

# HUG MAGAZINE



**December 2014**

(issued during the last month of each quarter)

For HAEMATOLOGY and ONCOLOGY patients, their families and friends being treated in Cancer Services areas or under review



A Merry Christmas and a Healthy New Year to all our readers

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## **HUG Get-togethers**

**We have suspended meetings at the hospital in favour of coffee mornings at other locations. We now meet in the Blunsdon Arms pub, on Thamesdown Drive from 11am onwards on the second Monday of each month.**

**Further get-togethers and venues are often arranged on a month by month basis on dates to suit attendees. Contact us for more details.**

**Known dates for the first quarter of 2015 are as follows:**

**12<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**9<sup>th</sup> February 2015      and**

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

## **What do we do?**

**HUG offers tea, sympathy, sharing of ideas and information and much more, to patients and their families or carers, including:**

- **Organising Coffee Mornings and Craft Sessions (as new stock for sale is required)**
- **Suggesting how and where to access professional help, where appropriate**
- **Attending Cancer Services User Involvement Meetings on behalf of patients and carers and discussing or raising and following up on issues of importance to them**
  - ✓ **Items currently under discussion include a Patient Information DVD, Resuscitation, Radiotherapy for Swindon, home delivery of chemotherapy**
- **Fund-raising to provide practical help with purchases which have included thermometers, travel bands, mugs, slippers, gel bags and heat pads, when suggested by clinical staff, patients or carers.**
  - ✓ **Items for sale at any time: chemo hats made of a silk/wool mix in a choice of colours and styles and our personalised mugs and teddy bears. Contact us for more details.**
- **Maintaining a website and making leaflets available to promote the group and advertise our activities**
- **Producing the HUG Magazine quarterly and leaving copies in Cancer Services areas, providing direct to members and posting on the website.**
- **We have a stall behind the atrium at the hospital, on a regular basis. In 2015 we shall be there on the first Thursday of every month, apart from January. There will be no stall in January.**

# INTERESTING HEALTH-RELATED NEWS

## **Steps to potentially improve the effectiveness of radiotherapy**

A new treatment developed by British scientists could significantly improve the ability of radiotherapy to save the lives of cancer patients. More than 50% of people with cancer are treated with radiotherapy, which kills tumour cells and boosts the body's own ability to fight off the disease.

Its success is limited by the ability of some cancer cells to become resistant to the treatment. These resistant cells stubbornly survive and in some cases can grow into new tumours.

Now scientists at the University of Manchester have discovered the reason why radiotherapy does not always work - and they have worked out a way to boost its success. Dr Simon Dovedi, who led the Manchester team, said the breakthrough had come with the discovery of a 'molecular shield' which helped cancer cells survive the radiotherapy treatment. The shield – a protein called PD-L1 – tricks the body's defences into thinking that cancerous cells pose no threat. Dr Dovedi and his colleagues found that injecting an antibody into the blood stream of mice could block the PD-L1 protein, destroying the shield and allowing the cancer cell to be killed.

For more information refer to:

[www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2776138/Hope-cancer-patients-scientists-discover-radiotherapy-doesn-t-work-develop-new-treatment](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2776138/Hope-cancer-patients-scientists-discover-radiotherapy-doesn-t-work-develop-new-treatment)

## **More immune system targeting drugs**

Drugs that allow the immune system to recognise cancer and attack it are continuing to produce "exciting" results, say experts in the field. The comments come after a series of studies were published in Nature, highlighting further progress in the field of immunotherapy.

One report contained details of a phase 1 clinical trial looking at bladder cancer carried out by Dr Thomas Powles from the Barts Cancer Institute, and colleagues. There have been no major advances for patients with advanced bladder cancer for 30 years, with chemotherapy still the main treatment option. Outcomes for patients with this stage of bladder cancer are poor. However, there was a promising response among patients on the trial, which involved a drug that targets a protein, called PD-L1, which tumours use to trick the immune system.

Of the 68 patients who were given the drug, more than half showed signs of effectiveness, and – in a minority – the drugs produced a long lasting response.

For more details see <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/cancer-news/news-report/2014-11-28-new-immune-targeting-cancer-drugs-show-continued-promise>

## **Health tools to help you to avoid cancer**

The World Cancer Research fund website includes a series of tools to help you to avoid cancer. There are alcohol and exercise calorie calculators, healthy recipes, as well as BMI and waist size calculators.

The recipes are categorised by meal or course, but can also be searched by looking for a particular ingredient. For more information refer to:

<http://www.wcrf-uk.org/uk/here-help/health-tools>

## **Radiosurgery on the NHS**

So-called “radiosurgery” is a delivery system that provides a non-invasive alternative treatment of both cancerous and non-cancerous tumours anywhere in the body, including the prostate, lung, brain, spine, liver, pancreas and kidney. The treatment delivers beams of high dose radiation to tumours with extreme accuracy. The Mount Vernon Cancer Centre was the first NHS hospital to purchase a CyberKnife® system and they have been delivering the technology since August 2010.

When the equipment was initially purchased at a cost of £3 million the east of England strategic health authority's specialised commissioning group (SCG) banned NHS patients from its region from being treated in this way at Mount Vernon because they were not convinced that the robotic radiosurgery system worked.

The Gamma Knife is another trade mark of a similar system for precise radiotherapy delivery. Neither of these “knives” are knives in the conventional sense. They use a focused array of intersecting beams of gamma radiation to treat lesions and provide an alternative method of treatment for a number of conditions, for which open neurosurgery may be either not practicable or carry a high risk of complications.

It is only suitable for a selected group of people, based on the characteristics of their tumour. It should be noted that specialists don't recommend radiosurgery for larger brain tumours. This is because it isn't possible to get the same dose of radiotherapy throughout the treatment area with a large tumour.

Unfortunately, availability on the NHS has not improved greatly in the four years since then, with only a small number of the largest cancer centres providing the treatment option. Some of the most sophisticated linear accelerator radiotherapy machines can deliver this type of treatment. The knife therapy is also available at a number of private clinics, but many patients would not be able to afford this option.

A search of the NICE website does not reveal any guidance on the use of the gamma radiation, except for trigeminal neuralgia. This may explain why “knife” radiosurgery is not very readily available.

However, it would appear that many patients would benefit from greater use of this technology.

## Food, Hospital Food

In the last issue of the Magazine, we provided some information on the quality standards now expected for hospital food. At the time, very few hospitals in the Wiltshire area were included in the scores. Another recent search on the NHS website at

[www.nhs.uk/hospitalfood/search/](http://www.nhs.uk/hospitalfood/search/)

revealed the following scores for some local hospitals.

Quality of Food	Choice of Food	Choice of breakfast	Fresh Fruit available	Food available between meals	Menu approved by dietician	Cost of food per person per day
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### Great Western, Swindon

OK 90.27% in the middle range	! 77.44% among worst	OK in the middle range	Yes	No	Yes	£8.00
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### Savernake Hospital, Marlborough

OK 90.31% in middle range	83.65% in the middle range	Among the best	Yes	No	Yes	£11.83
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### Chippenham Community Hospital

OK 90.54 in the middle range	! 77.87% among worst	Among best	Yes	No	No	£15.21
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### Royal United Hospital, Bath

OK 92.09% middle of range	90.57% in the middle range	OK in the middle range	Yes	Yes	Yes	£6.30
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The variation in the sums of money available for patient meals is surprising, with the Royal United spending the least of the four hospitals compared above, but scoring acceptable results across all the criteria.

It should be remembered that patients receiving intensive chemotherapy in Dove Ward can now order Appetito meals at any time of day, since the equipment has been purchased to store and cook a good selection of meals at very short notice.

With the quality of food deemed acceptable at the GWH, it should be possible to improve the choices available and to set up a system for making food available between meals throughout the hospital, without too much additional effort. Some cost would be involved.

## Obesity related health problems

We have all read reports about the increased risk of health problems that can be caused by obesity. These range from diabetes and heart disease to some types of cancer.

It has now been reported in a study by the World Health Organisation that women are twice as likely as men to have obesity related cancer. The most common overweight-related cancer among British women was post-menopausal breast cancer. Obesity was also a major factor in cancers of the oesophagus, colon, rectum, kidney, pancreas, ovary and womb lining. Although British men were less affected than women, they fared worse than most countries, with the fourth equal highest cancer rate linked to weight.

The study showed that a quarter of cancers attributed to obesity could have been prevented if populations had the same average Body Mass Index as they had 30 years ago. Our diets are less healthy and we tend to eat more and exercise less in the course of everyday life than we did back then. The number of cancer linked to obesity and overweight is expected to rise globally along with economic development.

The NHS is intending to carry out more stomach-stapling operations on obese patients, but shouldn't there also be more effort put into helping and supporting more of us to eat sensibly and lose weight without expensive surgery? And in developing countries, shouldn't more weight control measures be put in place to avoid the same problems arising as in richer countries in the future?

## Look Good, Feel Better

Pampering sessions for cancer patients through the Look Good, Feel Better charity have now been arranged for 2015. We are happy to report that the charity has agreed to continue with this service at the Great Western. Dates for the first quarter of the year are

January 20th, February 17th and March 17th.

For an application form please speak to a member of your health care team. You may also speak to a member of the Cancer Information Point on 01793 604346 or visit the Cancer Information Point, Osprey Unit, 3rd Floor. HUG and other local cancer patient support groups have application forms. You can also contact:

Telephone: 01793 646152 Email: [lorraine.hayward@gwh.nhs.uk](mailto:lorraine.hayward@gwh.nhs.uk)

Telephone: 01793 605962 Email: [donna.lake@gwh.nhs.uk](mailto:donna.lake@gwh.nhs.uk)

## Christmas Crackers

It has become a HUG tradition to include some silly Christmas cracker jokes in our December issue, so here goes!

What is the largest room in the world?

The room for improvement

Why would some snakes make good story tellers?

Because they get off a rattling good thing in the shape of a tail.

Why are they like olden tales?

They are leg ends (legends)

When is a pie like a poet?

When it is browning

When does a haystack most resemble a Welsh mountain?

When it is Snow'd on.

What is an underground train full of professors called?

A tube of Smarties.

Why did the elephant cross the road?

Because it was the chicken's day off.

What is a cow that eats grass?

A lawn-moer!

A bottle of lemonade fell on a barman's head. Why wasn't he hurt?

It was a soft drink.

Why is milk fast?

Because it's past your eyes before you know it.

What's yellow and dangerous?

Shark infested custard.

What has teeth but cannot eat?

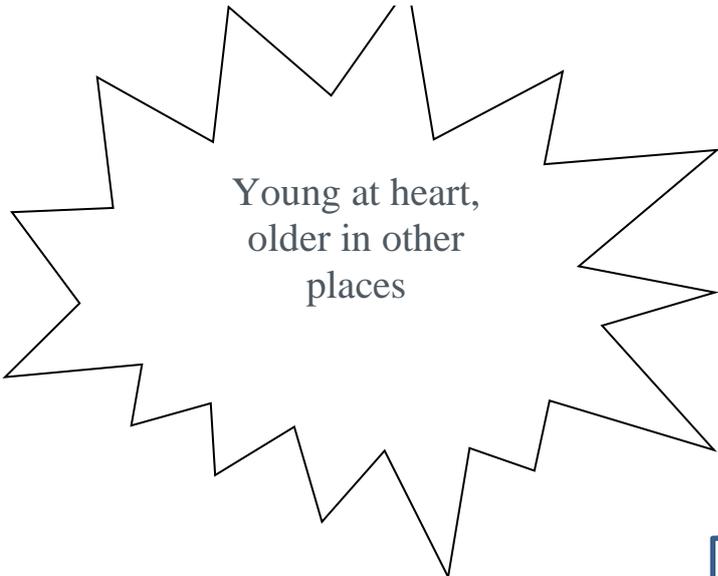
A comb.

Why do you bring a pencil to bed?

To draw the curtains.

What athlete is warmest in winter?

A long jumper.



Young at heart,  
older in other  
places

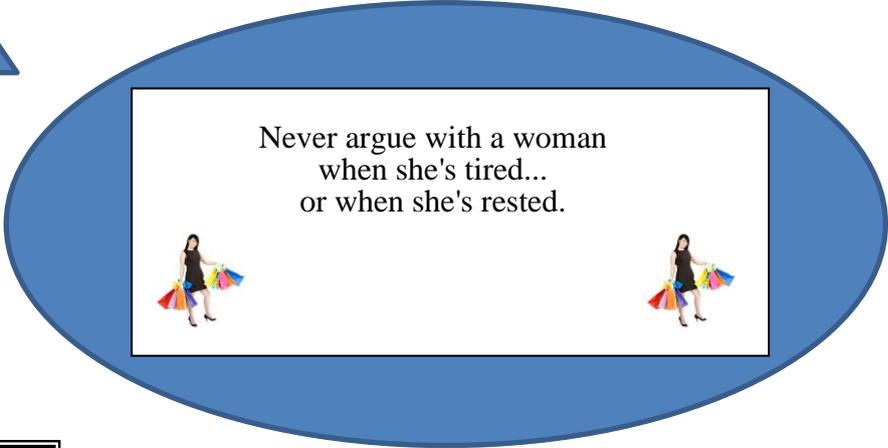
# Fridge magnets



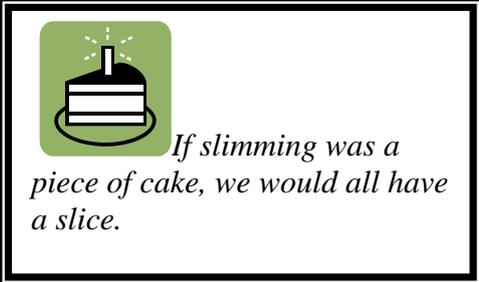
I never finish anythi..



Sometimes I wake up grumpy. Other times I let him sleep!



Never argue with a woman when she's tired... or when she's rested.



*If slimming was a piece of cake, we would all have a slice.*



Be yourself. Everyone else is taken.  
Oscar Wilde



## H.U.G. News – read all about it

- Get-togethers are usually held at the Blunsdon Arms pub, as regular coffee mornings and lunches.
- Occasional group craft sessions are arranged for those who are interested, as new sales stock is required.
- We are still making items individually at home to sell.

### 1. Get-Togethers

Normal get-togethers are taking place on the second Monday of each month, but for December, we are having a Christmas lunch on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

Further additional dates and locations are often arranged on a month by month basis depending on members' availability. Contact us to find out what has been arranged.

### 2. Income and Expenditure

Since the last issue we have hosted a Macmillan Coffee Morning in Lambourn, with the help of some local friends. We raised just under £590 in total for Macmillan, plus another £30.70 on the HUG sales table, so this was well worth doing.

Our Hospital sales in October realised £76.58, in what was the last of the year behind the atrium.

We took £121.70 at the Christ Church Christmas Fair in November. Around £20 had been spent in advance on tombola prizes and lucky dip toys. Another Christmas Fair in Wootton Bassett will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

In view of the generosity of the people who buy from our stalls, our bank balance has built up again. This has allowed us to make what we consider to be a generous donation towards the Great Western Breast Cancer Treatment appeal to enable a single radiotherapy delivery during surgery for breast cancer patients who meet the required criteria. £75,000 is required for this ground breaking new treatment, which will be the first of its kind in the South West of England.

Donations can be made to the Brighter Futures Breast Cancer Treatment Appeal.

### 3. Activities

We never did manage to fix a date to suit everyone for an autumn visit to Littlecote House near Hungerford and have had to postpone this until next year. The weather just wouldn't be suitable now for a walk around the gardens and a look at the Roman mosaic in the grounds.

## Progress towards a Radiotherapy building for Swindon

Planning permission has now been granted by Swindon Council for the radiotherapy building at the Great Western. The report in the Swindon Advertiser was not quite accurate with the heading that “The Radiotherapy Treatment Centre is Approved”. Other approvals are required before the full go-ahead which has certainly moved another step forward.



An artist's impression of the proposed building.

The proposed breast cancer radiotherapy will be conducted in theatre and is not dependent on this new building.

## Hope for Tomorrow launches new appeal

Cancer patients in north Wiltshire are already benefiting from the Mobile Chemotherapy Unit (MCU) that the Hope for Tomorrow charity provided for Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in September.

And the charity has now launched its first *Chemotherapy in the Community* campaign to raise the £12,000 annual running costs to keep each Mobile Chemotherapy Unit (MCU) on the road, and to donate more MCUs to more NHS Trusts across the UK.

Dozens of cancer patients have already been receiving life-saving treatment on board 'Linda' - the Wiltshire unit that visits rural locations and smaller towns in the county.

The Mobile Chemotherapy Unit drastically reduces the stress of driving for appointments for chemotherapy at the Great Western Hospital Swindon Oncology Centre, for both cancer patients and their loved ones. It can treat up to 20 patients a day.

[We have read that there are Government proposals to make chemotherapy available at some Doctor's surgeries in future. We won't hold our breath on this, however!]

