



## WELCOME

This expanded version of the newsletter is an up-to-date of the activities of the About Face charity and a review of what we are aiming to achieve in the coming months. Because an active membership contributes much to the success of the group we would welcome anyone who could help us in support of About Face whose objects are to provide care, medical and research facilities in support of those suffering from cancer and disfigurement of the head and neck, in the Dorset and Hampshire area. So attention is drawn to the appended membership application form. We would also like to have contributions from the readership – personal reminiscences, stories, poems or jokes for our future newsletters.

Please don't hesitate to write to the

Editor, c/o Administration Office, 4 Hatherden Avenue, Poole BH14 0PJ

Tel: 01202 722123

## ABOUT FACE SUPPORTS HEAD & NECK SPECIALIST NURSE



Here Sarah Morton outlines her most important role and the progress so far, she writes:

I took up the Head and Neck Specialist Nurse post at Poole Hospital NHS Trust at the end of June 2003. I had been working on the Ear, Nose and Throat and Maxillofacial surgical ward before that, as deputy to the ward sister and looked forward to the appointment of Specialist Nurse as I thought the role would offer timely support for those receiving treatment at our centre. For the past decade or so I have worked at Poole Hospital mostly in a surgical setting, having returned to work after a career break having a family; two sons and two daughters. My general nursing training was a Southampton University Hospitals and I am just completing my Masters degree at Bournemouth University.

My new role involves supporting people from diagnosis through their treatment for head and neck cancer, as well as liaising with care providers in the community and some audit, education and research. At the moment we are doing a project looking at quality of life and how different treatments affect it.

The past eighteen months have been extremely varied and I have been pleased to receive encouraging feedback from patients and fellow team members alike. A particular encouragement was that the role has contributed to an improvement in the care offered to our patient group, which remains a priority.

## A MEDICAL LIBRARY & STUDY ROOM – A NEW PROJECT

Our latest project is to provide a library and study room for use by trainee surgeons working alongside Mr Ilankovan and his staff. The library will contain a range of specialist medical books, Broadband internet link and facilities for the trainees to practice their surgical skills on suitable material. Hopefully this will open during the evenings and week-ends when they are not otherwise engaged on hospital duties.

It is hoped that in time this can be expanded into the provision of a permanent freehold property possibly with some residential accommodation for a couple of trainee surgeons. Currently we are looking at capital expenditure on fittings and equipment in the region of £2/2500 and a rental cost of up to £5000 per annum.

## DONATIONS

Amongst donations recently received was £7500 on account of a legacy left to the Trust by the late Norman Raymont who had been Mr Ilankovan's first patient at Poole. The Trustees are grateful for this generosity and also for other recent gifts including:-

£400 collected by Canford School (Wimborne House) and numerous small donations.

## A FORMER PATIENT RECALLS



Mavis Dale, a founder member of About Face and now a Trustee was a patient in the Head & Neck Ward at Poole Hospital. Her recollections, presented here have been the subject of many talks that she has given to various groups in support of the work of the charity.

There's a song about... "look on the bright side of life" which has little significance until one day it appears an impossibility. One of the things which we value highly is that we can look our fellow beings in the face but what if one day you find this simple task very difficult?

When I was diagnosed with facial cancer (a small ulcer on the inside of my cheek) my whole world was in danger of falling apart, but I had the good fortune to be passed to Mr Ilankovan for his surgical skill. What seemed to be an impossible situation was made very plain sailing by his expertise in putting me right. Ten days after being admitted to hospital I was home again in time for Christmas – eating liquidised Turkey, not the best meal in the world but when needs must... The only thing I don't recommend is the hospital's fortified ice cream! Being required to eat this after soup-like dinner in order to improve my ability to swallow, I could not face it so I thought I would sneak into the toilet and dispose of it down the loo. What a big mistake – it just floated. Whereupon I grabbed the toilet brush and proceeded to attack it in order to push it round the bend. Another big error – I only succeeded in smearing ice cream everywhere. Then of course I had to clean up the mess I had created. The nurse wondered why I was in fits of laughter on my return to bed – but I could not tell them! It all goes to show that a sense of humour goes a long way in these rather traumatic circumstances.

Thanks to Mr Ilankovan and his wonderful team I am still around to enjoy Christmas dinner some 10 years down the line and to remain active in promoting the charity About Face which I helped to set up when it was time to "pay back" the skill and dedication of "Ilanko" and his great staff. I only hope that others who have benefited will do likewise and join us in any way they can.

Often secretaries have difficulty in finding speakers for their groups or Societies; you could try . . .

### MJB PRODUCTIONS

Which specialises in audio-visual travel programmes of less frequented places such as **Greenland, Alaska, Newfoundland, China, St. Helena, Zimbabwe and Antarctica**; or popular destinations such as **America, New Zealand** – or even "home" tours such as the **Thames Valley**.

Each show lasts up to between one and one and a half hours and the charge is between £20 and £25 per visit.

Details from: Margaret Bright,  
4 Hatherden Avenue, Parkstone, Poole BH14 0PJ  
(Tel: 01202 722123)

## FORGOTTEN ARMY?

Just as provision of care is an important object of About Face, so family carers are dedicated in the work they do but so often need support in times of stress. Cathey Gardner, Hon. Chair of Advocare "Caring for Carers" reviews the problems and tells us how to get help and support.

Many family carers give up substantial amounts of time to keep a loved-one at home, selflessly deferring their own needs to another's. This noble work can be rewarding, but lack of understanding by others about the care-giving role and being regarded as a resource to be exploited leaves many family carers feeling isolated, as if in a 'forgotten army'.

A person's quality of life may depend on the quality of care they receive but sometimes carers can't ask – or don't know who to ask – for help. Those striving to prevent a hospital or care home admission rarely admit openly that services have let them down in a crisis, afraid of being deemed to be coping badly. Those fighting against time rarely challenge unwelcome decisions for fear of repercussions for their loved-one.

All this stress added to a carer's disadvantaged status can adversely affect their wellbeing. After losing his wife to cancer, 'John' described how he was "held for so long in the caring role . . . and then collapsed, like a weak jelly coming out of a mould".

'John' since has become a founder-member and Trustee of Advocare, an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting carers and enabling them to have a free voice. Our confidential Caring for Carers line (01202) 737 592 is open Monday to Friday.

### FACING THE FACTS

- Poole has a largely 'hidden' population of about 16,600 adults looking after someone with a long-term illness or disability
- Older carers are the most disadvantaged group in Britain
- Carers rarely go to see a doctor about their own problems
- Carers are more likely to receive medication for stress, isolation and depression than a referral for counselling support.
- Carers often suffer from viral infections due to not having time or the desire to eat properly, lack of sleep and feeling 'low' all the time.

## ABOUT “ABOUT FACE”

A review of its activities and aspirations by Mervyn Bright.

Established about nine years ago, this charity has broadly three objectives:

- To support the medical/surgical staff at Poole and Dorchester hospitals with the provision of facilities or equipment which the NHS cannot or will not provide – currently we are funding the salary of a specialist nurse.
- To provide comforts for patients attending the hospital, either as outpatients or inpatients – we have recently provided two sets of framed photographs of Dorset for the waiting rooms and ward at both hospitals.
- To provide reassurance (usually from a former patient), information and other support of potential patients, their carers and families – including social activities.

Recently there may have been many enquiries asking what is happening and whether the charity still exists – it does, and this article is intended to explain what is taking place.

Early in 2004 the trustees decided that, since administrating costs were spiralling, it was necessary to close our offices in Parkstone (they had to be closed anyway because of a flood) and to divide the administration between the trustees, each working from home. It was decided to proceed with the two pre-organised social events – the fashion show and the boat trip. But sadly these, due to a combination of circumstances, resulted in a financial loss which caused the trustees to cancel the annual Christmas luncheon.

We are now in the process of re-establishing the organisation and this newsletter is the initial move which it is hoped will be followed by organised social events. It is also intended to establish a membership scheme.

## WHO ARE THE TRUSTEES?

- **Mr V. Ilankovan** – the hospital consultant
- **Miss Jo Bell** – his secretary
- **Miss Nicholette Flatman** (Chair)
- **Mrs Mavis Dale** – a former patient
- **Mrs Christine Brienne** – a project manager
- **Mr Wayne Miller** – partner in Messrs. Rawlins Davy, the Bournemouth solicitors
- **Mr Mervyn Bright** – a practicing Chartered Accountant

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- By becoming a member/supporter of the charity – there is an application form printed below.
- By supporting our various functions beginning with our Annual General Meeting in March.
- By coming up with ideas for future newsletters and for fund-raising events.
- By offering your services on a voluntary basis (currently we need someone to collect information for our newsletters and a minute secretary to attend the trustees' monthly meeting).

## AND WHAT DO YOU GET AS A MEMBER/SUPPORTER?

- The **About Face** quarterly newsletter
- Invitation to all future **About Face** social and fund-raising events
- Reassurance, advice and any information we are able to offer
- The satisfaction of supporting a **LOCAL** charity

## DID YOU KNOW . . .

**that if you are disabled and have difficulty in using equipment – medical or domestic – you can call on the services of a voluntary engineer from the local **REMAP** panel to recommend and carry out the necessary adaptations or to even design the equipment for you?**

REMAP is a national charitable organisation and may be contacted through the Bournemouth District Panel of which your local Social Services Department has details. We are always willing to arrange a speaker for your Club or Society.

## FEATURES OF OUR PROJECT WORK

Photographic prints for the wards and waiting rooms of Poole and Dorchester Hospitals.

In the past month or so the Trust donated a set of twelve framed photographs of Dorset for display in the waiting room and wards at Poole and Dorchester Hospitals. These are taken by Margaret Bright and will prove rather more relaxing for patients than the previous prints on display.



Two of the views are reproduced in this newsletter – the **Avenue of Beeches at Badbury Rings** and **Gold Hill (Shaftesbury) in the snow**, an unusual picture.



### Membership Application Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Mr/Mrs/Miss (etc) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (if you wish us to contact you by that means) \_\_\_\_\_

Patient/Care/Family Member/Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_



Please send the completed form with your subscription for 2005 (£5) to the **Membership Secretary** at 4 Hatherden Avenue, Parkstone, Poole BH14 0PJ

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### MARCH

Our Annual General Meeting followed by a social gathering with refreshments.

**ON A DATE TO BE FIXED** – A travel audio visual presentation on Newfoundland, which has had close associations with Poole due to the not inconsiderable cod fishing industry which made fortunes for many Poole merchants, responsible for the impressive buildings around the town.

**WE INVITE SUGGESTIONS** for other social events. In the past we have enjoyed quiz nights, skittles matches, boat trips, fashion shows and social evenings in a really friendly atmosphere.

### TIME FOR A SMILE

A lady went into a pet shop to purchase a parrot, but the shopkeeper appeared a little hesitant and explained that the bird had come from an establishment where it had learned some rather unfortunate language. Nevertheless, the lady decided to purchase the parrot and took it home. The parrot looked around the room and at the lady and said **“New house, new Madam”** which rather surprised her. Soon afterwards her two daughters returned home and, after inspecting them, the parrot said **“New home, new Madam and new girls”** at which they took exception but decided there was little they could do. About an hour later the lady’s husband came home from work and, after viewing him, the parrot simply said **“Hi, George”**.

One of our supporters has offered a small cash prize for the first correct answer received to the following two questions – (phone the **Editor** on **01202 722123**).

If someone tells you he (or she) is going to **“turn the vicar’s bicycle around”** what do you think is meant?

Do you know the name of a notorious **“faggots and peas”** shop in Poole up until 1953? He shared the same name as a busker/fiddle player who frequented the Poole Bus Station (and whose language was at its most colourful when those waiting for the bus displayed a lack of generosity).