

# U.G.I.

## Upper G.I. Blues

Raising Awareness of & Funding Research Into  
Upper Gastrointestinal Cancers

# Newsletter

# December

# 2017

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Raising Awareness of & Funding Research into  
Upper Gastrointestinal Cancers.

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## A Matter of Faith.

Just over two years ago I met a patient at our Sandwell Thursday clinic who was due to have his first consultation with Mr. Whiting. Obviously worried about what he was about to find out he was keen to ask many questions about my own diagnosis and treatment. I told him of the diagnosis of the oesophageal cancer I had had fifteen years earlier, about the chemotherapy and surgery I had undergone and of the great advances in these treatments that had been made since that time. I spoke to him about the changes that I had to make in my daily life and how I managed them. I also told him that about twelve months earlier that I had also been diagnosed with another type of cancer, follicular lymphoma and how I had great faith in the treatment I was receiving, knowing that this could not be cured but could be held under control.

When the patient, I'll call him Joe came out of consultation he was clearly still worried and said that Mr. Whiting had asked for more tests and would see him next week. I told him that this was quite normal and that he was being fast tracked.

I saw Joe again the following week as he came out of his consultation. Things had not gone well and he had been told that his cancer was inoperable. Although he was very distressed he did sit with me as we spoke about alternative treatments, chemotherapy and radio therapy that could keep the condition under control. Joe said that he had read enough reports on the internet to "know" that these did not work and that he had only weeks to live. I told him of the great advances that had been made in these treatments over the past few years and that he should not give up hope of surviving this ordeal, to have faith in his doctors and nurses who would do everything they could for him. I was quite shocked by his reply of "I don't think so and I won't see you again as I am jealous of you, you have been given the chance to live, I am going to die. This is when I told him about my diagnosis

with lymphoma, a condition that I had been told couldn't be cured but could be controlled and the faith that I had in the medical team who were treating me. "I'll wish you the best of luck" he said "but I am a realist".

Fast forward to 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017, 3-30 in the afternoon and we were just clearing away our last sales items and getting ready for the Christmas break. I was in the outpatients lobby when Joe approached me and asked if I remembered him. Of course I did and was very pleased to see him. He had an appointment with Mr. Whiting to see about having a stent fitted to help his swallowing as he was eating more solid foods every day. He had suffered many ups and downs over the past couple of years but had survived and was doing ok. The team he was working with had done a fantastic job and he was looking forward to the new year. He asked how I was doing and I had to tell him about the reoccurrence of my lymphoma and how I was due to restart chemo. I told him that it's worked once and that I'm sure it will work again. His parting words were "You'll be ok. Keep The Faith".

## The Next Meetings

The first meeting of 2018 is on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm in Sandwell Hospital's Education Centre. This is the building where we used to meet, by the main Hallam Street entrance and opposite the Hallam restaurant. We are booked into room 9 of this newly refurbished centre and look forward to seeing you there. Our first guest speaker of the year is clinical oncologist, the young and good looking Dr. David Fackerall. His words not mine. Dr. Fackerall was for many months the visiting oncologist from Queen Elizabeth Hospital who worked at our Sandwell clinic. He has recently took up a twelve month post as consultant oncologist at Walsall Manor hospital so we will still be in regular contact with him. I can tell you that Dr. Fackerall is really good company, we had the chance to share a table with him at our Christmas party.

His only drawback is that he is a Spurs supporter so don't get him started on football, ok Heather.

For car parking at these Sandwell meetings we have found it better to park on the outpatients car park, Little Lane entrance and take the path past the MRI building and the old admin block towards the main Hallam Street entrance. The Education Centre will be on your left. Light refreshments, tea, coffee etc will be served, these are free but we do appreciate a small donation towards their cost. Car parking is also free at these meetings. The first meeting at Walsall Manor Hospital will be on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February, guest to be confirmed.

### 2018 Sales Donations Needed.

After a successful sales run in 2017 we are looking for donations of good quality items for our Thursday Sandwell sales stall. As this is now our main fund-raising activity we need undamaged glass ware, bric a brac, jewellery etc to fill our sales tables. We hope you can help by donating items for our stall. Bring things along to our meetings or to Sandwell Hospital between 10am and 3pm on Thursdays, or if necessary to our home address at 92 Brackendale Drive, Walsall, WS5 4BU, but please phone on 01922 864404 to make sure we will be in.

### Paul Higgett at Walsall Meeting.

I'm sorry that I could not make it to the Walsall meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December and have had very little feedback about the event. I have however received an email from your guest speaker Paul Higgett from Healthwatch Walsall requesting that survey forms are returned. You can bring these to either of the next Sandwell or Walsall meetings and I will get them to him.

## Meeting Dates for your Diary

### Meeting Dates 2018

Friday January 26 <sup>th</sup> Sandwell	Room 9
Monday February 26 <sup>th</sup> Walsall	Room 11
Friday March 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sandwell	Room 9
Monday April 16 <sup>th</sup> Walsall	Room 11
Friday May 25 <sup>th</sup> Sandwell	Room 9
Monday June 18 <sup>th</sup> Walsall	Room 10
Friday July 27 <sup>th</sup> Sandwell	Room 9
Monday August 20 <sup>th</sup> Walsall	Room 10
Friday September 28 <sup>th</sup> Sandwell	Room 9
Monday October 15 <sup>th</sup> Walsall	Room 11
Friday November 30 <sup>th</sup> Sandwell	Room 9
Monday December 10 <sup>th</sup> Walsall	Room 11

All meetings start at 2pm and end at 4pm. All dates will be confirmed in the regular news letters.