

Buzz Bulletin

September 2023
Edition 9 Vol. 8

Newsletter of the
North Hampshire Prostate
Cancer Support Group



Welcome to the Buzz Bulletin



Keith Jones

Chairman's Chat

First of all, a quick apology to those of you who attended our meeting last week. We were able to welcome a group from Hampshire Hospitals supported by the company Essity who are carrying out research into incontinence. Essity manufacture and deliver hygiene products and their brands include Tena incontinence pads and pants which many of us are very familiar with, hence their involvement in the project. There was a great deal of interest from the members and I was reluctant to cut short the discussion but as a result I had to rush through the Chairman's News part of the meeting. Based on the interest, we are hoping to invite the research group back again in the new year to update us on their progress.

Radiotherapy Treatment Research

It almost seems that not a week goes by without some news report on the treatment of Prostate Cancer. Last month it was the news that 10-minute prostate MRI scans may be more accurate at diagnosing PC than blood tests although more research is required.

The latest news is big. An international research trial has identified that a series of high doses of radiotherapy is as effective, if not slightly more effective than the current practice. The findings would reduce the number of sessions required for a patient from typically 20 sessions to 5. This obviously has a double benefit, the patient will have to undergo less treatment but perhaps just as important, the hospital equipment and staff will be available to treat more patients. In the United States, the patient typically receives 40 treatments, so there would be an

DIARY DATES

Thursday 5th October
Red Lion Hotel, Basingstoke
Pub Pint and Chat

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**Thursday 26th October**  
**Group meeting**  
**Speaker our own Martin Budd**  
**with a talk about Sleep**

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Saturday 28th October
Awareness Event at The Malls
Volunteers, please contact
Keith Bunker at
[**info@NHPCSG.org.uk**](mailto:info@NHPCSG.org.uk)

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**Thursday 2nd November**  
**Red Lion Hotel, Basingstoke**  
**Pub Pint and Chat**

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Thursday 30th November
Group meeting
Speaker Sarah Gray
National Support and
Development Manager
Tackle

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**Thursday 7th December**  
**NHPCSG Xmas Lunch**  
**BCoT 12.00 to 3.00pm**

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Thursday 7th December
Red Lion Hotel, Basingstoke
Pub Pint and Chat

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**Please note there will be**  
**no December**  
**Group meeting**

even larger impact in the US.

The study found that after five years, 96% of the men who received five doses of the multi-beam radiotherapy were cancer-free, compared to 95% who received at least 20 doses of standard radiotherapy. Side effects, such as needing to pass urine more often, were low in both groups.

Another key element of the trial was that none of the 874 men were given any hormone therapy to block testosterone, a driver of prostate cancer. Hormone therapy has multiple side effects including severe tiredness, hot flushes and low libido.

Lead researcher Prof Nicholas van As from the Royal Marsden Hospital said the results were "outstanding" and "fantastic" for patients and he expected that the NHS would "rapidly adopt" the lower-dose treatment.

(Source BBC News)

[Prostate cancer trial: Radiotherapy doses can be cut safely - BBC News](#)

## Boys Need Bins

In the latest development of this this campaign, 2,200 people sent letters to their MPs reaching 90% of MPs. There have now been debates in both the UK Parliament and the Welsh Senedd. On Tuesday 5 September, Prostate Cancer UK (PCUK) hosted an event in Westminster, sponsored by Stuart Andrew, MP for Pudsey, Horsforth and Aireborough.

The news is that this campaign is moving forward!! Indeed, I spotted bins in all the cubicles at Cobham Services on the M25 recently.

For more information, follow the link below.

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views>

## Home Urine Tests

These tests have been appearing for some time on social media sites and the manufacturers of these tests such as IcleTest claim they offer men "peace of mind" concerned about possible prostate cancer. The test analyses microscopic haematuria as distinct from visible haematuria (blood in urine).

However, in a statement from PCUK, microscopic haematuria is not recognised by NHS clinical guidelines as a sign of prostate cancer, and as far as PCUK are aware there is no evidence to support any claims that it indicates an increased risk of prostate cancer or is an "early warning sign". There is also no evidence testing for it may lead to earlier detection of prostate cancer. No evidence is provided by the manufacturer either.

PCUK also don't know about the test's sensitivity or specificity for diagnosing prostate cancer. A recent study by University College London (UCL) found 0 cases of prostate cancer in 1,245 patients presenting with microscopic haematuria.

PCUK has stated that it cannot properly advise people on these tests because they haven't been evaluated.

While PCUK don't recommend home urine tests such as this one, other types of urine tests do have potential to help us diagnose prostate cancer. PCUK are [currently funding research](#) into a urine test that could detect whether a prostate cancer is aggressive or not, and help some men avoid a biopsy.

For more information, follow the link below.

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views>

Finally, on a lighter note, for those of you who have been following my musings regarding my first sea cruise, I can report that my wife and I had a wonderful experience (as so many of you told me we would) and with no ill effects, so much so that we are now looking at our options for 2024.



## Basingstoke Malls PC Awareness Event

Our group are holding a PC awareness event at Basingstoke Malls on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October. We are still looking for additional volunteers to help us get the message out to the public. If you have an hour to spare on that day, please contact Keith Bunker through the NHPCSG email address [info@nhpcsg.org](mailto:info@nhpcsg.org).

## Christmas Lunch

Hopefully everyone has received the email in September with details of the Christmas Lunch arrangements. The date is 7<sup>th</sup> December at Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT). We have almost reached our allotted number of guests and will start a waiting list in case of any cancellations or if we are able to obtain additional places from BCoT. So, if you haven't already signed up and would like to attend, please contact Virginia Budd on [ymb@vinebudds.co.uk](mailto:ymb@vinebudds.co.uk). Cost is £22 for 2 courses or £25 for 3 courses.

## Cancer Services Partnership

This voluntary organization works in partnership with Hampshire Hospitals (HHFT) to enhance and make a difference to the lives of cancer patients, their families and caregivers in North and Mid Hampshire. Our representative is Martin Budd. To find out more about the organization follow the link below.

<https://cancerservicespartnership.org>



**Cancer Services Partnership**   
Patients, Families, Caregivers and Professionals Together

## Buzz September 2023

Pillar boxes – hardly an interesting subject for a talk one might think, not so when Tony Cross spoke to the Group at the September meeting. He explained that prior to the introduction of the Penny Black it was the recipient who paid the postage. The problem with that was that some of those doing the final delivery ended up carrying a large amount of money, making them an attractive target for robbery. When first established, one had to buy one's stamp and hand in the letter over the post office counter – hardly convenient. It did not help that the first stamps were neither pre-gummed or perforated, having to be separated by the post office using scissors. He also pointed out that British stamps are unique in that they do not carry the name of the country. It was apparently the Belgians who originated the first post boxes followed by the French.

The first post boxes in the UK were introduced by Anthony Trollope', initially in 1852 with four boxes in Jersey as an experiment, followed by two in Guernsey a year later. The first boxes had vertical slots, with again the oldest still existing in the Channel Islands. So were all boxes of a set standard? Tony was able, with slides, to show that to be far from the case. With different colours in different places, for example those in Cyprus being yellow from when we ran the island, and the Channel Islands in dark blue. Surprisingly Eire has retained the pre independence boxes, many with GR for George 5<sup>th</sup> cast in their face, but they are now painted green. He also showed the development of dual boxes for town and country, and even a multi use version – phone box/stamp dispenser/pillar box, whilst in the Falklands, an old ammunition box has been requisitioned.

Initially there was no standard design to the boxes, however in 1857 a design competition was established with the economy version becoming the first standard, which normally also included the makers name. This was then changed a few years later to a hexagonal shape initially painted green – however users experienced difficulty locating them so red became the colour of choice with ultimately Vermillion being today's chosen colour. However the hexagonal shape proved more expensive to produce and so the round shape was adopted. That did not stop other boxes appearing, in walls, with lamp-stands on top, with signs, and even fixed to poles.

With the introduction of a standard one might think that conformity ensued, not so! Liverpool as a city introduced its own design in 1863, of which 2 boxes still remain, and a box outside one of the Cambridge colleges is topped with spikes – allegedly to stop students from using the box for a leg up over the wall when climbing back into their college out of hours.

The second part of the meeting was allotted to the incontinence team from HHFT, who with assistance from Essity, part of a major worldwide paper producer, are researching the impact of surgery and prostate treatments on male incontinence and sex life. Many members signed up to participate in the research at the meeting. The chairman finished by mentioning the progress of the 'Bins for Boys' campaign and the PC UK testing programme of home urine tests for microscopic blood inclusion – potentially an early sign of health problems to come.

**Keith**