

SpeakOut

The newsletter of Oracle Cancer Trust

LEADING RESEARCH INTO HEAD AND NECK CANCER

SUMMER 2017

Oracle joins forces with Oxford-based Research Charity Heads Up

Oracle Cancer Trust is delighted to announce that from June 2017, we will be jointly collaborating with the Oxford University Hospital Trust's Charity, Heads Up.

The charity, headed by Oxford-based surgeon Stuart Winter, was founded ten years ago with the sole aim of funding research into head and neck cancer. During this time it has acted as pathway for raising funds, mostly from the Thames Valley region from a core group of supporters who generously support the charity throughout the year.

Head and neck cancer affects over 11,000 people per year. Unfortunately the numbers of cases is increasing.

Furthermore it is affecting younger, healthier people and this has huge implications for those unfortunate to be diagnosed with it. Heads Up has been very successful in funding projects, ranging from basic molecular research to looking for cancer cells in saliva to reasons for radio resistance in cancer.

The collaboration of Heads Up and Oracle represents a hugely exciting opportunity to increase the amount of research into head and neck cancer. The synergy of the two organisations will increase the range and size of projects that can be funded and promote closer collaborations between those treating this condition. Together we will have 15 current research projects and details about a further Oxford-based project we are currently evaluating are later in this newsletter.

Heads Up Trustees and Volunteers will take up key roles within Oracle as Honorary Trustees on the Finance and Research Committees and in Fundraising.



Oxford surgeon Stuart Winter of Heads Up

Oracle Cancer Trust was founded in 1979 by ENT cancer surgeon and Oracle's Chairman, Peter Rhys Evans at The Royal Marsden Hospital in London.

The charity has since grown to become the UK's foremost funder of pioneering research into head and neck cancer in the UK, and it has had some notable successes in funding projects that have resulted in breakthroughs in delivering treatment to head and neck cancer patients. These developments have included pioneering ways of delivering radiotherapy treatment to preserve the vital senses, improving swallowing and speech for patients during treatment and exciting combination drug therapies which are now part of mainstream clinical trials.

With the support of our fundraisers and supporters we look forward to funding more projects to discover newer and better treatments for patients.

To be kept informed about the latest developments, receive the regular newsletter and hear about news and events please send your details to info@oraclecancertrust.org or call us on 020 7922 7924. Our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/oraclecancertrust and do follow us on Twitter @oracle_cancer.

Oracle does not cold call or share information with third parties.



Research Projects Update



Support our nine "Team Oracle" cyclists at RideLondon in July



Specialist dietitian Sarah Ballis offers advice on lifestyle changes following cancer



Leading actress Clare Holman writes a tribute in memory of her late husband, Howard



Message from our Voluntary CEO, Jamie Newall

Dear Supporters,

We are already having a busy year and are delighted to be joining forces with Heads Up, an Oxford based head and neck cancer charity. Both charities have so much in common, from a committed community of supporters many of whom have been patients, led by excellent surgeons and oncologists and a focus on supporting early stage head and neck cancer research.

But In the current environment smaller charities have a hard time regardless of the importance of the cause they support. Small charities are required to have the same level of governance as the large charities and this takes considerable time and effort away from fundraising and other key functions. Small charities are also competing with the big charities and their network of high street shops, television advertising and outsourced fundraising (often using private companies to cold call or 'chugg' on high streets).

Therefore, to join together, allows us to demonstrate Oracle operating not just a local but a regional and national level. We will be utilising Oracle's excellent governance framework to support a wider community of volunteer fundraisers. It also means that together we are currently funding 15 head and neck cancer research projects covering a range of areas from genomic sequence testing to immunotherapy. Thereby making a real difference to outcomes for head and neck cancer patients.

Key Heads Up personnel will be woven into Oracle Cancer Trust: Stuart Winter, a head and neck surgeon becoming an Honorary Trustee and Stuart and Ketan Shah, a head and neck oncologist, joining the Research Committee (who select projects to fund) and Ray Derkacz becoming the Voluntary Fundraising Co-ordinator, Thames Valley.

We are also delighted to welcome John Fallon, Chief Executive of Pearson plc, to the Board as a Trustee. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Board as well as his own personal experiences with cancer.

Finally our funded research continues to deliver, with a number of projects achieving, or about to be published, and others already being taken forward to clinical trials. But we continue to face the challenge of research projects requiring regular multi-year funding but donations being irregular. We continue to need your incredible support and I would like to take this opportunity to also thank the fantastic team at Oracle who continue to work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure we remain the leading head and neck cancer charity.

Jamie Newall
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Oracle's Voluntary CEO Jamie Newall

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Heads Up and Oracle Cancer Trust Team

Voluntary Fundraising Co-ordinator for Thames Valley



Ray Derkacz, Voluntary Fundraising Co-ordinator, Thames Valley

I am really excited at the partnership of Heads Up and Oracle Cancer Trust. Having been involved with Heads Up for nine years this is a great development for the charity and will ensure that the hard-earned funds raised by our many supporters are channelled into the best possible research projects.

The merger is a timely one for me, as it coincides with my retirement from full-time employment as a project management consultant and allows me to devote more time to the role of Voluntary Fundraising Co-ordinator for Heads Up, in its new guise as Oracle Cancer Trust, Thames Valley.

I'm looking forward to engaging further with our supporters and providing them with the assistance they need in their fundraising efforts. Over the years many of our fundraisers have organised successful golf days, themed tribute nights, curry nights as well as abseiling, skydiving and running marathons.



Leigh-Anne El-Bahrdadi

Following my wife's treatment for head and neck cancer I was one of the founders of Heads2gether, a head and neck cancer patient support group. We are in the early stages of launching a regional Oxford patient support group and hope to roll this out to other regions in the near future.

Many of you will be familiar with my colleague Leigh-Anne who is the outpatients supervisor at The Blenheim Head and Neck Centre at The Churchill Hospital in Oxford. Leigh-Anne will continue to be a volunteer and point of contact at the hospital if you have any questions about fundraising.

In the meantime if you you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch.



Ray Derkacz
Voluntary Fundraising Co-ordinator, Thames Valley
ray@oraclecancertrust.org

John Fallon joins Oracle Board

We are delighted to announce that leading business figure John Fallon has joined the Oracle Cancer Trust Board. John was formerly a patient of Professor Chris Nutting, whom he calls his "hero" for successfully treating him for throat cancer.

John is the CEO of Pearson, the world's leading learning company. Since his appointment, he has taken on the responsibility of encouraging all 35,000 colleagues, in 70 countries, to work as one global company, with the primary goal of empowering people's lives through learning. Prior to his appointment as CEO, he served as Chief Executive of Pearson's International operations, working extensively in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Previously, John was Director of Corporate Affairs at Powergen plc, and was also a member of the company's executive committee. Earlier in his career, John held senior public policy and communications roles in UK local government. He is an advisory board member of the Global Business Coalition for Education and a member of the Council of the University of Hull.

He enjoys reading (with particular interest in the topics of economics, robotics and the "Second Machine Age"), running (if rather slowly), and spending time with his wife and two university-age daughters.



New Board Member John Fallon (left) with Professor Chris Nutting

Oracle sponsors Annual BAHNO Lecture



In May Oracle Cancer Trust attended the BAHNO Annual Scientific Meeting in London to raise awareness of the charity's pioneering head and neck cancer research work.

BAHNO is a leading multi-disciplinary society for healthcare professionals involved in the study and treatment of head and neck cancer. Many of the UK's leading head and neck surgeons, oncologists, speech therapists and other health professionals involved in the care of head and neck cancer patients attend this prestigious meeting.

Oracle supports BAHNO by sponsoring the annual "Blair Hesketh Memorial Lecture" which was set up in memory of the late Blair Hesketh. This year's speaker was Professor Katherine Hutcheson, Associate Professor at the Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Centre.



Oracle's Emma Colliver (pictured) and Linda Wimble represented Oracle in the event's exhibition breakout area and shared information about the charity's pioneering research activities with delegates.

Oracle's Honorary Trustees Professor Kevin Harrington and Professor Chris Nutting also spoke and debated at the event, talking about the latest advances in treatment.

Oracle is passionate about helping to create a community of researchers and supporters for the head and neck cancer cause.

The lecture was held at the historic Royal College of Physicians in London

Annual Supporters Research event, Tuesday 10th October 2017

Following the success of our 2016 event we are delighted to announce that our third Annual Research event will be held on the 10th October at the Grange City Hotel, located in the heart of the City of London, just moments from the Tower of London. Having outgrown holding our annual event at The Institute of Cancer Research, we are extremely grateful to Grange Hotels for generously hosting and sponsoring the evening.

The event starts at 6.30pm with registration, followed by a series of short presentations from research project leaders including Professor Chris Nutting, Professor Kevin Harrington and Professor Uwe Oelfke as well as their teams of talented researchers. All researchers will be available to talk to visitors in a series of break-out areas to discuss their projects in more detail.

This is a free event and open to all supporters interested to hear more about our pioneering work in head and neck cancer research. During the evening refreshments and a buffet will be served. For guests that would like to stay over at The Grange City after the event, please get in touch so we can offer, subject to availability, a preferred Oracle guest room rate.

Please note that numbers are limited for the event and early registration is advised.

To register, please visit www.oraclecancertrust.org/events, email us at events@oraclecancertrust.org or call on 020 7922 7924.



Grange Hotels are kindly sponsoring and hosting our 3rd Annual Research Event



Join the team for our third Annual Supporters Research evening on Tuesday 10th October at the Grange City Hotel, London EC3

Research Committee to review new project

Research Committee to consider new research project: Genome Sequencing for Head and Neck Cancer Patients



As the UK's leading charity dedicated to funding head and neck cancer research, Oracle funds a variety of research projects in targeted therapies, radiotherapy, imaging and pathology.

Oracle has a robust governance procedure in place for all research applications which undergo a three-tiered review process. All applications are reviewed and vetted by the research committee which consists of independent medical and non-medical professionals.

This review consists of a written application and a presentation to the team. If this application is successful at this stage it is then passed to the Financial and Investments Committee for review. The final stage is sign off at Board level. All committee members are independent, professional trustees and volunteers.



All projects, though unique, share a common thread – the aim to develop techniques and treatments to improve prospects for head and neck cancer patients.

As researchers develop new treatments, they are also looking at ways to ensure we are selecting the best treatment for each individual patient.

In this vein, Oracle is considering funding for a new Oxford-based research project looking at how we can use Genome Sequencing to select the most appropriate treatment for a particular patient's cancer.

What is Genome Sequencing?

- Genome sequencing is working out of the order of DNA bases in a genome - the order of A's, C's, G's and T's to make up the organism's DNA
- Sequencing is mostly done by high-tech machines
- The human genome is made up of over 3 billion of these genetic letters
- Genome sequencing gives scientists a valuable shortcut, helping them find genes more easily and quickly

The proposed new research project will be based at the Oxford University and University Hospitals Trust and carried out by a group of scientists led by Associate Professor Jenny Taylor (pictured) of the University's Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics.

The aim of the project will be to pioneer the use of new Genome Sequencing technologies in selecting the optimal treatments for head and neck cancer patients.

Each cancer patient's tumour is different. However, we know a great deal about the genetic drivers of cancer so if we know the particular sequence of genes present in a patient's tumour we may be able to select a treatment that will target those specific genetic changes.

Head and neck cancers present a particular challenge for clinicians which Genome Sequencing could help to address: some patients have very good prognosis and are likely to be cured whilst others have a poor prognosis.

These two groups of patients are currently treated in the same way, meaning that some patients suffer significant side effects from the toxic therapy unnecessarily whilst others would benefit from having more treatment options.

The new research project aims to sequence the genomes in tumours from head and neck cancer patients to understand how we can differentiate between these two patient groups by identifying differences in patients' genomes.

It is hoped that results from this project could have immediate clinical impact on the patients sequenced and could also inform clinical practice or guidelines for future patients to ensure that they are receiving the most appropriate treatment for their cancer.

Support our fundraising events

9th Annual Golf Day, Thursday 28th September 2017

Oracle's 9th Annual Golf Day will be held on Thursday 28th September 2017 at the prestigious Burhill Golf Club near Weybridge in Surrey. Always hugely popular with friends and supporters of all golfing abilities, our golf day is a fun day out whilst raising funds to support our pioneering research programmes tackling head and neck cancer.

Players can enjoy breakfast in the stunning Georgian clubhouse followed by a briefing from the Head Greenkeeper. They will then head out onto the course for a 10am shotgun start on the beautiful Old Course. There will be some fun on-course competitions such as Beat the Pro, Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive.

The price for a fourball team is £550 and individual players are welcome for £140. The price includes breakfast, 18 holes of golf on The Old Course, a three course lunch with entertainment and a welcome gift bag.

Following the golf, we have a three course lunch with entertainment provided by the hilarious Aaron James (pictured). Aaron is one of the UK's best known after dinner speakers and has appeared in numerous shows in Las Vegas, World Cup finals, "Friday night with Jonathan Ross", C4 "Big Breakfast", Match of the Day Live at the N.E.C and much more.

We also have a fantastic range of prizes for individual, on-course and team competitions and the replica claret jug, "The Derek Lucie-Smith Memorial Trophy" to play for.

One of the finest golf courses in South East England, Burhill Golf Club regularly hosts PGA competitions as well as qualifying rounds for the prestigious Open Golf Championship.

Could you sponsor some aspects of the day or help with prizes? From hole sponsorship to providing silent or live auction prizes any support would be greatly appreciated. Do get in touch by emailing sarah@oraclecancertrust.org or calling on 020 7922 7924.

If you have any queries or would like to book a place or team, please email events@oraclecancertrust.org or call on 020 7922 7924. You can also book individual or team places online at www.oraclecancertrust.org/events.

10am shotgun start
Golf, entertainment and
three course meal

£550 fourball team
£140 individual player



The Derek Lucie-Smith Memorial Trophy awarded to the best player was won in 2016 by Julian Buck



Leading entertainer Aaron James is our host and MC for the day



Support our fundraising events

12th Glory of Christmas Concert, Monday 4th December 2017

The Glory of Christmas is Oracle's annual celebration concert which is held in early December. Now in its 12th year, the evening is for supporters, patients, friends and family as well as staff from the local hospitals to come together and enjoy seasonal music and readings in the stunning concert venue of St John's Smith Square.

The concert is a glorious occasion with music from The Thames Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Keith Marshall accompanied by the soaring voices of the Choir of Christ's College, Cambridge. At the 2016 concert we were treated to virtuoso performances by internationally renowned musicians, David Juritz and Deian Rowlands on the violin and harp. Music included pieces by Bach, Britten Handel, Rutter and Vivaldi with a number of popular carols sung by the choir and audience.

It is a tradition at Glory that we invite ex-patients who have undergone treatment for head and neck cancer to read at the concert. Other readers that have joined us at previous concerts include Vice-Presidents Nigella Lawson, Jimmy Mulville and Jenny Pitman OBE.

Following the annual concert we host a drinks reception for supporters in the crypt which has been generously sponsored this year. The crypt is also home to the Footstool restaurant which serves a pre-concert supper and is always a popular meeting point.

At last year's event we were thrilled by the level of support shown by our friends and sponsors by not only joining us at the event, but also by the level of generosity with donations on the night and after the concert.

We look forward to another wonderful evening and to welcoming supporters and friends, new and old, at the concert which is being held this year on Monday 4th December from 7.30pm.

Save the Date

Monday 4th December
St John's Smith Square
London SW1

Tickets

available now at
www.sjss.org.uk
or call
020 7222 1061

A range of ticket
prices available
from £45 to £10



Oracle's Vice-President Nigella Lawson reads to the audience



Some of the volunteers on the evening



St John's Smith Square is a stunning concert venue near Westminster



Oracle-funded researchers Eva Crespo-Rodriguez and Dr Malin Pedersen



Former leading racehorse trainer and Oracle Vice-President Jenny Pitman OBE reads a seasonal poem



Chairman Peter Rhys Evans welcomes our Patron, HRH Princess Alexandra to the concert



Acclaimed Royal harpist Claire Jones performing at the concert



Sir Christopher and Lady Lewinton with Peter Rhys Evans

14th “Shark Attack” Charity Golf Day



The infamous inflatable shark



The joining of Oracle and Heads Up was officially announced at the event

Super fundraiser John Hughes held his 14th “Shark Attack” Golf Day in early June at The Wiltshire Golf Club near Wootton Bassett, raising an amazing £9,000. Despite the high winds the sun shone for the fifteen teams and guests had a hugely successful day as their golf balls flew high, thanks to the weather.

At the evening dinner comedian Aaron James entertained everyone with his side-splitting one liners and teased more than £4,000 out of guests during the live auction, the highlight being a river cruise for two which was kindly donated by Imagine Cruising.

John has been raising funds for the Oxford charity Heads Up (see front cover story) following his treatment for head and neck cancer and has become one of its biggest supporters. As well as organising the annual “Shark Attack” golf day, John also turns his hand to tribute nights which have included an Abba night. Those 70’s flares can again be dug out of the wardrobe as on the 29th September John is organising a BeeGees Tribute night at The Wiltshire Golf and Country Club. Tickets cost £30 and include a carvery supper. For information and tickets please email info@sharkattackcharitygolf.com.

We are delighted that John hasn’t retired the shark yet and Shark Attack 2018 will be held on Friday 27th July once again at The Wiltshire Golf Club.



“Beat the Senior” Challenge was a popular fundraiser



Sarah White attempts to get on target at the Shark Attack fundraiser



Organiser and fundraiser John Hughes



Comedian Aaron James and the lucky recipient of a sign won in the raffle

Oracle chosen as beneficiary charity for prestigious awards evening

Oracle was delighted to be selected as beneficiary charity for the prestigious WealthBriefing European Awards which was held in May at the City of London’s Guildhall.

Over 350 guests from Europe’s leading companies from the world of banking and finance attended the event, where Oracle’s Honorary Trustee Professor Kevin Harrington addressed the audience about the charity’s pioneering work developing new head and neck cancer treatments for patients.

More than £5,000 was raised on the night from donations and the silent auction. We are very grateful to ClearView Publishing for selecting Oracle and to our generous supporters for donating the fantastic silent auction prizes on the night and team of volunteers who helped on the night.



The team of volunteers at the event

London Marathon runner Ian smashes his fundraising target



Ian "Bakey" with his mother Margaret at the Marathon

In our Spring 2017 newsletter edition, we published a piece by supporter Ian Mitchell from Dunstable about his marathon running challenge for Oracle.

Ian was preparing to run the London Marathon, arguably the world's most famous race, in aid of Oracle, running in memory of his late stepfather Neil who had passed away from a head and neck cancer just two and a half years earlier.

Oracle is pleased to announce that, on April 23rd, Ian – also known as 'Bakey' – successfully completed his 26.2 mile Marathon challenge cheered on by friends and family. He even made it onto the live television coverage of the event, no mean feat out of 50,000 runners!

What's more, Ian smashed his original £2,500 fundraising target for Oracle, raising a grand total of £6,611.91 for Oracle's head and neck cancer research work.

Ian's mother Margaret said of her son's achievements: 'As Ian's mother I just want say how proud we, both myself and the rest of our family, are of his brilliant fundraising effort for Oracle Cancer Trust. We know only too well how he spent months in training for The London Marathon, sacrificing many a winter evening to run the streets alone. I have no doubt my husband would have been overwhelmed with his stepson's efforts.'

Ian raised his funds for Oracle through donations from friends, family and work colleagues, and through organising his own fundraising events including a race night, quiz night and bucket collection.

Ian said of his challenge: 'I sincerely hope it makes a difference to someone's life. It was an honour and a pleasure representing Oracle. It has truly been an unbelievable experience.'

Oracle would like to thank Ian for his fundraising and awareness-raising efforts for the charity over recent months and to congratulate him again on his marathon challenge.



Margaret with her late husband Neil



Ian even made it to the television coverage of the marathon out of 50,000 runners

"Delightfully Decadent" Isle of Wight dinner dance raises over £3,300



DJ and organiser Tony Martin

On March 18th, charity supporters Nikki Sampson and Tony Martin held a Delightfully Decadent Dinner Dance in aid of Oracle.

Following on from the successful 'Up and Down & All Around with Nigel' walk event in October 2016, this was the second event held in aid of the charity in memory of Nikki's late husband Nigel who sadly passed away in July 2016 after a long battle with head and neck cancer.

The dinner dance, held at Cowes Yacht Haven on the Isle of Wight, began with a game of Heads and Tails followed by a meal, auction and raffle. Guests heard about Oracle's work and Nigel's story before finishing the night on the dance floor enjoying music from local DJ and fundraiser Tony and island band Groove Union.

The evening was a resounding success, raising £3,335 for the charity, and bringing the total fundraising in Nigel's memory to over £4,800.

Oracle is incredibly grateful to Nikki and Tony for their support on this event and for their continued efforts to raise funds and awareness for Oracle's research work.



(L to R) Nikki Sampson with Lynn Lyndsay and Vicki Scovell

Fundraising report

Walk the Test Way 8th October 2017

Walk the Test Way is a firm favourite in Oracle's calendar and is an organised and marshalled walk along the stunning Test Way in Hampshire. Superbly run by the Rotary Club of Romsey, walkers have a choice of five walks to choose from at 5, 8, 11, 16 and 25.5 miles.

All transport, signage and event support is provided for the walk which is covered by the registration fee. Dogs are also most welcome to join walkers.

One of Oracle's walkers, taking part for the third year running, will be four year old Seb (pictured right). Walking five miles last year, Seb is once again taking on the challenge he describes as 'The Long Long Bear Hunt' in memory of his two great grandfathers, both of whom passed away from cancer. Seb's parents, Jamie and Gemma, also walking, describe how- 'As parents, the well-being of future generations should be our legacy; the more we can do to help support the research into this horrible disease the better.'

Seb and his parents are walking as part of "Team Twisted Arm". The team, whose members are walking 99 miles between them, is led by serial Walk the Test Way walker and Oracle Trustee Nicola Ridges-Jones. Why "Team Twisted Arm"? Because many of the walkers have already seen off the challenge on many occasions but have been talked into attending again by Nicola! Oracle continues to be grateful for Nicola's support of this event and her wider support of the charity.

In 2016, Oracle's team of 33 walkers raised over £5,000 and we are looking to beat that target in 2017. If you are interested in joining the team please visit www.walkthetestway.org.uk.



Four year old Seb will once again be taking up the challenge

Oracle Oncologists RideLondon for head and neck cancer



Oncologists Dr Shree Bhide and Professor Kevin Harrington are keen cyclists and are taking up the challenge for Oracle

On 30th July, Oracle Honorary Trustee Professor Kevin Harrington and funded scientist Dr Shree Bhide will be taking on the marathon 100 mile RideLondon cycling challenge for Oracle.

The oncologists will also be joined in the popular cycling challenge by Oxford Registrar Dr Nicholas Rabey along with six other supporters, all taking on the challenge to raise vital funds for Oracle's head and neck cancer research work.

The RideLondon challenge is a 100 mile cycling marathon through the city of London and rolling countryside of Surrey. It is also a former London 2012 Olympic cycling route.

Our Oracle riders will be facing a mixture of flat terrain and steep hill climbs as they test their pedal power over the lengthy route, cheered on by Oracle volunteers.

If you'd like to support Professor Harrington, Dr Bhide or Dr Rabey's efforts then you can donate to their online fundraising pages at:

Dr Shree Bhide
Professor Kevin Harrington
Dr Nicholas Rabey

www.virginmoneygiving.com/shreebhide
www.virginmoneygiving.com/kevinharrington
www.virginmoneygiving.com/churchillheadandneck

You can also find links to our other riders' pages on Oracle's website at oraclecancertrust.org/fundraise/charity-challenges/

If you are interested in volunteering to cheer on our riders on the day of the event or in hearing more about other cycling challenges, please contact Emma at emma@oraclecancertrust.org



The Oracle riders face an Olympic challenge as they tackle the 2012 cycling route through London and Surrey. Pictured is rider Rachel Hesketh in training

Tribute to the late Howard Davies 1945-2016

By Clare Holman

Six months ago I lost my husband to throat cancer and lost my life, as I knew it. Howard Davies was a Husband, Father and Grandfather and a very talented theatre director.



He'd worked at the Royal Shakespeare Company, opened the Donmar Warehouse and for the last twenty five years he'd been an associate director at The National Theatre in London. Landmark productions such as 'The Iceman Cometh' starring Kevin Spacey, 'Flight', 'All My Sons' and 'Les Liasons Dangerous' had earned him justified plaudits. But illness is a great leveller and to me, his wife, and to his family he was just a truly lovely man.

It was two years ago that Howard started having symptoms; a persistent cough, changes in his voice, an obstruction in his throat and eventually earache and weight loss. Our GP forwarded Howard three times on the cancer pathway but sadly he was misdiagnosed all three times. A year later we received the news that he had a tumour in the cricoid area in his oesophagus, stage 3 cancer with traces of cancer in the lymph. He began a gruelling schedule of chemotherapy and radiotherapy at the same time.

It was a torturous path. A quiet man, whose pain threshold was generally very high, was completely floored by the effects of the treatment. It is horribly tough on the body and it can be overwhelming and its grip can be complete. I'm glad to say that now we were on the path of treatment the care was extremely good. The detail and attention on the whole was impressive but I can honestly say seeing someone you love in so much pain is not something you ever forget. Howard fought nobly, battled with the loss of autonomy and wept when after 12 weeks of recuperation he seemed not to be mending as well as he ought and the oncologist informed us that he might have to have a laryngectomy.

To lose his voice was a cruel and bitter irony given his lifelong commitment to expression and communication but we were prepared to do anything to keep him alive. So another biopsy was planned.

Over the next couple of weeks, after 3 visits to A and E with breathing problems, Howard was slowly worn down and he had lost a lot of weight. He told me all he really longed for at this point was to be able to eat a Parma ham, mozzarella, tomato and basil salad. He had not eaten anything for about six months and was being fed via a tube in his stomach. I know how much he longed to sit down and have a meal with me, to chat as we always had about everything and anything. I missed it too. Finally he was admitted to hospital with what was potentially a bout of pneumonia. The day was Thursday the 20th of October 2016.

Howard had had his biopsy two weeks before to see just exactly what was going on and we were due to get the results of this biopsy on the 21st of October, Friday. I sat with him at that meeting as tears dripped down his face. His surgeon told him that the cancer had gone, but that he would need a spell in hospital to get him back on track.

We had an ecstatic couple of days. We laughed a lot and discussed what we might do for Christmas. Suddenly we had our life back. On Monday I took a day off but on Tuesday the 25th of October at 6.30 in the morning the hospital called me to say they were trying to resuscitate Howard. At 7 o'clock, driving to the hospital and shaking like a leaf, they rang me to tell me that Howard was dead.



His carotid artery had burst; he had had a massive haemorrhage and died very swiftly. The structure inside his throat had been destroyed by the radiotherapy. The battle was over.

Now six months later I want to help others. Oracle seems to me the best place to try and do what I can to help those to speak up and speak out. Research for earlier diagnosis being a priority but to help with any aspect of head and neck cancer, which is a growing concern. Somehow this cancer feels so personal and is often so visible. Your face your voice. Also I want to encourage people not to be afraid to talk about worrying signs if they have them, to be persistent if they know something is wrong. I have bequeathed some money to Oracle hoping it will help to tackle this specific cancer and in the hope I can help fund more research.

Howard, to my mind, was a modest man despite all his success, a thoughtful man. While we were going through his treatment and seeing others in far worse situations than Howard's we acknowledged to each other the strength of the human spirit and just how much kindness and courage people had in the face of illness.

We were all battling the same thing together with dignity and courage... Cancer. I hope my small contribution can help to make a difference.

The whole team at Oracle Cancer Trust wish to express their gratitude to Clare Holman for writing this moving tribute to her late husband, Howard and for her invaluable support of Oracle Cancer Trust.

Dietary and lifestyle measures to prevent disease

Dietitian Sarah Ballis presents the latest statistics and how dietary and lifestyle measures can improve long term prospects for patients



Head and neck cancers are still considered to be rare and complex to treat.

Like many types of cancer, the incidence of head and neck cancer is on the rise, with a rapid increase in diagnoses observed over the past three decades.

The rate of increase in incidence (approximately 30%) has been higher in women than in men, with the most common sites of head and neck tumours being the larynx, followed by tonsil and then base of tongue.

Just under 11,500 people in the United Kingdom are diagnosed with a head and neck cancer each year which, as a proportion of the 350,000 new cancer cases nationally, accounts for about 3% of all cases.

In the UK, there are around 2.5 million people currently who have had a diagnosis of cancer. Earlier detection alongside improvements in surgical and radiotherapy techniques, better targeted chemotherapies and scientific advancements like immune therapy, have profoundly improved survival, such that people are living longer after cancer than ever before.

Survivorship

In recent years, the term survivorship has been accepted as a description of the experience and common issues regarding the health and life of a person with cancer throughout the continuum of care.

That is: from diagnosis to treatment, into remission and beyond through the rest of their life. This term survivorship encourages mindfulness of life beyond cancer and encourages clinicians to implement cancer preventing diet and lifestyle strategies as soon as possible, to minimise and mitigate long-term and late side-effects and other health conditions. This is particularly important to the head and neck group who experience significant effects from their disease and treatment.

They may experience long-term physical effects like dry mouth, swallowing disorders, shoulder dysfunction, jaw and throat tightness and also feel uncertainty about the future, have a fear of the cancer coming back, experience post-treatment anxiety, social challenges or financial hardship.

Head and neck cancer risk factors

- ➔ 90% cases associated with lifestyle factors
- ➔ 30% cases due to alcohol consumption
- ➔ 75% from cigarette and marijuana use
- ➔ Chewing betel nuts or paan
- ➔ Exposure to the HPV virus
- ➔ New research is showing that over 50% of cases of head and neck cancer in the UK may be associated with eating too few fruit and vegetables

They are at higher risk of further malignancies and may be faced with late side-effects presenting many years after treatment, including restricted jaw opening, hearing loss, bone disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, blood vessel narrowing or lung fibrosis.

More than 60% of people treated for head and neck cancer are alive 10 years after treatment.



Highlighting the lifestyle factors at play in the development cancer is never intended to imply blame or guilt on survivors, but rather encourages evidence-based guidance about positive lifestyle change to be offered by professionals when the majority of patients still seek information from the media and online.

Head and neck cancer survivorship

Reducing new and recurrent cancers

Having had a diagnosis of head and neck cancer increases the risk of another head and neck cancer by as much as 16%. 23% of head and neck survivors will go on to develop a non-head and neck related primary cancer like oesophagus or lung, probably due to the shared lifestyle and environmental risk factors which lead to the initial disease.

It is not uncommon to develop a mouth cancer some years after treatment for an oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma, lung cancer or cervical cancer. The risk of larynx cancer is also much more common in survivors of lung, oesophageal, bladder and cervical cancers.

People who continue to drink alcohol after upper aerodigestive tract cancer treatment have a 2.2 times greater risk of mouth, pharynx and larynx cancer, with the least risk in people who drink the least alcohol.

Both nutrition and physical activity have important roles to play and, while there are many fear factors promoted by commercial enterprises like organic farmers, vitamin and mineral suppliers and alternative health practitioners, there are some key evidence-based dietary and lifestyle factors that are proven to impart significant cancer protective effects which will be discussed below.

Smoking cessation

Smoking is the main avoidable risk factor for head and neck cancer and the leading cause of HPV negative disease.



Tobacco smoking is classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as a definite cause of mouth, nasopharynx and throat cancers. More than 65% of oral cancers and 79% of laryngeal cancers are caused by smoking.

It is the combination of tobacco with alcohol which appears to carry the highest risk when it comes to head and neck cancer, with risk almost tripled in alcohol drinkers who smoke tobacco.

Around four years after stopping smoking head and neck cancer risk begins to decline. By 20 years an ex-smoker the risk of mouth and pharyngeal cancer reduces to that of a never smoker. The risk of laryngeal cancers however remains higher for a much longer period of time after quitting.

Increasing fruit and vegetable intake

A diet high in fresh (not salted or pickled) fruit and non-starchy vegetables, especially containing carotenoids, has been described by the IARC as 'probably protective against mouth cancer'.

Carotenoids, such as beta-carotene, are antioxidants that give the orange and dark green colour to foods like carrots, sweet potatoes, berries, tomatoes, spinach and kale.

In general, a mainly plant-based diet is thought to be strongly protective against overall cancer risk with increasing protective benefit from taking as many as ten portions or 800g of fruit and vegetables per day.



When chewing and swallowing difficulties remains an issue whole juicing (retaining the pulp) or blending fruits and vegetables into a puree is an acceptable alternative. This can add variety and may even improve the absorption of some nutrients.

Frozen foods are also useful and highly nutritious when fresh fruit and vegetables are not available. These are often picked ripe and quickly frozen retaining a high nutritional content.

Reducing meat consumption

Following a diet high in processed meat, such as sausages, bacon, and luncheon meats carries a higher risk of larynx cancer. Larynx cancers also appear to be more common in people consuming a high fat diet. Red meats that have been processed and salt cured have been under the spotlight for some in relation to their link with cancers of the colon.

Keeping these foods to a minimum and limiting overall red meat intake to one portion per week is advisable. Fish, chicken, soy, lentils, chickpeas and nuts are all suitable high protein alternatives to be eaten often.

Choosing cooking methods which avoid the need for high temperature cooking and charring is also advisable.

Head and neck cancer survivorship

Minimal to no alcohol intake

Many studies have found a link between alcohol and seven types of cancer: mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, breast and colon. People who drink 50g of ethanol per day (around 3 standard drinks) have a 2-3 fold increased risk of head and neck cancer compared to non-drinkers. The IARC lists alcohol as a cause of tumours in the mouth, pharynx and larynx. The American Cancer Society says there is a 'substantial' risk of developing second primary head and neck cancers in people who continue to drink alcohol after treatment.



The UK Department of Health released new advice in 2016 which suggests that there is actually no safe level of alcohol intake. In order to achieve a state of 'low risk drinking', men and women alike should consume no more than 14 units of alcohol per week.

Regular physical activity

The American Cancer Society advises that people should avoid inactivity and return to normal activity as soon as possible after a diagnosis of cancer. This includes during cancer treatment. At least 20 prospective observational studies have shown that physically active cancer survivors have an overall lower risk of cancer recurrences and improved survival compared to those who are inactive.

Oral and pharyngeal cancer risk is up to 40% lower in people who do moderate to high levels of physical activity, especially men. The evidence-based recommendation is to engage in 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week, plus strength training twice per week.



Avoiding overweight and obesity

Being overweight appears to have no effect on incidence or recurrence rates of head and neck cancers. However, being overweight is associated with a number of other cancer types including colon and oesophageal cancer. Maintaining a body mass index of less than 28 kg/m² is strongly associated with improved health, and weight loss of between 5% and 10% body weight in overweight individuals can have profound health benefits.

In summary, minimising alcohol, avoiding tobacco and following a diet high in fruit and vegetables, low in processed meat and low in total fat is key to reducing cancer risk. When these dietary recommendations are adhered to alongside a lifestyle which incorporates daily walking, the risk of new or recurrent cancer is the lowest it can be.

Sarah Ballis is a senior dietitian who specialises in the management of cancer, mainly of the head and neck. Since 2013 her role at The Harley Street Clinic has been to provide dietetic care to people undergoing radiotherapy, chemotherapy, surgery or all three cancer treatment modalities.

The fully private highly skilled multidisciplinary team to which she belongs is made up from clinicians who bring extensive experience from NHS backgrounds, and work to the same evidence-based recommendations and guidelines adhered to by the NHS. Prior to this Sarah worked with patients undergoing surgery for head and neck cancer at St George's Hospital NHS Trust.

Health promotion and delivering health improvement and education programmes is a key interest of Sarah's and a vocation she continues to study at post-graduate level at The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine via a Master of Public Health.

She is also establishing a consultancy called Sound Bites to offer personalised dietary and lifestyle advice pre or post-cancer treatment. She can be contacted at sarahballis@hotmail.com.

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Our supporters

Message from our Head of Fundraising, Emma Colliver

I am privileged to be entering my second year as Head of Fundraising at Oracle Cancer Trust. It has been a pleasure to get to know the charity's staff, volunteers, researchers and supporters over the past twelve months, each and every one so passionate about improving prospects for head and neck cancer patients.

Oracle's role funding early stage research is so important if we are going to make the groundbreaking discoveries which can lead to new treatments for patients. Yet despite this Oracle receives no government funding and is reliant on the support of donors and fundraisers to carry out its vital work.

Thank you to everyone who has chosen to donate to the charity over the last twelve months. The charity is grateful to anyone who is willing to make a gift of any size towards our work; every donation makes a difference.

Alongside the generous support we have continued to receive from individual donors and fundraisers, just some of whom you can read about in this newsletter, it has been a privilege for me to support Oracle in developing and forming new partnerships with Corporates and Trusts & Foundations who are willing to support our charity's work.

I look forward to the year ahead and to helping the charity to develop its partnerships with donors and fundraisers, new and old.

Emma Colliver
Head of Fundraising



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Fundraise

From cycle rides, skydives, running marathons to hosting a quiz night or a bake sale, there are lots of fun ways to raise money with friends, family and work colleagues to support our work. Oracle receives no government funding and relies on the generosity of fundraisers to continue our valuable work funding pioneering research projects.

If you have a fundraising idea, do get in touch with us at fundraising@oraclecancertrust.org or visit our website where you can download our fundraising guide as well as other useful tips and resources at www.oraclecancertrust.org/fundraise

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Online

You can now make a one-off donation or set up a regular donation directly via our website at www.oraclecancertrust.org/donate

Regular Giving

By becoming a regular donor you can help ensure that Oracle's research programmes get the funding they need to make advances in finding newer and kinder treatments for head and neck cancer. A direct debit form can be downloaded via Oracle's website at www.oraclecancertrust.org/donate

Become an Individual or Corporate Partner

Oracle is looking to create mutually beneficial partnerships with companies who would like to support our pioneering cancer research work, a cause about which everyone can feel passionate. Pledge to fundraise for the charity and in return we would look to offer you bespoke fundraising support, volunteering opportunities and events invitations. We will work with your organisation to offer dedicated support throughout any partnership activity and to keep you up to date with the charity's pioneering research work so that you can understand the impact of your fundraising.

Contact Emma at emma@oraclecancertrust.org for more information or visit oraclecancertrust.org/fundraise/become-a-corporate-partner

Support our Events in 2017

Thursday 28th September, Annual Golf Day, Burhill Golf Club, 10am start

£550 fourball team, £140 single player. Our ninth annual golf day is a day for all levels of golfers to enjoy a great day's golf at one of the UK's leading courses. The day includes breakfast, golf on the Old Course, a three-course lunch and entertainment with the hilarious Aaron James. A must for all golfers of all standards.

Tuesday 10th October, Annual Research Event, Grange City Hotel London EC3

A free supporter event to hear the latest innovations in head and neck cancer research from Oracle's funded project leaders. Buffet and refreshments will be served. An informal opportunity to meet the whole team behind the research projects.

Monday 4th December, The Glory of Christmas, St John's Smith Square, SW1

The highlight of our year and a wonderful start to the festive season, our 12th Christmas concert is once again taking place at the beautiful concert venue of St John's Smith Square. With music by Thames Chamber Orchestra featuring popular classics as well as festive carols and readings, our much-loved celebration concert is an evening for all music lovers.

For further information please email us at events@oraclecancertrust.org or visit www.oraclecancertrust.org/events



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Leading research into head and neck cancer

