sessions run by Di Fox and featured in the December Supporter magazine.

Now we can offer just four members a UNIQ opportunity to work with Andrew Smith of UNIQ Furniture (Pershore), The 6-week course is set to start on **Wednesday, 27th. April (10.00-16.00)** at Andrew's workshop on Racecourse Road and should attract anyone keen to improve their skills in woodwork, either to upcycle a piece of furniture they have at home or to repair a precious keepsake for future generations à la BBC's The Repair Shop,

So, what persuaded Andrew to make this offer exclusively to our members? In conversation with him back in November at the Pickled Plum after an evening on court at the Pershore Indoor Tennis Centre, Andrew spoke movingly about his father who passed away after being diagnosed with prostate cancer. His father, Francis (Frank to his friends and workmates), was 65 when he was told by his GP he had prostate cancer and a prognosis of only 3 months.

Frank underwent radiotherapy and then went into what Andrew called 'practical mode', organising himself and others and forming closer relationships with his wider family, helping to heal wounds that had festered and providing the bridge for his brother's estranged family to come together again. His positivity allowed him to defy his GP's prognosis and to go on to live on for a productive two years.

Once I explained the workings of the support group, Andrew was keen to offer his skills and expertise as a tribute to his father and as an opportunity for a number of our group to refresh old skills or acquire new ones under Andrew's guidance. Our hope is that, if this venture goes well, it may encourage another woodwork and upcycling group to set up their own course at Leapgate.



Andrew was born and brought up in Swansea. His career has seen him complete a Toolmaking Apprenticeship at the Austin Rover plant in Llanelli followed by gaining further qualifications in Mechanical and Production Engineering. Next came a move into teaching Craft, Design & Technology after graduating from Avery Hill College (University of Greenwich) and subsequent teaching posts in London, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, including Head of D&T at Thomas Rich's School in Gloucester and ending his teaching career at The Chase High School in Malvern.



Andrew Smith, Uniq Furniture

In 2014 Andrew was made redundant from his teaching post and decided on a career change, starting his own business, upcycling furniture by giving reclaimed and salvaged items a new lease of life, reimagining and restyling it for a new domestic life! Andrew sources his furniture from schools and businesses providing him with quality used, pre-owned furniture from the 50s, 60s and 70s. UNIQ specialises in Retro, Vintage and Modern furniture, repurposed to reduce our carbon footprint and to avoid needless waste.



Upcycled oil barrel made into a teenager's bin!

Andrew rails against quality wooden and metal furniture being disposed of in landfill sites, only to be replaced by non-degradable plastic. His products have gained recognition regionally and beyond, with Wychavon District Council's Small Business Award in the Intelligently Green category in 2016, followed by Worcestershire Business Awards and TV recognition, appearing in Gok Wan's 'Fill Your House for Free' and Channel 4's 'The French Collection.'



Bespoke curved bench using reclaimed beech

Andrew has a range of stock available for sale or as 'donor furniture' at his workshop and is always happy to discuss individual commissions. If clients wish him to upcycle a particular item or to develop a custom-built piece of furniture for their home, they should look at his website (www.uniqfurniture.com) for ideas and inspiration.

The type of things you might bring along to the course, would include items such as chairs, stools, boxes, keepsakes, grandad's old toolbox, gardening equipment, a family memento etc.

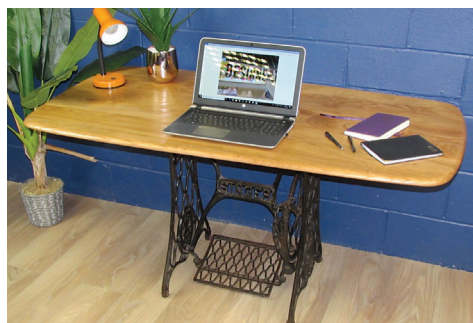
Anyone wishing to sign up for the course should contact Andrew directly on 07704 590688 to discuss ideas and options, or by email at andrew@uniqfurniture.com. The hope is to have up to 8 members on the list, some of whom may only require 2-3 sessions rather than all 6 which will free up places for other members. Ideally, we would like 4 members at each session.

Don't delay – pick up your mobile and find out more about what Andrew could help you to create, repair or restore! Something unique, something very UNIQ.

Peter Corbishley



50th. birthday wine cooler commissioned from reclaimed oak



Singer sewing machine combined with an Ercol table top

EXCITING AZ TRIAL RESULTS

AstraZeneca's share price rose by 5.8% on the day the company announced that the phase 3 trial showed that Olaparib (sold as Lynparza) reduced the risk of cancer progression by a third when used in combination with abiraterone.

The drugs could form a first-line treatment with prostate cancer that had spread, irrespective of a specific type of gene mutation. This will be good news for those with advanced PC for which the five-year

survival rate in the UK remains stubbornly low.

The Cambridge-based company was created in 1999 with the merger of the British company, Zeneca (formerly ICI), with Astra of Sweden. Due to its leading role as the workhorse of the Covid vaccination programme, AstraZeneca has become a household name throughout the world, but its core business is in cures for cancer.

TACKLE AGM VOTING OUTCOMES ANNOUNCED

Members will remember that the original Tackle Zoom AGM last autumn was aborted owing to objections and difficulties raised by a cabal of groups in N W England. However, a follow up emergency general meeting took place on Friday 4th February and the voting has resulted in what KWPCSG considers to be mainly satisfactory outcomes.

The Board have been pleased to announce the appointment of the following nominees as Trustees:

Prof. Frank Chinegwundoh MBE • Aidan Adkins
Dr Steve Allen • Ian Nightingale

Unfortunately, Ken Mastris did not secure enough votes to continue as chairman and therefore this role will remain vacant, and a decision on filling the chair will be discussed and agreed by the newly constituted board. Ken was thanked for his many years of service to Tackle and the Prostate Cancer community in the UK and across Europe.

At KWPCSG we have benefited hugely from the appearances of Dr. Steve Allen (Reading PCSG) at both Kidderminster and Pershore and, more recently, via Zoom in March 2021. In recent months we have worked together productively with Aidan Adkins (Solihull PCSG), so we feel we have people we know, support and trust on the Tackle board.

The Board has thanks all those that put their names forward and hopes that we can see their involvement in Tackle projects in the future. The Board acknowledged that the election had been highly contested and hopes to bring harmony amongst the board and develop policies and projects of benefit to the whole prostate community.

It will start work on reviewing the member database, creation of a group charter, and a review of the articles of association.

Closer working with groups, and particularly on a regional basis, is a priority in the coming year. We await further communications.

Gordon Kingston

KWPCSG COMMITTEE 2022

Mary Symons	Acting Chair / Secretary	01299 823166
Paul Markall	Treasurer	01562 751355
Dick Langley	Publicity / Website	07861 233930
Derek Scully	Support Contact Co-ordinator	01886 833236
David Underhill	Tackle Representative	07817 518201
Mark Hall	Minute Secretary	01299 879953
Peter Corbishley	Co-Editor Supporter Magazine	01386 556434
Dick Herbert	Trustee	01299 250598
Val Markall	Co-opted Member	01562 751355
Nicky Langford	WAHT Fund Raiser	07590 624426
Peter Spencer	Co-opted Member	01562 914797
Eddie Rudge	Co-opted Member	01299 266394

Please contact us if you need support or advice

MAGGIE'S : ALWAYS THERE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

One of the greatest concerns for those diagnosed with prostate cancer and seeking advice, guidance or support was the difficulties in accessing CNS nurses. This problem pre-dates Covid but has been exacerbated by it. Back in late 2016 after my prostatectomy, I remember many futile attempts to contact our nurses, discovering almost always that there was no room on voicemail to even leave a message.



Maggie's Cheltenham

While fully appreciating the pressures on our urology team to meet the demands on their limited time against a backcloth of growing numbers of newly diagnosed and post-treatment prostate patients, there needs to be more support which can be accessed easily and where the response is rapid. To an extent KWPCSG fills that role for some of us, but what happens when more professional advice and support is needed?

I must confess I had not heard of Maggie's until Mark Howard brought it to my attention after his first visit in January. The charity was set up and named after Maggie Keswick Jencks in 1996 after her breast cancer returned 3 years on from her initial treatment. Unhappy with being given her terminal prognosis in a small clinical room in a busy hospital (see 'Guardian' article), she and her architect husband, Charles Jencks, set about designing and creating calm and relaxing buildings specifically for all cancer sufferers. This is reflected in the stunning exterior architecture and interior design of all Maggie's 24 centres

The first centre was created on the site of Weston General Hospital in Edinburgh, which is where Maggie received the news about the spread of her cancer. It is fitting that the present CEO of the charity is Laura Lee, who used to work at Weston General. In addition to its centres in the UK, which include no fewer than 8 in Scotland, Maggie's also has a growing international network in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Barcelona.

So where can we access our nearest Maggie's centre? For some it may in the future be Coventry on the University Hospital site, but construction work has not yet begun, so for all of us at present it will be Cheltenham. The centre is located at a former Grade 2 Victorian lodge on the site of the original Cheltenham Hospital and just a very short walk from the present Cheltenham Hospital site. This is unusual, as almost all the other centres are purpose-built and sited in hospital grounds. The lodge has, however, been beautifully restored (see photo) and feels very welcoming when you walk towards it.



Nicola Peregrine, Centre Manager,

continued over

But the moment you walk through the doors, you realise you have arrived at somewhere very special. I was amazed at the thought that has gone into the various rooms, pods and flexible spaces. You feel you have time-travelled to Scandinavia, with modern wooden beams, restful soft furnishings and stylish fires to produce the perfect ambience. Here is an extract from Charles Jencks' book, 'The Architecture of Hope':

'Cheltenham centre is described as a sense of retreat with particular emphasis both on the external and internal space coexisting together. The landscaping leading into the centre is set around an S shape path representing the sigmoid colon as a metaphor of life and living. The water feature designed by William Pye trickles water as you walk towards the centre alongside the thoughtful planting to help offer a soothing restorative environment.

The context of the centre is set around a Victorian lodge. The adjoining extension takes the form of a single spine room with a couple of small retreats or 'refuges' housed in circular pods leading off it. The exterior of the extension is clad in timber which complements the natural surroundings.

Sir Richard MacCormac architect who designed Maggie's Cheltenham described the building as a series of cabinets, like a big piece of joinery. The interior is clad in oak timber and the decor of the centre, with its relaxing colours and windows allowing natural light to flood which links with the nature outside. Attention to the fabric of the building with the careful use of furnishings, colours, textures in the centre all help to offer a warm welcome into the building and a sense of calmness.

The very heart of every Maggie's centre is the kitchen table where people can sit quietly if they wish or connect with others who have also been affected by cancer. '

Nicola Peregrine, the manager of Maggie's Cheltenham, urged me to stress that their clientele is not confined by county boundaries. She and her team of experienced cancer support specialists would be delighted for those such as our KWPCSG members to contact them and arrange a visit. Note that Mark Howard, in his adjoining article, contacted the centre one morning and was offered an appointment that same afternoon.

Peter Corbishley

In addition to the one-to-one sessions on offer via Zoom or in person with a Cancer Support Specialist, the centre can be contacted all day for benefit advice and support. Its full programme of courses delivered virtually by Zoom also includes

- Relaxation (Mondays, 15.00-15.40)
- Living with Uncertainty course (Wednesdays, 10.30-12.30)
- Kitchen Table (Thursdays, 14.00-14.40)
- Fitness Course on Zoom (10.00-11.00)

Here are the contact details of the centre:

- Tel. 01242 250611
- www.maggies.org → our centres → Cheltenham
- The Lodge, College Baths Road, Cheltenham GL53 7QB
- Open 09.00-17.00
- Parking available (£2 per hour) on the nearby Sandford Lido car park

THE ROOTS OF THE CHARITY

Maggie's Centres: how one woman's vision is changing cancer treatment

When Maggie Keswick Jencks was 47 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Five years later she started to have severe back pain and, after two misdiagnoses, went to her local GP's surgery in Dumfries where she was told the cancer had spread to her bones, liver and bone marrow. She and her husband were told to see a visiting Edinburgh consultant. They waited in 'an awful interior space' with neon lighting and then the nurse told them to come in. They asked: 'How long have we got?' To which the doctor said: 'Do you really want to know?' 'Yes, we really want to know.' 'Two to three months.' 'Oh.....'

And then the nurse explained, 'I'm very sorry, dear, but we'll have to move you out into the corridor, we have so many people waiting. They sat in 'a windowless corridor trying to deal with this business, having two to three months to live. And as we sat there, various nurses who I knew came up and said, very cheerfully, 'Hello, dear, how are you?' 'Well,' managing a laugh, 'I'm fine.'

This was the story that became Maggie's spur – the NHS corridor that would lead to her big idea. There might be no cure for Maggie's cancer but there was something that could be changed. Why shunt people with cancer into miserable surroundings? Didn't people need respect, time and space? With the support of her young nurse, Laura Lee, Maggie would devote the rest of her life to planning a cancer caring centre.



Maggie

She understood the need to feel in charge (not a helpless passenger in a hospital production line). She realised people might want to find out more about their treatment options. And she knew a beautiful place was needed in which to digest even the worst of news.

She envisaged a room with a view – and a library. And she argued for an 'old-fashioned ladies' room – not a partitioned toilet in a row.' This would supply 'privacy for crying, water for washing the face, and a mirror for getting ready to deal with the world outside again.' She knew that, in a crisis, everything counts, even – or especially – the little things.

(Kate Kellaway, The Guardian, February 20th. 2011)

FRIDAY AFTERNOON AT MAGGIE'S

Throughout my cancer journey I have enjoyed the support of numerous individuals or organisations, including KWPCSG, Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire, Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Prostate Cancer UK, Macmillan, Di Fox and many others. I have spoken to members of our support group on the same pathway as myself. The lesson I learnt was that there is help available, but it does not come knocking on your door - you invariably have to go looking for it.

In the early days I wasn't signposted to any organisation which offered help. I am not ashamed to say I had problems in that first year. Going through chemotherapy by myself was very unpleasant, then being advised to "shield" for four months saw me come very close to rock bottom. But I got some help which led to more help, and pretty soon I was out and about and enjoying life again, on occasions regretting not getting more involved with the local community prior to my diagnosis and life- changing problems.

It was my new, open-minded approach to life and being pro-active which took me to Maggie's in Cheltenham on a Friday afternoon in January. I was aware of Maggie's from an early stage but had discounted them, being under the wrong impression they only supported one specific cancer type, and that wasn't prostate cancer. Having checked their website, I gave them a call and explained my situation.



The central area of the Cheltenham centre

They invited me in for a chat that very same afternoon. I was, unfortunately, otherwise engaged playing walking tennis that day, so I made an NHS appointment for the Friday. Like a lot of organisations Maggie's has had to move many of its activities onto Zoom or by telephone, but they are carrying out occasional face-to-face meetings. Maggie's is located near to the hospital in Cheltenham, a restored Victorian lodge with a tasteful modern extension with plenty of space for private or group discussions.

I was introduced to "my" Cancer Support Specialist, a retired palliative care nurse, who immediately put me at ease. I told my story and had to use the strategically placed box of tissues as I recounted my journey, becoming particularly emotional when I came to my biggest fear, "The End Game." Whether I was seen by a former palliative care nurse by chance or design, I may never know, but my fears were allayed and the reality discussed rather than the bad news stories so favoured by the media.

Maggie's does not offer medical advice. For that you go to your own medical team, but they are very good listeners and can point you in the direction of support groups, benefit claims assistance, will writing, exercise sessions and more. There was a plentiful supply of coffee and biscuits. In retrospect the visit has been very productive for me. Every so often I have to let everything go, so Maggie's was the ideal location for me to unwind and to unburden myself.

Mark Howard

WHERE ARE THE MISSING MEN?

In the December issue of the Supporter Magazine we carried the good news story that our oncology unit at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital had treated more patients in 2020 than in 2019. This was very reassuring for those who required treatment in the 9 months of 2020 disrupted by the Covid pandemic.

The scene nationally is, however, very worrying. According to Prostate Cancer UK 58,000 men have been treated since April 2020. This number is 14,000 less than expected, based on pre-Covid figures. NHS research has the main reasons for the shortfall were hesitancy due to a combination of not wanting to burden an NHS under severe pressure and a fear of contracting the virus in a medical setting.

The good news is that referral rates have recovered and are in line with pre-pandemic figures. But where are the missing men? TV presenter, Bill Turnbull, urges those men to come forward. 'Prostate cancer is so much more treatable when it's caught earlier. Unfortunately, mine wasn't. So if you're a man who's at risk of the disease or worried about prostate cancer, don't put off going to your doctor to talk about it.'

BOXING DAY TRACTOR RUN

The 2021 Bewdley Tractor Run, organised by Ray Attwood and Tony Pain, raised the amazing sum of £2000 for KWPCSG. I must admit that I was concerned on the day that we would not get the support from the local tractor fraternity due to Covid and the poor weather conditions. However, I was proved wrong, as 90 tractors and crews turned up at the Pavilion at Far Forest for the event.

Cllr. Paul Harrison. Local landowners had given their permission for the tractors to enter their land and they then moved on to the Little Lakes Holiday Park before finally arriving in Bewdley at 12.00 noon.

To my surprise there were crowds of people waving on both sides of the road in Bewdley. The Mayor and Mayoress of Bewdley met the convoy at the finish on Severn Side South.

We had encouraged the tractor drivers and the crews to dress in seasonal costume for the event, and the Grinch and Father Christmas (see photo) excelled.

On behalf of KWPCSG we would like to thank Ray, Tony and their helpers for their incredible generosity once again in contributing so significantly to our funds and also Colin Hill for his photos.

Paul Markall



Tractors arriving in Bewdley

After consuming copious quantities of tea and coffee and bacon baps, the crews manned their tractors for the 10.00 am start. The event was started by the Mayor of Bewdley,



Santa Claus, Mary Breese, Paul Harrison, the Grinch



Paul Markall (KWPCSG), Mary Breese, Paul Harrison

SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAMME UPDATE

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust has recently produced a document for patients who have recently received curative treatment for prostate cancer (PC). It centres on the need to regularly monitor their recovery by providing appropriate support via the **Lead Nurses for PC**. This support is, however, more likely to take place via the telephone rather than involving a visit to the hospital.

In order to assess patients' needs, the lead nurses will contact you at enrolment to complete a **Holistic Needs Assessment**. Areas covered could include side effects from treatment. Information will be recorded in a care plan. Any action required will be undertaken and a review date added. It is vitally important, however, that patients call the lead nurse specialists with future PSA results.

The Lead Nurses for the Prostate Cancer Survivorship Programme are:

- **Kerry Holden** kerry.holden1@nhs.net
- **Sarah Holloway** sarah.holloway6@nhs.net
- **Both can also be contacted on 01562 512328**

Blood tests for PSA monitoring should be taken at your local GP practices for convenience rather than the hospital. Patients are encouraged to phone in for results. If the PSA level has risen by a pre-determined amount (unique to you and your disease), the lead nurses will contact the consultant involved for a plan of care moving forward and contact patients to discuss the plan. The GP practitioner will be informed in writing and a copy automatically forwarded to the patients. **Remember: PSA monitoring continues for life.**

Health and wellbeing events for PC sufferers are available across the county. Their aim is to promote self-management through positive lifestyle changes. Sadly, these have been on hold since Covid, but videos are accessible online at:

- **www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/health-and-wellbeing**

In addition, the Trust recommends that patients turn to KWPCSG. We would add the following:

- Tackle Prostate Cancer: go to their website (www.tackleprostate.org) and access their webinars covering topics such as nutrition, sex and intimacy, future treatments (inc. genetics, artificial intelligence)
- Macmillans (www.macmillan.org.uk)
- Maggie's Cheltenham (see pages 10-14)

SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE PCSG

Wychavon Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, WR10 1PT

Tuesday 22nd March (doors open 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. start)

Speakers: Simon Adams (Healthwatch CEO)

Clare Arthur (Macmillan Information and Support Lead)

Music by A Celtic Touch (John Mills & Peter McCann)

MEDICAL SCREENING WITHIN 5 YEARS?

At some point we have all probably been involved in conversations with health professionals about screening for prostate cancer. Through my own links with some of you in my role as a support contact, I know that unwillingness shown by some GPs to refer patients for testing has contributed to critical – and sometimes life-limiting - delays in diagnoses, some of which could be prevented by the introduction of a screening programme.

One major problem has always been the present system of testing for PC. As you all know, we are still hugely reliant on prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood tests. These detect proteins in the prostate gland which are used to evaluate a patient's risk of getting the disease.

What the test is unable to do is to distinguish between dangerous cancers and harmless ones. This in turn can lead to unnecessary biopsies and even treatment with negative and life-changing side-effects on a cancer that would not have caused the patients any problems.

According to Professor Rosalind Eeles from the Institute of Cancer Research, advances in genetics and medical imaging, particularly MRI, could make screening for prostate cancer highly likely within 5 years. 'We might need to use all of them together.....so we can find those who have significant disease,' she said when interviewed recently on the *Today* programme on Radio 4.

Her interviewer, Conservative peer and writer Michael Dobbs (*House of Cards*), spoke of his own family issues with PC. His father and older brother have both succumbed to the disease, while Dobbs himself was diagnosed with the disease in 2021. 'Men are rubbish at it (taking better care of their health) and we die of ignorance. We die of embarrassment. And nowadays there's absolutely no reason for that,' he said.

Developing a screening programme for PC has proved frustratingly difficult, according to Peter Johnson, national clinical director of cancer at NHS England. 'The reason it is tricky is because (prostate cancers) tend to grow more slowly.' Worryingly, the pandemic has meant that thousands of men who needed treatment have yet to be diagnosed.

On a more positive note, the recent permitted use of enzalutamide for some types of the disease is viewed as 'Covid-friendly', as patients can take the drug at home rather than requiring intravenous medication in hospital.



Lord Michael Dobbs

Peter Corbishley

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR PAUL BROTHWELL

Hilary Brothwell and family have arranged a service to celebrate the life of her late husband, Paul, which will take place on Wednesday, May 4th at 2.00 pm at St. Mary's Church, Kidderminster. They have kindly extended the invitation to all KWPCSG members.

Paul was a much-loved personality throughout our community in Worcestershire. He came to Kidderminster Hospital as Chaplain and became an amazing support, not only to patients and their families. He had the ability to help and understand the work of the medical teams on the wards and departments in the hospital and was always there to support any member of staff going through a difficult time.

He understood that staff became very involved with care and support to patients and their families throughout some very difficult illnesses and would quietly comfort staff when they lost a patient. They needed that understanding. When the hospital closed, he knew that staff grieved for the loss of their hospital and fought alongside the staff to try and keep it open.

He helped me start the Prostate Cancer Support Group and became our Chairman for 20 years. His dedication to the support group was amazing. He is a big loss and is missed by people from the hospital, the local churches, the community and this group.

If you wish to attend the celebration of his life, please let Hilary know for catering numbers. You can contact her on 07779 916389 or hilarybrothwell@outlook.com.

Mary Symons



Paul Brothwell, one of the founders of KWPCSG and its chairman from 2000 until his death in 2020

Ramblings Remembered:

The First of Many - A Start at 10 years old.

Our family was always taking trips into the countryside after the “War”. Dad had a lovely Austin 7 Ruby (COL 252), which, with a fold-down luggage rack, managed to cope with 2 adults, 3 growing boys and a smelly Welsh collie. Long summer holidays were spent at either West Angle beach on the tip of Pembrokeshire, or the most northerly parts of Scotland, from whence my grandfather’s Henderson clan derived. But we also ventured to many coastal areas of Britain, including a holiday at Nefyn on the northern coast of the Llyn peninsula.

Apart from the splendid beaches of North Wales, which allowed 3 boisterous boys to indulge in sea-water fights in patched up HGV inner tubes, Nefyn provided easy access to Snowdonia. My dad was a keen walker and was determined that I should get up Snowdon before I needed to shave! Although it meant nearly a 3000ft climb, the route planned was fairly gradual for a boy & a dad who was supposed to be fit. It is still called the Rhyd Ddu track, which I could not pronounce, although I can manage its other name – Beddgelert.

So mum provided sandwiches and cake and a bottle of water apiece – just in case the 1930’s cafe (described by Prince Charles as “the highest slum in Wales”) was shut. But the day dawned wet and overcast, with low cloud meeting the trunk road on the floor of the valley. Dad was adamant – the forecast (his, not the met office) was for skies to clear.

For the first couple of hours, we plodded upward through the rain, getting damp, then wet, then sodden. No Gore Tex in those days! But glory be, for come mid-morning the clouds were lifting and our (i.e. my!) spirits also started to lift.

By the time we reached a narrow ridge, which leads to the top (Bwlch Main), the skies had cleared, and the views were.....fantastic. This narrow ridge is pretty much as exposed as Crib Goch and provides probably the best approach to the top of Everest (sorry – Snowdon).

We sat on the top and ate those scrumptious sandwiches (Shippams paste!) and pondered life and the meaning of the universe. But the expedition had given me a taste of something special and led to many years of heading to the tops – but also just rambling.

Postscript. Further attempts on Snowdon from different locations resulted in very different outcomes – but more of that in the future.

Gordon Kingston.





I NEVER SAW THAT COMING!



I got my diagnosis of prostate cancer in July 2019. CT scans and biopsies showed that it was metastatic and had already moved to the lymph nodes in my abdomen and pelvis, one node the size of a cricket ball, others the size of golf balls. Ironically, in the early days, life carried on as normal. That changed in October 2019 when I found myself talking to Dr Capaldi and agreeing to undergo chemotherapy.

No book ever written prepares you for chemo. The reactions are spread across the spectrum, from no side-effects to being laid up in bed for months. The first cycle saw me suffer with terrible acid reflux. The answer to the acid reflux left me with a problem best not discussed in this genteel publication, but it involved the toilet and running speeds that would merit inclusion in the Olympic track team.

The low point of each cycle saw me fatigued and with a total loss of energy, yet, bizarrely,

after 4 or 5 days everything returned to normal, and life resumed. There was a week of recovery and, yes, you have guessed, a return to the Rowan Suite, and it all started again with the next infusion.

Towards the end of 2019 I realised I needed something to do, a goal to take my mind off my medical problems. After some thought I decided to visit all of the Anglican Cathedrals in England. It does not sound like much of a challenge, but there are 42, ranging from Canterbury in the South-East, Truro in the South-West, Carlisle in the North-West and Newcastle in the North-East.

The quest started on January 6th 2020 when I visited Worcester Cathedral. I had a pleasant day, took some photos and visited the café for coffee and cake; but something was missing in those early trips. Later I would sit, surrounded by history, in the nave, thinking about my place in life - a small, but important part in life's great jigsaw puzzle.



Mark Howard in Canterbury Cathedral



Interior of St. Alban's Cathedral

I started to say a prayer on each visit, asking for fortitude in my coming battles, thinking about the thousands of people who had entered the church, seeking answers or help. The quest resumed on 10th July 2021. I left home extremely apprehensive about the trip to Bristol. Using public transport was something I had avoided since the pandemic hit us, but I hadn't gone through everything just to watch my life fade away. I had things to do!

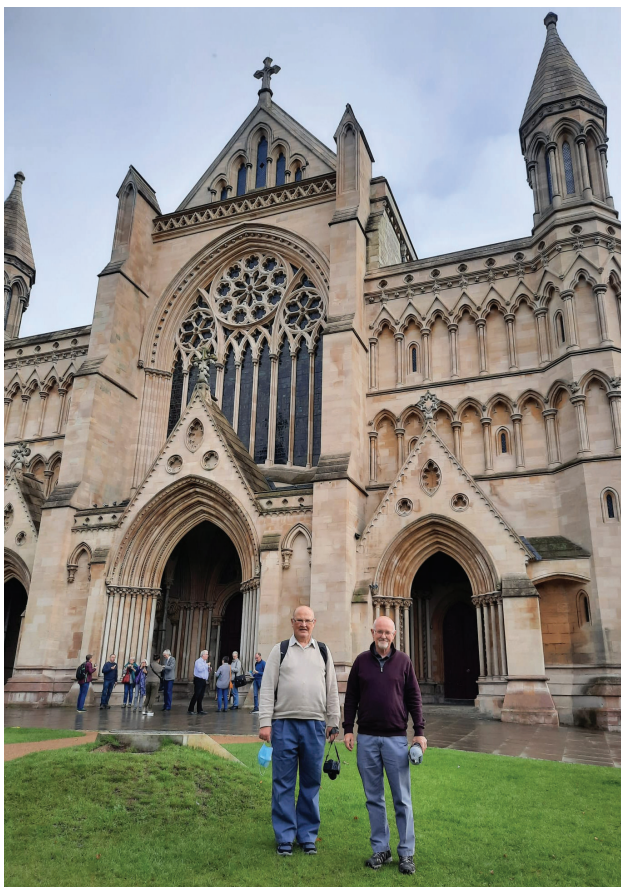
One of my favourite visits was to St Alban's Cathedral. Here I met my brother Jim and Shelley, his wife. We joined an organised tour, learning about the cathedral and some of its characters. My favourite feature in the cathedral was the shrine of St Amphibalus. Throughout history stone masons have often left some observation on current affairs or a local personality. On his shrine, currently undergoing restoration, we see a carved stone figure wearing a surgical mask!

Another favourite was Winchester Cathedral, partly because of a tenuous connection (the cathedral is linked to St Swithin, and St. Swithin's Day is also my birthday!). An event occurred during my visit that prompted a philosophical moment. A wedding was taking place, the bride being escorted through the west door and down to the service in the quire and tourists gawping from the side-lines as the organ played.

This made me aware that the cathedral is also a functioning church, looking after the needs of its parishioners. I was soon deep in thought, contrasting the young couple just starting out on one of life's great adventures with me on one of my own last great adventures with my own personal battles to be fought.

At the time of writing, I have ticked off 37 cathedrals from my list, each a history lesson in its own right. There are just 5 remaining, including Bradford, Ripon, Portsmouth and Truro. The Covid Omicron variant has slowed progress once again. I am still undergoing treatment and trying to be sensible about unnecessary exposure on public transport, but I hope to finish after Easter at a special location, joining my three brothers for a potentially emotional family event at Southwell Cathedral.

Mark Howard



Mark and his brother, Jim, outside the West front of St. Alban's Cathedral

DERBY SUPPORT GROUP LETTERS

"If you're reading this letter, then you are in the same position as I was a few years ago. There's a strong possibility that I felt the same emotions as you are feeling right now and wondering what the future holds. I'm not sure that I took in even half of what the doctors and nurses had just told me.

Like me, you may be wondering what's in store for you. I didn't think I knew anyone who'd been through this, but of course I could have done. One of the leaflets in my Information Pack contained the details of a support group I could have access to. Regrettably, my perception was, a support group was just a bunch of people sitting around feeling sorry for themselves. Just how wrong I was!

What was the point in going? Simple - I felt now I had the voice of experience. I took huge comfort in sharing the knowledge that I didn't know I had. I was amazed at how freely both I and others were prepared to talk about very personal things that possibly wouldn't necessarily be discussed with clinicians. We had a common thread bonding us. So, if right now you feel uncertain as to where the path you are just about to embark upon is going and what's in store over the coming months then I would encourage you to read the enclosed leaflet and seek out support from others in whatever capacity is comfortable for you. You'll find a wealth of experience and people in the same situation as yourself, no matter what your diagnosis.

Like me, you may think a support group has nothing to offer you at this point in your life but don't make the same mistake I did.

May I take this opportunity to wish you every success with your treatment. Derek"

"I was diagnosed with cancer just days before my wedding and literally my world fell apart. Since that day I have undergone chemotherapy and radiotherapy and am now waiting for surgery. It was a dark time for me and for my fiancé and we had no idea how we were going to tell the family let alone our children.

I did an internet search, as you do, and came across a Facebook support group and decided I would join to see if I could find any more information. I cannot tell you how valuable this was. It was like being thrown a lifeline into a rough sea that I was barely able to keep afloat in. Complete strangers welcomed me and I felt it was a safe space to explain what had happened to me and my worries.

It turned out that a guy a little younger than me, but also with young children, was able to relate to how I was feeling and he took the time and trouble to listen, encourage and support me. Don't get me wrong, it didn't stop me worrying but it lessened the burden somewhat and I felt that there was hope. I was also made aware of other places I could turn for help and that helped me get a little control back to explore how I could help myself and my family.

I would encourage you to reach out to find others in a similar situation to your own as it was a valuable lifeline for me.

I wish you well on your journey, Stuart"

AND FINALLY FAREWELL, BARRY CRYER

The death of comic writer and comedian, Barry Cryer, on January 25th. at the age of 86 severed one of the remaining links between the comics of yesteryear and today. Barry wrote for and worked with some of the outstanding acts in British comedy, stretching back to Danny La Rue at the Windmill Theatre in the late 50s and including Morecambe and Wise, the Two Ronnies, Kenny Everett, Dave Allen, Billy Connolly, Tommy Cooper, Frankie Howerd and Les Dawson. Many, however, will remember him for his contributions to BBC radio classics such as *I'm Sorry, I haven't a Clue* and *Just a Minute*.

Here is a selection of some of his jokes:

A woman purchases a parrot for only £5. 'Well, I must confess, it was brought up in a brothel,' says the shopkeeper. 'And it has quite an extensive vocabulary.' 'Never mind,' says the woman. 'At that price, I'll take it.

She takes the parrot home, puts its cage in the living room and takes the cover off.

'New place – very nice,' says the parrot.

Then the woman's two daughters walk in. 'New place, new girls – very nice,' says the parrot

Then the woman's husband walks in, and the parrot says, 'Oh, hello, Keith.'

A man is driving down a country lane when he runs over a cockerel. He goes to the farmhouse and knocks on the door. A woman opens it and he says, 'I appear to have killed your cockerel. I'd like to replace him.'


She replies, 'Please yourself, the hens are round the back.'

Quick – the noise made by a dyslexic duck

Picasso was burgled and did a drawing of the robbers.

Police arrested a horse and two sardines.

Analysing comedy is like dissecting a frog. Nobody laughs and the frog dies.



Allan Morris

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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

MEETING FOR SUPPORT CONTACTS

Ombersley Golf Course, Bishops Wood Road, Droitwich WR9 0LE

Saturday 19th March (10.00-12.00)

WE WELCOME ANYONE WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED
IN BEING A SUPPORT CONTACT OR BUDDY TO HELP OUR MEMBERS
PLEASE COME AND JOIN US

Call Derek Scully 01886 833236 or Mary Symons: 01299 823166

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WORCESTER COFFEE & CHAT

Tuesday 5th April (10.30-12.00)

Free coffee and cake for every member and partner!!!

New Road Club Shop & Café, New Road, Worcester, WR2 4QQ

Free parking in WCCC car park immediately after café.

KIDDERMINSTER & WORCESTERSHIRE PCSG

Tuesday 19th April (doors open 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. start)

Kidderminster Town Hall, Vicar Street, Kidderminster DY10 1DB

SPEAKERS: ADEL MAKAR

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

LISA CAPALDI (Consultant Oncologist for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust)

PAUL BROTHWELL MEMORIAL SERVICE

Wednesday, 4th. May (14.00)

St. Mary's Church, Kidderminster DY10 4LR

Hilary Brothwell invites members and partners to celebrate the life of her late husband,

Paul. Please contact her for more information on

07779 916389 or hilarybrothwell@outlook.com