



WELCOME

In our last newsletter we expressed the importance of an active membership to support About Face. We look forward to meeting those who have responded to our request for new members and include a form to be completed by anyone who can give us their support and also enjoy the social aspects of our group. The forthcoming Annual General Meeting will be an opportunity for old and new friends to get together.

We invite contributions from the readership – personal reminiscences, stories, poems or jokes for our newsletters.

Don't be shy! Please contact: **The Editor, c/o Administration Office, 4 Hatherden Avenue, Poole BH14 0PJ. Tel: 01202 721021 e-mail: contact@about-face.info www.about-face.info**

WHY POOLE? – A note from a Sri Lankan Maxillo Facial trainee



With our efforts directed towards the provision of a library and study centre for use by trainee surgeons it is relevant to include here a contribution from Mr T. Sabesan MS, FDSRCS, MOSRCS Trust Doctor in Maxillo – Facial Surgery.

When I first began my surgical career in Sri Lanka I wanted to become a competent surgeon in every aspect of facial surgery. But, my wishes and dreams were considered to be unrealistic amongst my colleagues and teachers.

It was five years ago, before I even knew where Poole was on the map, that I completed my masters degree in Maxillo Facial Surgery and had the opportunity to continue my training overseas. At that time I had the chance to go to several hospitals in the UK and my dream was to be trained by a good teacher. Although I didn't know Mr Ilankovan personally I had read and heard about his work and felt that he must be the right person to train me.

Soon after my arrival here I knew I had made the right decision. I have spent a very valuable and inspirational time at Poole Hospital and my experience here has far outweighed my expectations. Under the guidance of Mr Ilankovan I have been able to further my studies and improve my skills and research activities. I have also been able to observe and be involved with good working practice throughout the hospital, which will stay with me and enhance my future career on my return to Sri Lanka. My experience here has been so valuable that other trainees from Sri Lanka have been encouraged to come to Poole.

My wishes and dreams have become a reality and I have almost completed my time at Poole Hospital. I plan to return here on a regular basis, and maintain contact with colleagues, friends and patients, who have become and will remain so much part of my life.

OUR NEW REFERENCE LIBRARY PROJECT NEEDS YOU

The next exciting project for About Face is to raise all or part of the funds for a Medical Reference Library to be used both by the charity and doctors working in the Head and Neck Cancer Department at Poole and Dorchester Hospitals.

The plan is to buy a residential property within walking distance of Poole Hospital which About Face can convert into part library and part accommodation for doctors and / or nurses. The planning department at Borough of Poole Council has already been approached with this project and there appear to be no problems with any partial change of use.

We envisage a small office base for About Face and a reference library with internet access for use by doctors, especially those in training, and facilities for the trainees to practice their surgical skills on suitable material. Also residential accommodation, the rent from which will help cover the overheads including a possible mortgage.

OUR TARGET. . . **£250,000**

We are planning to achieve this figure over an eighteen month period and are in the process of implementing a fund raising campaign accordingly. We are looking for donations of any size and ask our readers to help in any way possible. If you have any fund raising ideas of your own we will be pleased to discuss these with you.

Look out for further information or talk to Mervyn Bright on 01202 721021.

We confidently look forward to achieving our target which already stands at **£12,000** after just two weeks!

A FORMER PATIENT RECALLS

Our last issue featured the recollections of Mavis Dale, a founder member of About Face and now a Trustee. Of her experiences as a former patient in the Head & Neck Ward at Poole Hospital she described how a sense of humour goes a long way in traumatic circumstances. This determined spirit is again demonstrated by the recollections of Michael LeFort, a former patient and now a sterling supporter of About Face.



There is probably no more emotive a word in the English language than 'Cancer'. The illness that strikes everyone else but you. At least that's the way it is perceived by most people and was by me until June 2003.

Never having been ill, with the exception of the usual measles and mumps that affected most children in the 1950s and 60s, when a small lump began to appear on my tongue I dismissed it as an ulcer and tried to treat it accordingly. It was not for about three years when it seemed to have continued to grow that I visited my GP who passed me on to a consultant at Poole Hospital. A biopsy followed and I was given an appointment a few weeks later to discuss the results.

A call from the hospital brought my appointment forward. The meeting was short, very short... Sorry but it's cancer. Me, cancer? There must be some mistake. No mistake and it was very advanced. Seemed I had just a few months to live. Just as well the nearest bar was open!! Having had time to take in the news over a large drink (or three) I went home to ponder the consequences and thought of all the 'goodies' I could have on a "buy now... pay next year deal" when I wouldn't be here to settle up!

During that meeting I met Mr Ilankovan for the first time who told me that he could operate and hopefully give me a longer life or I could let nature take its course. The operation came with no Dixon's style "extended warranties" and my appearance, speech, taste and eating and drinking habits could be severely affected.

In my heart I knew it was "no contest" and only one decision could be made. A few weeks later I put my trust and life in the hands of Mr Ilankovan and his dedicated team. That was in July 2003. Three weeks later I was on my way home albeit weak and having lost a lot of weight. Fantastic! Thanks to 'Ilanko's' skills and the NHS I had lost weight AND had a free face-lift!

Surgery had removed around 70% of my tongue which had been replaced with a 'flap'... a graft from my arm which at the time looked like a piece of white paper, at least it did when I finally had the courage to look for myself. The irony of this is that when I first visited the hospital the clinic nurse told me the amazing things that could be achieved today and how a new tongue could be built. We joked

about this as it appealed to my sense of humour as I thought she was joking!

Nearly two years later I am a normal person, much to the delight of my family.... me, normal?

Well done 'Ilanko', you really achieved a miracle. Seriously, for a marketing man to lose his tongue is quite a problem but now my appearance is much as it was before the operation and I am working normally. My speech is almost back to what it was before surgery. However, I was buying a rail ticket at Bournemouth station to Cosham shortly after the operation. "Sorry mate", came the reply, "this train does not stop at Totton". "No, Cosham" I insisted. Again the response "I just told you this train does not stop at Totton". Exasperated I said "Damn it then, give me a return to Aberdeen" At least I was able to pronounce that!

A sense of humour and a never give up attitude combined with the support of my family have enabled me to live a normal life which I hope to do for many more years.

However it has been the skill and dedication of Mr Ilankovan and his maxillofacial team that has given me my life back.

THERE IS LIFE AFTER CANCER!

Like Mavis who wrote of her experiences in the last newsletter, I too hope to give something back and am helping the About Face team to raise funds for a dedicated reference library and 'training unit'.

You can see details and how to make a contribution in this newsletter.

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-half hours, the charge is between £20 and £25 per visit.

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

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Macmillan – “All the way through cancer”

This is the first of a series describing organisations that provide help in various ways to cancer patients. We begin with Macmillan Cancer Relief, originally founded as the “*Society for the Prevention and Relief of Cancer*” by Douglas Macmillan in 1911.

Macmillan had watched his father die of cancer “*in needless pain and suffering*” and his aim was to promote quality care and information for all patients, regardless of income. He wanted residential homes for some patients and “*panels of voluntary nurses*” for domestic visits to others.

The charity became a Benevolent Society in 1924 and changed its name to the “*National Society for Cancer Relief*”. The first paid staff member was appointed in 1930. In 1969 it began to support in-patient care and to collect money to build hospices. The first Macmillan nurses were funded in 1975, the first Macmillan doctor in 1986. In 1993, Prince Charles funded the 1000th Macmillan nurse and by the year 2000 there were twice that number. Macmillan adopted its present name in 1997 and merged with CancerLink in 2001.

To quote from its own material, “*Macmillan Cancer Relief provides the expert care and emotional support that makes a real difference to people living with cancer. We offer a range of innovative services including Macmillan nurses, doctors and other health professionals, cancer care centres, a range of cancer information, practical help at home and help with money.*”

Macmillan now has over 3000 health professionals including specialist doctors, nurses, pharmacists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians and others. These are funded for three years after which the NHS or voluntary organisations take them over. There are 22 Macmillan nurses in Dorset.

Macmillan gives out half a million booklets a year including the Cancer Guide for newly-diagnosed patients. It maintains a Macmillan CancerLine (tel: 0808 808 2020) which has special facilities for the hard of hearing. It takes the Mobile Macmillan Cancer Information Centre around towns. It provides small grants to self-help and support groups and individuals. It can provide grants to patients for care and convalescent holidays, among other things, and can support carers.

Most of the organisation’s ninety or so million pounds in annual income comes from voluntary sources. This inevitably means that a significant amount is spent on fund-raising activities. But, overall, the charity is extremely efficient in that it spends nearly 70p out of every £1 raised on high-quality care and support services (although About Face manages 96p).

As well as offices in Wales and Northern Ireland, Macmillan has four regional offices. These are in Edinburgh, York, Hammersmith and, for our region, at 6 Regents Court, Andover SP10 5NX, tel: 01264 343600. There is more about its activities on www.macmillan.org.uk



FORTHCOMING ABOUT FACE EVENTS

MAY 2005

The adjourned Annual General Meeting of About Face will take place at **7pm on Wednesday 18th May 2005 at Four Ways**, Constitution Hill Road, Parkstone, Poole.

This will be followed by a social gathering with refreshments and there will be a travel video presentation entitled Newfoundland and Beyond. This has 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.

Please let us have your suggestions for social events.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 18th May – **ALL** are welcome.

WELCOME NEW RECRUITS

We now welcome on board Dorothy Goldsborough as a membership secretary, Christopher Brooks as the minute secretary and Frank Smith who will collect news and other material for inclusion in the quarterly newsletter for which Geoff Hutchinson is the editor. With the help of these new recruits, it is hoped the Trust can grow and prosper.

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 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.

MORE FEATURES OF OUR PROJECT WORK

In the previous issue we reported that the Trust had donated a set of twelve framed photographs for display in the waiting room and wards at Poole and Dorchester Hospitals. These were taken by Margaret Bright and will prove more relaxing than the previous prints on display.



Two more of the views are reproduced in this issue – **Poole Harbour from Evening Hill** and **Corfe Castle in the snow**.



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

TIME FOR A SMILE

A young man in nautical uniform went into MacDonalds in Southampton, where he saw an attractive young lady in tears. He asked what was wrong and she explained she wanted to get home to America but her passport, tickets and money had been stolen. *“Don’t worry my dear”* said the young man, *“I will look after you. I am due to sail tonight and if you meet me at 10pm in the docks I will smuggle you aboard my ship.”*

The young lady gratefully accepted the offer, and once on board he installed her inside a lifeboat and regularly brought her food and drink; she in turn *“looked after him”*. But eventually a ship’s inspection took place, the lifeboats were uncovered, the stowaway revealed and taken before the Captain. After she told her story, the Captain said *“You may well have looked after him, my dear, but I don’t think he really looked after you”*. The young lady was puzzled until the captain added *“This is the Isle of Wight ferry”*.

After Pythagoras

An Indian Chief had three squaws in his wigwam. The oldest slept on a bed of goat-hide, the next in age on one of buffalo-hide, but the youngest and his favourite, on the finest hippopotamus-hide, which only went to prove that the squaw on the hippopotamus-hide equalled the sum of the squaws on the other two hides.

Toujours La Delicatesse

An Englishman invited a visiting Frenchman to a game of golf. After a few holes, a funeral cirtège passed along a nearby road. The Englishman stopped, doffed his cap, lowered his head and remained silent for one minute.

“Ah” said the Frenchman. overcome with admiration, *“comme vous avez de la delicatesse!”*

“Well,” said the Englishman, *“I suppose it’s the least I can do, after 30years of marriage to her.”*

DONATIONS

We much appreciate the support of the Bournemouth & Meyrick Park Golf Club who sent us a donation of **£362**. The Trustees are grateful for this generosity and for the numerous small donations recently received.