

SpeakOut

The newsletter of Oracle Cancer Trust



LEADING RESEARCH INTO HEAD AND NECK CANCER

AUTUMN 2021

Immunotherapy combination could be alternative to 'extreme' chemotherapy in some head and neck cancers

A major phase III trial has discovered some patients could be spared 'extreme' chemotherapy in favour of combination immunotherapy

Immunotherapies 'nivolumab' and 'ipilimumab' helped some patients with advanced head and neck cancer live longer, compared with 'extreme' standard treatment consisting of an aggressive cocktail of two chemotherapy drugs and a targeted antibody treatment.

The results were not statistically significant, but the immunotherapy combination, designed to spark the immune system into action against cancer, led to a positive trend in survival when compared to the 'extreme' standard in a group of patients - those with tumours that had high levels of an immune marker called PD-L1.

Around 12,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with head and neck cancer and many will be diagnosed at advanced stages. There is an urgent need for better, kinder treatments for these patients than the current standard of care.

Patients who received the immunotherapy combination and had tumours with high levels of PD-L1 lived an average of three months longer than those who received 'extreme' chemotherapy. The median overall survival for these patients was 17.6 months - the highest average ever reported in this group of patients. Immunotherapy is also a much kinder treatment option than 'extreme' chemotherapy, which comes along side effects such as nausea, pain, appetite loss, tiredness and breathing problems.

A different trial known as CheckMate 141, led by researchers at The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) and The Royal Marsden, showed the effectiveness of nivolumab alone in head and neck cancer and led to the approval of the immunotherapy by the US Food and Drug Administration and the European Medicines Agency back in 2016.

Researchers hope that future findings from the current CheckMate 651 trial will demonstrate further benefits of the new combination in patients with advanced head and neck cancer.

Professor Kevin Harrington, Professor of Biological Cancer Therapies at The Institute of Cancer Research, London, and Consultant Clinical

Oncologist at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, who was involved in the CheckMate 651 trial, said:

"Our findings point towards a positive trend in survival when using a new immunotherapy combination for patients with head and neck cancer whose tumours are positive for the PD-L1 immune marker. In this group of patients, combining the immunotherapies nivolumab and ipilimumab could be a better option than the standard 'extreme' treatment, especially as it has fewer side effects.

After Barry Ambrose, 77, was diagnosed with throat cancer in 2017, which had also spread to his lungs, he was told by his local hospital palliative care was his only option. Barry was then given a second opinion at The Royal Marsden and joined the Checkmate 651 trial in August 2017, which caused the tumour in his throat to completely disappear. He stayed on the trial for almost two years and, as the cancer had started to progress, his treatment switched to chemotherapy followed by surgery. He said:

"When I was told about the trial by Professor Harrington, I didn't hesitate to join - what did I have to lose? It turned out to be a lifeline. Although I had to make bi-weekly trips from Suffolk to the hospital for the treatment, I had virtually no side effects and was able to carry on as normal doing the things I love - sailing, cycling, and spending time with my family. When the research nurses called to tell me that, after two months, the tumour in my throat had completely disappeared, it was an amazing moment.

"While there was still disease in my lungs at that point, the effect was staggering. In fact, I was doing so well on the trial I was allowed to pause it in November 2018 to go on a Caribbean cruise with my wife. I'm so fortunate they've continued to find treatment that works for me - they're the gift that keeps on giving."

Oracle Cancer Trust is funding several new immunotherapy projects at The ICR under the supervision of Prof Kevin Harrington. This new generation of immunotherapy treatments can bring significant benefits to patients sparing them some of the difficult side effects of chemotherapy and offers a real opportunity to offer personalised treatments to patients with head and neck cancer.



Team Move4Mikey raise an incredible £28,000



Our 16th Glory of Christmas concert is back this December



Tribute to Charlie Watts of The Rolling Stones



Welcome to our new Voluntary CEO

Tamara Kahn joins Oracle as new CEO

We are delighted to welcome Tamara Kahn as Oracle's new CEO. Tamara takes over from Nicola Ridges-Jones who remains as Trustee of the charity.

"I'm really pleased to be appointed as CEO of one of the leading charities dedicated to accelerating the understanding and awareness of head and neck cancers. I really think that Oracle Cancer Trust's history of funding high potential medical research projects is remarkable and I hope that we can continue to fund key diagnosis and treatment research projects. I also think that there is an opportunity for us to do more to bring together the patient, research and medical communities and to raise awareness of diagnosis and best practice treatment options.

"As a daughter and cousin of head and neck cancer survivors and wife to an ENT surgeon I know how challenging and important Oracle's work is. It has been a very difficult two years for the charity but by working closely with our community I am sure we can both better understand their needs and raise critically needed funds."

Tamara joins Oracle with more than 25 years experience in both commercial and not-for-profit organisations in the UK and the US. She previously held leadership roles as Executive Director at the International Compliance Association, Chief Operating Officer at Science Group Plc, Chief Executive at Localgiving.com and Managing Director at Microgen Plc. She has an MBA from INSEAD and a BA in International Relations from UCLA.



Tamara is passionate about making a positive difference with Oracle Cancer Trust and is hoping to have the opportunity to meet with our wider head and neck cancer community, including supporters, scientists, partners, other charities and support organisations helping head and neck cancer patients, medical practitioners and corporate partners. She would be delighted to meet if you have time so please get in touch.

Says outgoing voluntary CEO, Nicola Ridges-Jones, "I'm delighted that Tamara has joined Oracle to help take the charity forward in what's been a very challenging time. I will still very much be involved with the charity in my role as Trustee."

If you'd like to get in touch with Tamara please don't hesitate to send an email to ceo@oraclecancertrust.org.

Contact details:

If you would like to get in touch with any member of the team here's how you can contact us:

Tel: 020 3875 8991
info@oraclecancertrust.org
www.oraclecancertrust.org

Please note if you wish to telephone us we have a 24-hour answering service in place and messages are forwarded straightaway.

Tamara Kahn, CEO - ceo@oraclecancertrust.org
Sarah Bender, Head of Marketing and Operations - sarah@oraclecancertrust.org
Teresa Forgione, Head of Fundraising, Teresa Forgione - teresa@oraclecancertrust.org
Sally Elder, Administration - sally@oraclecancertrust.org

LOWE Works
14-16 Peterborough Road
London SW6 3BN



Head and neck cancer in the news

NHS launches the Galleri™ patient study in the UK following successful US trial

Oracle Cancer Trust is hugely supportive of the NHS Galleri™ multi-cancer screening trial launched in September by NHS England. Recent trials in the US promisingly showed that just under 90% of cancers of the head and neck were detectable before any symptoms appeared. The test was also extremely effective at finding bowel, lung and pancreatic cancers which are typically difficult to diagnose early.



The Galleri™ trial involves 140,000 volunteers aged between 50 to 77 years in the UK having blood samples taken at mobile testing clinics. The simple test checks for the earliest signs of cancer in the blood and could mark the beginning of a revolution in cancer detection giving patients the best possible chance of survival. Letters are being sent to people from different backgrounds and ethnicities who haven't had a cancer diagnosis within the last three years in selected trial areas.

The test works by finding chemical changes in fragments of genetic code – cell-free DNA (cfDNA) – that leak from tumours into the bloodstream. Some tumours are known to shed DNA into the blood long before people experience symptoms. Initial results of the study are expected by 2023 and, if successful, NHS England plans to extend the rollout to a further one million people in 2024 and 2025.

Patients whose cancer is found early – known as stage one or two – typically have a broader range of treatment options available to them, which can be curative and are often less aggressive. A patient whose cancer is diagnosed at the earliest stage typically has between five and 10 times the chance of surviving compared with those found at 'stage four.'

The Galleri™ test doesn't detect all cancers and won't replace current NHS screening programmes such as those for breast, cervical and bowel cancer.

Tamara Kahn, Oracle's CEO said, "The Galleri™ trial is hugely promising, particularly in the early detection of head and neck cancer. Oracle Cancer Trust has been at the forefront of funding early-stage research to drive new treatment innovations for what is a very complex group of cancers that are often diagnosed at a late stage. We look forward to hearing results of the trial."

Oracle supports HPV booklet for World Sexual Health Day

- * 31% of people report having never heard of HPV
- * 41% of people report having a poor understanding of HPV
- * One in five (19%) know it causes throat cancer

In contrast, more than half of the people surveyed (57%) knew that HPV was a risk factor in cervical cancer development.

Three in ten (31%) adults have never heard of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and 41% have a poor understanding of it, as found by a recent online survey conducted by YouGov.

Awareness of who HPV affects and what diseases it can cause was also shockingly low, with about a quarter of people (23%) saying that they don't know who HPV affects and only one in five (19%) aware that it can cause anal and throat cancers.

Unfortunately, sometimes HPV doesn't get cleared from the body and can lead to genital warts, head and neck, cervical, vaginal, vulval, anal or penile cancer.

All children aged 12-13 are currently offered a vaccine to protect against four key strains of HPV, including two 'high-risk' cancer causing strains, HPV 16 and 18.

People with a cervix are also eligible for cervical screening on the NHS aged 25 – 60. When they receive their results, they will be told whether or not they have HPV in a letter and a HPV positive result raises a lot of anxiety and questions.

There are many myths surrounding HPV – for example that a condom offers full protection against it. There is also stigma and shame that surrounds the virus being a sexually transmitted infection which can prevent people taking measures to protect their health.

To mark World Sexual Health Day, gynaecological charity The Eve Appeal launched a thorough and inclusive guide to HPV for everyone aged 16+ to dispel the myths and stigma, raise awareness of the virus, explain ways to prevent it, and bust some of the many myths and stigmas surrounding this commonly occurring virus. Oracle Cancer Trust supported this booklet with content for the risks associated with head and neck cancer and we are grateful to former patient supporter and HPV campaigner Steve Bergman for sharing his story.

The guide can be downloaded at www.oraclecancertrust.org/news



Charity golf day finally goes ahead at Goodwood Golf in May raising over £8,500

With COVID restrictions changing quickly the team were relieved to finally be able to host our postponed Annual Charity Golf Day and welcome 18 teams to the stunning Goodwood Estate. COVID restrictions provided logistical challenges to ensure the event could go ahead safely and after a lot of careful planning even the weather decided to co-operate.

We were delighted to welcome sponsors EightOne Power Drinks who provided gift bags for our golfers keeping them hydrated and energised for their round on the challenging Downs Course.

To support fundraising on the day we held a raffle and online silent auction to bid on a range of wonderful prizes donated to Oracle.

Several competitions were held on the day and due to COVID rules at the time we were unable to host formal prizegiving so we reverted to hosting an online prizegiving ceremony where we also shared some more entertaining footage from the day thanks to on-course videographer Jim White.

Oracle's golf day was the first event that Goodwood Golf had hosted in several months and the venue provided a memorable day for all our guests. But as with all golf days it was down to the business of prizes and winning! Competition was tight during the day and the Goodwood Golf live scoring app kept golfers guessing at the ever changing leaderboard.

Winner of the Derek Lucie-Smith Memorial Trophy awarded to the best individual score went to Fruit Boys Team Member Mark Redfern who finishing on a score of 40 points.



Team winners "The Fruit Boys" Paul Beaumont, Mark Reddish, Mark Redfern and Simon Alltridge finishing on a score of 86 points



Runners up "The Prophets" Michael Elliott, Jane Elliott, David Jamieson and Penny Jamieson finishing on 85 points



Third placed team "The Cowdray Cowboys" Peter Rhys Evans, Andrew Rhys Evans, Bill Peach, Matt Knell on a score of 82 points



Join us for our 16th Glory of Christmas Concert this December

We're delighted to announce that our much-loved Christmas concert returns this December at our new venue of **St Paul's Knightsbridge** on **Wednesday 8th December 2021** at 7pm. Celebrate the start to the festive season with a candlelit evening of seasonal carols, music and celebrity readings and join together with friends of the head and neck cancer community, along with the teams of Dr's, nurses, cancer researchers and support staff dedicated to caring for head and neck cancer patients. For those joining us at St Paul's Knightsbridge we will be hosting a drinks reception following the concert where we can toast the start to the festive season and meet new friends and old.

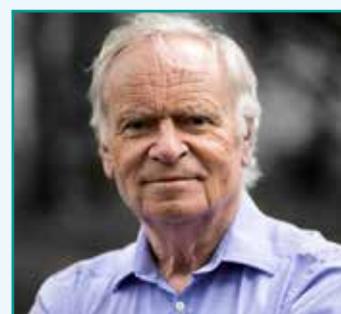
Our Patron, Sir Michael Morpurgo will be performing at the concert alongside the Choir of St Paul's Knightsbridge as well as Jeffrey Archer. We are delighted to announce that harpist Les Magee will be performing and will be shortly announcing other artists for the evening's programme.

If you're not able to join us at St Paul's for the evening join us online for the event which will be livestreamed from the church. Full details on how to buy tickets can be found on our website **www.oraclecancertrust.org** - where you'll see a direct link on our homepage for tickets. Tickets are priced £30 each or £20 per household to watch live at home.

St Paul's Knightsbridge is a very spacious and accessible venue with a mezzanine level and there is plenty of seating for guests to allow for social distancing. For the comfort and safety of guests we will be also requesting guests have an up to date NHS COVID pass available. Parking is free in the local area in chargeable parking bays after 6.30pm and the venue is outside of the congestion zone. The church is also a short walk from Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner underground stations and there are also lots of fabulous restaurants, pubs and cafes in the locality. Do let us know if you'd like any recommendations.



St Paul's Knightsbridge is one of London's most beautiful Victorian churches



Jeffrey Archer will be joining us for the concert and reading a special poem



Come and join us for an evening of candlelit carols, music, readings and friendship and the beautiful church of St Paul's Knightsbridge



Our Patron, Sir Michael Morpurgo will be performing for us once again and is busy working on his piece for this year's concert

Tickets now on sale
£30 each or £20 per
household to watch at
home.

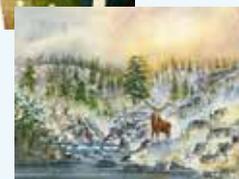
Visit our website
oraclecancertrust.org
or scan the QR code
below on your phone.



Oracle Christmas Cards on sale now

Following our Christmas card design competition our independent judging panel chose four designs now available to buy this Christmas in support of Oracle. The cards, in packs of eight are £6.99 (excluding P&P) and can be purchased online at our website at: **oraclecancertrust.org/shop**

Thanks to everyone who sent in entries and designers Katie Jones, Fee Doubleday and Brian Madden whose designs, exclusive to Oracle Cancer Trust, were chosen.



“Move4Mikey” raise an incredible £28,700 in memory of Michael Gillespie



The Mikey to Morlich team arrive after a marathon 138 miles

Following the incredible fundraising success in 2020 in memory of Michael “Mikey” Gillespie, family and friends joined together in August for a two-week campaign encouraging everyone to join together and “Move4Mikey”. The result was raising £28,700 attracting TV and press coverage. Their fundraising also caught the attention of the Scottish Parliament where MSP Monica Lennon congratulated the family and friends for their incredible fundraising effort whilst raising vital awareness about head and neck cancer.

“Move4Mikey” teams took on challenges including canoeing, running, cycling and a marathon 54 holes of golf. Two younger challengers, Max and Sam ran 5kms receiving a headmasters commendations for their efforts. And, on the 14th August, 11 cyclists set out from Mikey’s resting place at Eastfield Cemetery in Cumbernauld riding 138 miles to one of Mikey’s favourite holiday spots, Loch Morlich. Friends and family laid on rest stops along the way providing refreshments and snacks with budding chefs providing energy balls and cakes to keep the cyclists’ spirits up for the mammoth ride.



These hardy golfers played a marathon 54 holes at Dullator Golf Club

Michael, 45 died on August 4th 2019 undergoing countless operations and treatments that were unable to save him. Michael first went to the Dr with an ulcer that wouldn’t heal and was sent away and told it would get better. The ulcer persisted and it was only when he saw another GP and was referred for tests that he received the shattering diagnosis of buccal mucosa cancer (cancer of the inner cheek). A fit and healthy non-smoker the family accepted the news as sheer bad luck. A ten-hour operation followed removing a large section of Michael’s tongue followed by a reconstruction using tissue from his arm.

Sadly in just a few short months the cancer returned with Michael undergoing chemotherapy, further extensive surgery and radiotherapy. Michael was also offered immunotherapy but the treatment was unsuccessful and his condition deteriorated quickly.

Says Michael’s wife, Suzy, “Michael was the strongest and most admirable man - he was also my best friend. He was always positive and after every hurdle he faced he was hit by another - but in the face of adversity he always remained so upbeat. Mikey will be forever missed and never forgotten by us all. I cannot thank family and friends enough for joining together and raising such a phenomenal sum for head and neck cancer, especially my brother-in-law Darren, the driving force behind Move4Mikey.”

What is Buccal Mucosa cancer?

Buccal mucosa cancer is a type of head and neck cancer that begins when the cells that make up the inner cheek grow out of control and form lesions or tumours (squamous cell carcinoma). Buccal mucosa is another name of the inside lining of the cheeks. This type of cancer more common in men and risk factors include tobacco use and alcohol.

In the early stages there are no symptoms but as the cancer advances symptoms include:

- ⚠ White or red lump in the mouth that does not go away after two weeks
- ⚠ A red, raised patch in the mouth that bleeds easily
- ⚠ A lump or thickening in the mouth
- ⚠ Pain when eating or drinking
- ⚠ Soreness or a feeling that something is caught in the throat
- ⚠ Difficulty chewing or swallowing
- ⚠ Severe ear pain
- ⚠ Difficulty moving the jaw or tongue
- ⚠ Hoarseness
- ⚠ Numbness of the tongue or other areas of the mouth
- ⚠ Dentures fit poorly or become uncomfortable because the jaw is swollen

It’s vital that you visit a dentist or GP if you have any symptoms you’re not sure about - and if you’re still concerned, do seek a second opinion.



A day out in Glasgow for “Mikey’s Mural Melee”



Munch4Mikey cupcakes courtesy of GS Bakes

Best friends complete 210 mile week-long trek raising over £12,500

Friends Lucia Holden and Willa Barham, both 24, started their trek in August in Brentford, London, plotting out a route to Lucia's home in Shropshire which they estimated would take a week to complete. Lucia was walking in memory of her beloved father "Dada" Robert Holden who died suddenly in September 2014 at the age of 58. Robert was a major figure in the art world responsible for brokering the sale of artwork worth millions of pounds.

After a tiring eight days and 210 miles later the jubilant duo completed their amazing trek at 10pm on Tuesday August 24th to a rousing welcome from family, friends and neighbours from the village of Sibdon Cawood near Craven Arms in Shropshire. Twin brother Hubert illuminated the final approach home before the family enjoying a slap up meal of roast chicken and a few glasses of rose wine.

Lucia said "Having survived throat cancer twice, once before myself and my twin were born, and again for the second time when we were nine months old it was extremely sad to lose Dada to a heart attack. But we were grateful to have him for as long as we did after so many health problems, with cancer being the largest.

"We were the least sporting and lazy people before taking on the walk and people were amazed we even considered taking this challenge on. During the walk our knees ached and Willa suffered badly with blisters. On one particularly tough day we walked 37 miles, clocking up 80,000 steps finishing well after dark."

"What was really touching and overwhelming was meeting complete strangers who wanted to know what we were doing and who then went on to donate and support our walk. Oracle Cancer Trust is a cause very close to our family. Peter Rhys Evans looked after my father and was a constant support to us during his treatment. This walk was to share our gratitude for all the vital research work Oracle is doing for head and neck cancer and to help raise awareness about the signs and symptoms."



Sam Hagans takes on the Brighton Marathon raising over £6,500

"I signed up in late 2019 to run the Brighton Marathon in April 2020 and after being postponed twice in early September I finally put on my running shoes and headed to Brighton to run alongside 12,000 keen runners on a beautiful late Summers day.

"My father encouraged me to take up running a few years ago - he was a keen competitive runner completing several marathons and triathlons. As I started out, he jokingly told me not to talk to him about running unless I could run 10k in under 50 minutes. I had to prove him wrong and that's how I ended up signing up for the Brighton Marathon.

"We'd planned for my father to come and support me and whilst I knew I'd never even come close to his marathon best time of 3hrs 11, I had it in my mind that a sub four hour finish would be a respectable result for me, and one I felt dad would be proud of.

"Tragically in February this year my father (pictured below right) died from a rare type of throat cancer. Dad's death made me even more determined to do the marathon and to run in his memory but more importantly raise sponsorship and awareness for Oracle and the fantastic work that they do.

"Completing the marathon was a great personal achievement for me and knew that had dad been here to watch me he'd have been proud to watch me cross the finishing line. I'm keeping up with training and hope to be able to take part in next year's London Marathon for Oracle."



Supporter fundraising

Katie runs in memory of her mother



"In January of 2020 I lost my mother to head and neck cancer (HNC). Despite my Mum's cancer having been identified at Stage 1 the treatments and tests were simply not available to save her.

"Shortly after losing Mum I committed to raising money towards research for the

development of new and kinder treatments for HNC in the hope that others may be more lucky than she was.

"Those of you who know me know I am mad enough to do shorter distance triathlons for "fun". Therefore I felt I had to sign up to something truly unpleasant to get your donations... On July the 4th I took part in a gruelling event consisting of a 1.2 Mile Swim, 56 Mile Bike and then a 13.1 Mile Run raising over £3,000 for Oracle Cancer Trust.

Tim completes his 21st Triathlon

Congratulations to Tim Hammett for completing his 21st triathlon! On the 11th July Tim completed the Henley Sprint Triathlon with a 400m swim, 25k bike ride and 5k run raising over £1,000 to support Oracle's pioneering cancer research.



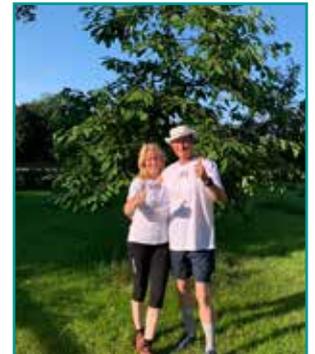
Says Tim, "I support Oracle as I lost a good friend and colleague twenty years ago to head and neck cancer. He was a patient of Peter Rhys Evans, and I was really taken by Peter's approach and dedication to discovering newer treatments for head and neck cancer.

"More recently I lost one of my brothers to throat cancer which made the cause even more important to me. I have previously completed the Windsor Triathlon and cycled London to Paris to raise money for Oracle as well as joining most golf days, but in my 63rd year I think I may settle for golf in future!"

Jon marks his ten year treatment milestone by running the Badminton half-marathon

"Ten years ago I was diagnosed with throat cancer and am forever grateful for the incredible treatment I received.

"To mark my ten years treatment anniversary my partner Rose and I decided to celebrate by tackling a half marathon to support the incredible work of Oracle Cancer Trust.



"My natural habitat is the couch or sitting on the back of a horse and this is by far the furthest I ever run. The Badminton Estate was a beautiful setting and the run finished in front of the Badminton House. My partner Rose said I didn't complain once, and we completed the course in two-hours 31 minutes which included an extra 2km. In all I raised just over £1,600."

Head and neck cancer nurse Alex completes 88km "Race to the Stones"



When head and neck cancer nurse Alex isn't working at the busy Blenheim Head and Neck Centre in Oxford she enjoys her passion of fitness, in particular running marathons.

"Completing not one but two marathons in one event seemed crazy - but I'm over the moon! Despite not finishing the full 100kms and having to stop short at 88kms due to dehydration it was an incredible experience.

"Running the Ridgway was without doubt the most challenging experience of my life. But doing it to support Oracle Cancer Trust made it all worthwhile. Nursing patients diagnosed with head and neck cancer gives you a real insight into just how debilitating the disease is. During the run I thought of these patients and their experiences which gave me the strength to keep going.

This was my first ultramarathon experience and I'm already looking into more challenges to support Oracle and it's pioneering research work. I would also like to thank everyone who donated to support me raising over £1,000."

Supporter fundraising

Thank you to “Team Oracle” our London Marathon Runners

On a perfect Autumn day our four marathon enthusiasts lined up with over 40,000 runners to take part in the iconic London Marathon between them raising over £11,000 for Oracle. The conditions were perfect on the day and Oracle were there on the day to cheer our runners on - here's what they had to say about their marathon experience:



Dr Patrick Elder

“I have had first-hand experience at work of the devastating impact of head and neck cancer on patients, both in relation to the cancer itself and its treatment, which can be disfiguring and can destroy their quality of life.

“The surgery required is often long and complex, resulting in an intensive care stay, and some patients end up unable to eat, or even speak. I am delighted to be able to support a charity that is doing such fantastic work to improve the outcomes for these patients. This conditions at this year's marathon were perfect and the fantastic support from Oracle cheering me on made all the difference!” Thank you Patrick for running for Oracle raising over £700.



Dr Stephen Salt

Stephen had a rather difficult lead up to the marathon injuring his foot that resulted in a trip to A&E and a diagnosis of two minor fractures. However much to Stephen's relief he was given the go ahead to press on with his training schedule and run the marathon. Despite Stephen's injury he crossed the line in a fantastic time of 4:03 raising £2,000 for Oracle too.

“As a dentist I am very aware of head and neck cancer, especially oral cancer. At every dental check-up appointment we not only check our patient's teeth and gums, but we also assess the surround soft tissues – lips, cheeks, palate, floor of mouth and tongue. Dentists are usually the first people to notice persistent mouth ulcers don't heal, lumps that look abnormal or patches in the mouth, like lichen planus, that change in appearance.”



Luke Donegan

“In February 2014, my Uncle Mark passed away after a brief battle with mouth and throat cancer at the age of 51. Throughout his illness, Mark was always a keen runner. He is my only other family member who has completed a marathon so I'm honored to be finishing one in his memory. I was so pleased to have run the marathon for Oracle Cancer Trust and in memory of my Uncle. I loved every minute of the day and I'm walking like I have wooden legs - but am happy!”

In a brilliantly paced run, Luke completed the marathon in 3:50 and raised over £5,000 in memory of his late uncle, Mark Donegan.



Kitty Watkins

“I started running 2.5 years ago thinking it would be a nice weekend hobby, but increasingly found I wanted to challenge myself more and more and what better challenge than a marathon? I was lucky enough to be given a place to run in the 2021 London Marathon to raise money for Oracle Cancer Trust, a fantastic charity supporting much needed research into head and neck cancer.”

Unfortunately whilst running the marathon Kitty became unwell and despite reaching the 19 mile point had to stop. Even with all the training, sometimes marathons don't go to plan - thank you Kitty for raising £1,900 too and hope we can encourage you to join us at a future marathon.

Head and neck cancer support

Head and neck cancer support group Heads2gether expand

Volunteer-run head and neck cancer support group Heads2gether have been busier than ever during lockdown, having to adapt to running their vital head and neck support groups to online. And whilst some groups have now resumed face to face, the twice monthly online meetings are still much in demand giving recovering head and neck cancer patients a support lifeline.

Since 2016 Heads2gether have been holding groups in Oxford, Swindon, Reading and West London. With the help of Maggie's Centres, they have now added a new face to face group at their centre in Southampton. Groups are run by former patient Pete Brady who established the first group in Oxford.

During group sessions patients share their experiences of life after treatment in a safe and supportive environment, giving hope and encouragement to others who may be still recovering from treatment. Post-treatment recovery for head and neck cancer can be extremely challenging with many patients having to cope with ongoing swallowing, taste and eating difficulties.

Says Pete Brady, "I feel privileged to be able to help patients on their road to recovery and feel humbled to have met so many wonderful people who have benefited from the Heads2gether support experience."

If you'd like to learn more about Heads2gether and their support groups please visit www.heads2gether.net



Janet's shares her post-treatment exercise routines to aid recovery

Supporter Janet West has always attributed her recovery from tongue cancer to her love of fitness. During lockdown Janet retreated to her home in France where she had time to produce a number of films to help other head and neck cancer patients with gentle exercises, particularly supporting those who've undergone extensive surgery.

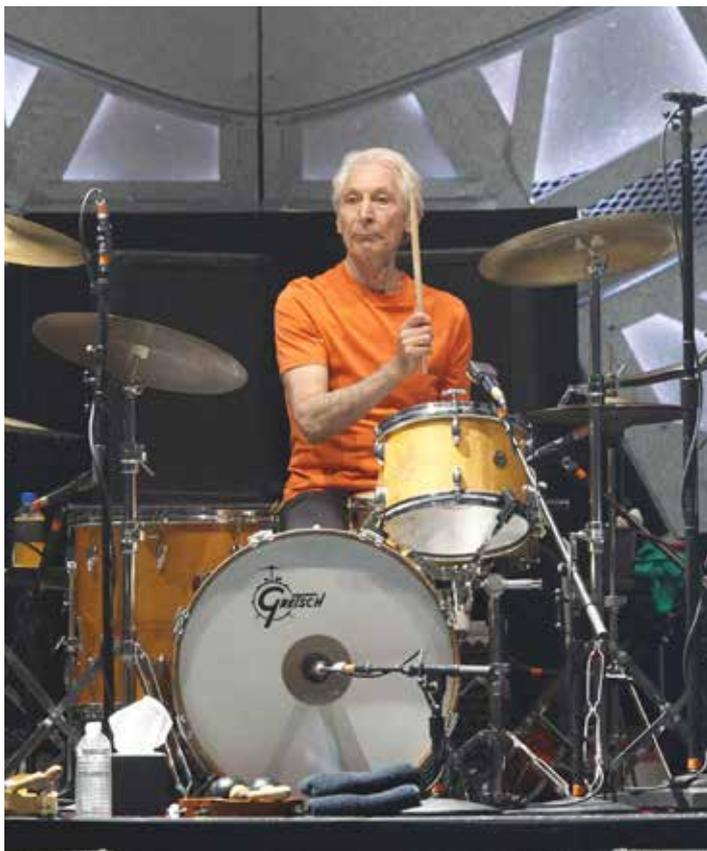
Former TV presenter and journalist Janet was overwhelmed with the response to her YouTube series receiving messages of gratitude and support from patients all over the world.

Says Janet, "I'm thrilled that my exercise routines have helped others, particularly during the pandemic when services were so severely impacted. These gentle exercises really help with neck and tongue mobility which is so vital following surgery.

"I'd particularly like to thank the physiotherapists who helped review the content and Pete Brady from support group Heads2gether who edited the films for me." To watch the exercises please visit www.oraclecancertrust.org/janetwest

In memory of special friends

Charlie Watts 1941 - 2021



The team at Oracle Cancer Trust were saddened to hear of the passing of rock legend Charlie Watts of the Rolling Stones.

Charlie was a long-term supporter of Oracle's pioneering research work into head and neck cancer following his treatment for throat cancer in 2004. He was successfully treated by Oracle's Chairman ENT surgeon Peter Rhys Evans and continued touring with the band as drummer until he pulled out of a tour recently due to ill health.

In 2018 Charlie donated a signed snare drum which had been used on a previous world tour to support the live auction when Oracle were Charity of the Year for the prestigious Asian Achievers Awards. The valuable piece of memorabilia raised a significant sum for the charity.

Says Oracle's Chairman ENT surgeon, Peter Rhys Evans, "I had the privilege of treating Charlie in 2004 and am deeply saddened to hear of his passing. On behalf of the whole team at Oracle I would like to extend my condolences to his family and other members of The Rolling Stones. We were incredibly grateful for his support over the years helping raise awareness about head and neck cancer. We remained friends after his treatment in 2004 and I was deeply touched that he asked to see me recently before he passed away.

John Hughes 1945 - 2021



John at one of his "Shark Attack" charity golf days

If there was one word to describe John, friends and family would call him a survivor. John was first diagnosed with throat cancer some 18 years ago and not long after was diagnosed with lung cancer and given 18 months to live. But that all changed when he was offered a new chemotherapy treatment sparking his interest in scientific research around treatments for head and neck cancer. This set John on a mission to raise as much as he could to further vital research, incredibly raising over £175,000 by establishing "Shark Attack" fundraising in 2003.

A small fundraising committee was created and John's first event was a charity golf day at a course near John's home town of Swindon. The name "Shark Attack" arose from John attributing his neck scars to a "vampire shark" attack on the golf course, typical of his brilliant sense of humour and desire not to dwell on living with cancer. John's enthusiasm for fundraising over the years led him to expand his charity golf days to chinese nights at a local Wootton Bassett restaurant and tribute evenings regularly attended by staff of The Blenheim Head and Neck Unit in Oxford who cared for John over the years.

Long term friend and committee member Linda takes up the story. "John had a wonderful sense of humour and zest for life, and despite living with cancer and undergoing treatment for nearly eighteen years it never dulled his determination when it came to fundraising. Shark Attack events over the years were a triumph of organisation and John's skill of persuading friends and business associates from all over the country to play or volunteer and to local and national businesses to donate prizes was a true testament to his strength of character. John's last Shark Attack fundraiser was in 2019, and the last two years were very challenging for John and his wife Velma who cared for him. He will be deeply missed by everyone but leaves a lasting legacy of the incredible work he did raising awareness about head and neck cancer and funding vital research."

John leaves his wife Velma and two children.

Dates for the diary

Register now for our free “Talking Treatments” webinar featuring researcher Dr Daniel Lin and patient Janet West on Monday 25th October 2021 at 6.30pm

Tongue cancer survivor Janet West and Newcastle University researcher Dr Daniel Lin will be talking about head and neck cancer treatment choices and how biomarkers such as the one Daniel is studying could open up the possibility of personalised treatments. To book your free place please visit <https://buff.ly/3B9M7G1> or scan the QR code.



The Glory of Christmas Concert, Wednesday 8th December 2021 at 7.00pm, St Paul's Knightsbridge tickets on sale now

Join us at our new venue of St Paul's Knightsbridge, one of London's most beautiful Victorian churches for an evening of candlelit music and carols in support of our work. Following the concert we will be hosting a drinks reception which is included in the ticket price. Tickets are £30 each or £20 per household to watch the concert from home. To purchase tickets please visit oraclecancertrust.org and follow the link on the homepage or scan the QR code.



Christmas Cards

Oracle Christmas cards on sale now

Our packs of Christmas cards are on sale now. Designed exclusively for Oracle Cancer Trust, cards come in packs of eight and cost £6.99 with all proceeds to support our work. Visit oraclecancertrust.org/shop to order



Support our Big Give matched funding Appeal

If you donate during The Big Give Christmas Challenge Week your donation will be doubled - the week runs from 12pm (midday) 30th November 2021 – 12pm (midday) 7th December 2021

Thousands of people had their diagnosis and treatment for head and neck cancer delayed during lockdown. Now they're being diagnosed later than ever, people need more support and better treatment options to help them survive and thrive. We know people need more and better help suited to their needs. We need to step up to ensure the treatments are effective for late stage diagnosis and people are supported through their cancer journey.

We want to kick start a brand new research programme to meet the needs of people being diagnosed with head and neck cancer since the pandemic and listen to the needs of these patients and develop new ways to support them with specialist information and support when they need it.

To donate during The Big Give Christmas Challenge week simply visit our website at www.oraclecancertrust.org where you'll find the donation link on the homepage.



Oracle Cancer Trust
LOWE Works, 14-16 Peterborough Road, London SW6 3BN

Telephone: 020 3875 8991

info@oraclecancertrust.org

Registered charity 1142037

Leading research into head and neck cancer

