

Breast Cancer Support Group Sussex

Newsletter July 2016

Hi All

Hope everyone is enjoying the summer months.

At our last meeting Professor Reed came along and gave us a very interesting talk on many different things that are now going on after being diagnosed with Breast Cancer. A great deal of his talk was all about choices that one can make before having surgery. It was a most interesting debate with many of our ladies asking many questions.

We would like to thank Professor Reed for his time and expertise that he gave to the group.

Pink Stall

Many many thanks to all the ladies that gave up their time and energy into helping with our Pink Stall at Blaker's Park. Fortunately the weather held out for us and we made £447.00 which was fantastic. So well done all of you that were involved and we look forward to the next Pink Stall which is to be held on 12th November at the Racecourse (Indoor of course). So we will be needing more pink things for then and more helpers too. Most of our pink things were sold at the last pink stall so beg, steal and borrow from family and friends to help make another great day. We would also like to thank Marks & Spencer and Tiger for their gifts to help make our stall so attractive and bright. Letters have been sent to them thanking them for their support.

Harvey's Brewery

A few of us went to Harvey's Brewery on Monday evening. It was most interesting going round the Brewery bit by bit to see how the beer is made. The tour took about an hour and a half and at the end there was plenty of tasting to be done. It was a shame that there were not many of us there as it was a really interesting tour.

August Meeting

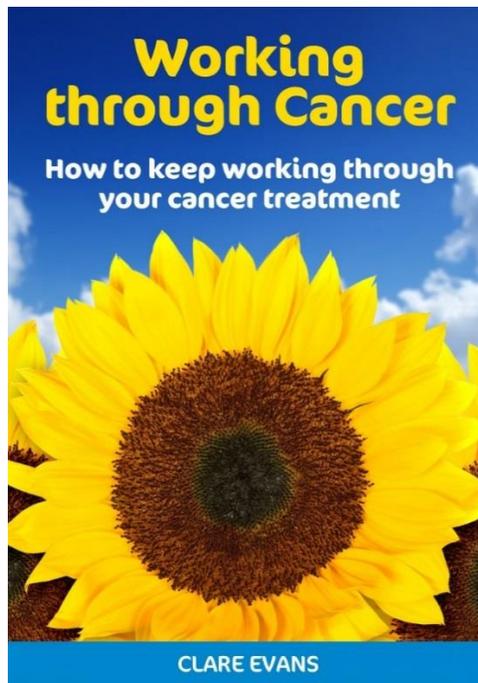
For our August meeting we always have a picnic in the Park (right opposite the Park Centre) so weather permitting we will meet in the Park. If everyone can bring a plate of food and drink that will be good to share round. We can discuss more at our July meeting. You may want to bring a blanket or chair to sit on. Last year's was a great success so let's make this year's as good, if not better. If the weather is bad we will have it in the Park Centre.

Horizon Centre

Gwen and myself were invited to look around the new Horizon Centre on Wednesday. It is a lovely place, very bright, many rooms for all different purposes. A car park is available for free although there is a possibility that we will have to change our meeting times to 6.30-8.30 as the centre car park is used for patients having treatment across the road at the Cancer Centre. But we will have to wait until we are able to move there which hopefully will be September. It is spacious and modern with a balcony and coffee bar and lots of different activities will be going on during the day for all of us to use. As soon as we have more information we will let you know. The building is still being finished off at the moment so when it is ready everyone will be informed.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the next meeting on the 18th July

Best wishes
Joyce



One of our members, Clare Evans, wrote an e-book and developed a website whilst she was going through her own experiences. The book is part personal journey, part self-help and a guide to show you that cancer can be a manageable disease. Once you know what to expect, you can take control.

The website is to share useful information and resources and for you to share your own personal journey or ask for information and advice.

Everyone's journey and experience will be different from mine but I hope this will help you and others to get through this and help you to get out the other side.

"... the book would be a welcome read for anyone who has recently been diagnosed, and it will help to make the difficult situation less scary."

The book is primarily intended for anyone diagnosed with breast cancer who wants to know what to expect, how to deal with your diagnosis and to help you through the next few months of your treatment. It might also help those diagnosed with other forms of cancer as many of the stages are the same, the details and specifics of individual treatment may vary.

"Clare shows that it's possible to maintain perspective and a sense of humour! Sharing her personal experience and how she coped may bring a sense of relief to people who are feeling frightened or overwhelmed. The message comes across – 'yes this is difficult but you can get through it, there are lots of things you can do to help yourself, and you are not alone!'"

You may find this at <http://www.workingthroughcancer.co.uk/>

The book can be [downloaded from Amazon](#) and all profits go to cancer charities

BLAKER'S PARK FAIR

A big THANK YOU to everyone who donated items and helped on the day to raise £ 446.88



Stay safe and cooler in the sun



During the summer months, you may be concerned about the effects of hot weather during and after breast cancer treatment. We suggest ways to manage symptoms and stay comfortable in the heat.

Skincare

Breast cancer treatments such as radiotherapy and chemotherapy can make skin more sensitive.

Take care in the sun by covering your skin and wearing a hat. Use a sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF) and avoid the hottest part of the day (11am–3pm). Remember, it's also possible to get sunburnt through clothing, so apply sunscreen underneath your clothes too.

Radiotherapy

If you're having radiotherapy, avoid exposing the treated area to sun during treatment and afterwards, until any skin reaction has settled down. Make sure the area is covered or apply a high-factor sunscreen when you're out in the sun, even when treatment is finished.

Lymphoedema

Lymphoedema causes the skin to stretch and it can become dry, flaky, itchy and prone to infection. Wear loose cotton clothes with long sleeves to protect the affected area from the sun, and wear a compression garment if you've been given one by your specialist. You should also try to avoid extremes of temperature – getting too hot then too cold, or too cold then too hot.

Avoid getting sunburnt, and use a good-quality sunscreen with a high SPF (such as SPF 50–60). Keep the affected areas covered. You can still burn through compression garments, particularly synthetic ones. Your lymphoedema specialist can advise you on which garments will offer the most sun protection.

Hair loss

If you've lost your hair because of chemotherapy, wear a hat or headscarf to keep your head covered while outside to help prevent burning. The most comfortable scarves are made from a natural fabric that's gentle on the scalp and allows it to breathe. Soft cotton is probably best, as satin and silk materials can slide off the head more easily.

Wigs can sometimes feel hot and itchy, particularly in warmer weather, but you can try wearing a thin cotton lining or skullcap under your wig. You can buy these from wig suppliers or find them online.

Breast Cancer Care's [HeadStrong](#) service can show you how to make the most of alternatives to wigs by using scarves, hats and other headwear.

Hot flushes

Menopausal symptoms, including hot flushes, can be caused by treatments such as chemotherapy, hormone (endocrine) therapy or ovarian suppression (stopping the ovaries working). Hot flushes can vary for each person, from a couple a day to a few every hour. They range from a mild sensation of warming that just affects the face, to waves of heat throughout the body. Some women also experience drenching perspiration affecting the entire body.

Hot flushes can feel more intense during hot weather, so keep cool by using a fan, wearing loose-fitting cotton clothing and drinking plenty of water. Getting to know what triggers your hot flushes can help you avoid them. You can find out more about this in Breast Cancer Care's [Menopausal symptoms and breast cancer](#) booklet.

You may want to avoid swimming during radiotherapy and shortly afterwards (until any skin reactions have healed), as a wet swimsuit can rub the skin and cause discomfort.

Chemicals in a swimming pool may also make the skin dry and irritated. Talk to a member of your treatment team if you normally swim regularly and want to continue.

You may also be advised to avoid swimming pools if you're having chemotherapy. This is because chemotherapy affects your immune system's ability to fight infection, which might make you more susceptible to any germs in the water. If you do want to go swimming, discuss it with your hospital team first.

Travel abroad

If you're travelling to a hotter, tropical area you may need to use insect repellent, particularly at night, to avoid bites and stings. Bites from insects such as mosquitos can become infected and are very uncomfortable.

If you have lymphoedema it's a good idea to ask your GP for some antibiotics to take with you. This is so you can start taking them immediately if you develop an infection in the area affected by lymphoedema.

Check with your doctor if you'll need any vaccinations or preventive medication before you travel. Live vaccinations (such as yellow fever) are not recommended during chemotherapy or for six months afterwards, as they could cause serious infections. While inactivated vaccines (such as cholera and typhoid) are safe during and after treatment, they may be less effective if you have a weakened immune system. This may be the case in the first six months after chemotherapy. Talk to your treatment team about the best time to have your injection.

Read more [travel and holiday tips](#).

Top sun-safety tips

- Use a high sun protection factor (SPF) sunscreen and apply regularly, particularly after swimming.
- Wear loose-fitting, cotton clothing and keep your head covered in the sun.
- Avoid the hottest part of the day (11am–3pm).
- Drink plenty of water at regular intervals.
- Check with your hospital team or doctor before swimming.
- Use insect repellent (if required), particularly at night.

Sadly Harveys are stopping the brewery tours so we were fortunate that after 4 years on the waiting list to have a tour and an interesting and amusing talk by one of the Head Brewers. It was surprising to see the traditional methods that remain in place to brew Sussex's best bitter!

The Head Brewer's Office



The hopper



The final process after yeast has been added to the water hops and malt prior to casking



Exercise for all: 5 activities to try today



From walking to swimming, we look at five types of exercise anyone can try after breast cancer treatment, with some expert tips to get you started.

The benefits of physical activity for people with breast cancer are well known, from easing fatigue to improving mental wellbeing. But if you're struggling with the effects of treatment, getting active is easier said than done.

'Exercise doesn't need to be vigorous or high-impact to provide its many health benefits,' says cancer exercise expert Lizzy Davis. 'It's important to start gently and progress slowly.'

Lizzy recommends speaking to your medical team before starting out.

Best foot forward

A brisk walk is the perfect way to increase your activity levels. All you need is a comfortable pair of shoes – and maybe a friend to keep you company.

It's the easiest form of exercise to incorporate into your daily routine.

Start slowly and build up the amount of walking you do and your pace gradually.

You could use a pedometer app for your phone to track your progress.

[Walking for Health\(link is external\)](#) is England's largest network of health walks.

Strike a pose



Yoga combines postures and breathing to boost physical and mental wellbeing.

It's great for improving strength, flexibility and balance.

Dr Jimmy Kwok, Head of Oncology at HCA Healthcare, is a registered yoga teacher and has practised Ashtanga yoga for over a decade.

'It's only recently the medical community has awoken to the potential health benefits this ancient practice might have in supporting people with medical conditions, including cancer,' he says.

There are many styles of yoga, some of which are more vigorous than others.

'Studies have suggested that breast cancer patients and survivors who practise yoga experience reduced fatigue levels,' says Jimmy, 'and that yoga can help lift "chemo-brain", alleviate depression and lymphoedema, and improve movement after surgery.'

You don't have to be super flexible to give it a try.

'Yoga isn't only about how bendy you are,' says Jimmy. 'It's about focusing your awareness inwards, using physical postures as a moving meditation. With consistent yoga practice, in time, you'll feel a shift in your flexibility.'

'It's suitable for everyone, including complete beginners. Cancer patients and survivors with no previous experience can reap its benefits.'

For information on different yoga styles, visit the [Dr Yoga](#) website.

The extra mile

'You don't need half the stuff you think you need to start running,' says Laura Fountain, running coach and founder of [Lazy Girl Running](#). 'All you need are some clothes you feel comfortable in and you're good to go.'

Laura says having a goal means you're more likely to keep running regularly. 'It doesn't have to be a marathon – your goal might be to run a lap of the park. Each run you do will take you a few steps towards making it happen.'

'Grab a notebook or diary and, after each run, write down how long you ran for and how you felt. Sometimes it feels like you're not making progress. But if you can look back and see that a few weeks ago running for 1 minute at a time felt hard, but now 5 minutes is comfortable, it'll encourage you to keep going.'

Having a running buddy is also great for motivation. ‘Search out a local beginners’ running group, or a friend who wants to start running. A long-distance training partner can work just as well – messaging each other will help you keep motivated.’

Laura also recommends keeping some of that beginners’ eagerness for a few weeks down the line. ‘We all start with lots of enthusiasm,’ she says, ‘keen to get out there and make it happen. And that’s great. But there’s a chance you’ll overdo it. Hitting the gym five times in that first week isn’t a good idea.’

Make a splash



Whether butterfly’s your bag or you’re more of a doggy paddler, swimming is a great all-round exercise suitable for all ages. It’s low-impact, so won’t put joints under stress.

Many swimming pools have adult beginner classes and women-only sessions. Find your local pool at [swimming.org](https://www.swimming.org)

You can buy pocketed mastectomy swimwear in some high street shops, large department stores or specialist shops. For tips on choosing swimwear, try Breast Cancer Care's information on [clothing and swimwear](#).

Pedal power

A means of getting to work or an enjoyable family activity, cycling is a simple way to increase your activity.

A specialist cycle shop can help you choose the right bike for your budget and needs. Some workplaces operate a cycle to work scheme, which can make buying a bike and equipment more affordable. And if you have an old bike, you could think about having it serviced to make sure it's still suitable for road use.

If you're a beginner or getting back in the saddle, cycle training can help boost your confidence. Ask your local council what cycle training is available near you.

Try the [Sustrans](#) website for tips on getting started, road safety, bike maintenance and plenty of route maps to inspire you.

Get active, stay active

Lizzy suggests the following tips for getting and staying active:

- List all the activities you enjoy, from walking with a friend to gardening. Don't exclude anything.
- Plan how you'll deal with any barriers. For example, if you're more tired today or feel under the weather, choose lighter activities such as walking or take it easy in your exercise class.
- Try to exercise at a time in the day when energy levels are higher.
- Keep an activity diary. It's a great motivator and helps track your progress.
- Consistency is key. Do something every day, even if it's a few minutes of walking. No effort is ever wasted.

White chocolate mousse with strawberry and black pepper sauce



Adding just a hint of cracked black pepper to pureed strawberries adds a real kick. Combine with the white chocolate lime and white rum mousse and you'll wow your friends.

Serves 4

For the white chocolate mousse

- 200g white chocolate broken into pieces
- 1 lime grated rind only
- 2 eggs separated
- 2 tbsp white rum
- 150ml double cream

For the strawberry and black pepper sauce

- 50g caster sugar
- 75ml water

- 1/2 tsp black peppercorns roughly crushed
 - 225g strawberries hulled sliced
 - 1/2 lime juice only
 - Few extra small strawberries to decorate
1. To make the mousse melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a saucepan of very gently simmering water making sure that the base of the bowl isn't touching the water.
 2. Take the bowl of chocolate off the saucepan and stir in the lime rind egg yolks and rum until smooth. Lightly whip the cream until it forms soft swirls then fold into the chocolate mix and spoon into 4 small glasses. Chill in the fridge for 3 to 4 hours until set.
 3. Meanwhile make the sauce. Add the sugar water and pepper to a medium saucepan and heat gently stirring until the sugar has dissolved then simmer for 3 minutes. Add the strawberries and lime juice and cook for 2 minutes then leave to cool.
 4. Puree the sauce in a liquidiser or using a stick blender until smooth. Pour into a small jug and pour over the tops of the mousses just before serving. Serve on small plates with extra halved strawberries if you like.