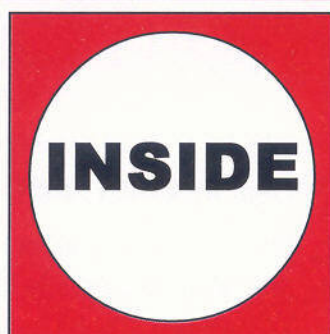

SPRING 2003
NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 2
ISSUE 4

STOMA SUPPORT GROUP WORKING WITH ST MARKS AND NORTHWICK PARK HOSPITAL
e-mail insideout.bag256@btopenworld.com



Bob's Hello



Hi everyone, I'm sorry it has been a long time in coming out to you, but I have been running a little behind schedule. My father passed away at the end of February this year, so thanks to all who passed on their condolences. I have been running up and down the country, sorting things out. I do apologise.

We have just had a committee meeting, during which we discussed what we hope to be doing in the future, and the committee thought that it would be a very good idea to combine our AGM with an Open Day, when the manufacturers can come along and display their wares. We also thought that it would be a golden opportunity to invite some prominent speakers to talk on subjects that are of interest to you, and we would end with an open question and answer time, when our speakers and an ostomist from each of the organisations would answer all questions put to them.

We have decided upon the 8th May 2004 for this. I would welcome any suggestions regarding the subject matter that you would like discussed. Please let me know so that I may arrange for the appropriate speakers.

Best wishes
Bob

Inside Out Coffee Mornings

In the Out Patients Department of St Mark's, Level 3
10.00am to 12 noon

We are there to enable you to seek advice about your stoma, or if you just want a good old chin-wag and a cup of tea or coffee, then you are more than welcome.



May

Thursday 8th and Monday 19th

June

Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 18th

July

Thursday 3rd, Monday 14th and Tuesday 29th

August

No meetings due to vacations

September

Monday 1st



In a London Department Store
Bargain Basement upstairs

Spotted in the toilet of a London office
Toilet out of order, please use floor below.

In an office
**After the tea break staff should
empty the teapot and stand
upside down in the sink**

Health Notes

by Norma Hermann

I wonder if you spotted in the Sunday Times that the Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English and the Americans. But so do the French, who eat lots of fat. The Japanese drink very little red wine, the Italians drink excessive amounts and both suffer fewer heart



attacks than the British and Americans. Moreover, so do the Germans, who drink masses of beer and eat loads of sausages, heaps of cream and mounds of fat.

It seems you can eat whatever you like, what is bad for you is - speaking English!



Love is not blind - it sees more, not less. But because it sees more it is willing to see less.

Rabbi Judy Gordon



The only true love is love at first sight.

Second sight dispels it.

Israel Zangwill



Marriage is not merely sharing the fettuccini, but sharing the burden of finding the fettuccini restaurant in the first place.

Calvin Trillin

From your Secretary

Dear Inside-Outers,

the time has come round again for me to write an interesting epistle to you all, all 150 of you! Where are you all hiding? We don't see you at meetings, outings or coffee mornings. Why did you join? Don't get me wrong, we do want your membership, but we would also like to see you. If we are not offering you what you expected, please let us know.

I have had a habit, at this time, to moan about the lack of attendance at our evening meetings that are (were) held every two months. The parenthesis will give you a clue. I cannot moan any more because we have had to cancel them for lack of attendance. Bob, your chairman, persuaded doctors, nurses and surgeons (these are in alphabetical order, and not in order of importance!) to give up their valuable time to talk to us. Usually we were lucky to see half a dozen of you at these meetings. I, for one, am very disappointed because I learnt a lot at these talks. Without exception they were interesting and informative. It is a great pity.

At the AGM there were only 5 people plus your committee. Next year's AGM is going to take a different format. See Bob's missive and put the date in your diary now (the forward planning section).

There will be a Film Premier at St George's Centre later this year and a Jazz Night early next year at the Harrow Arts Centre. We will need your support at both of these events.

Meanwhile, Clinimed has offered us a day trip around their factory, including lunch and a glass of wine. This will take place in October. Book your place with Bob, but if you then find you cannot make the visit please let either Bob or me know.

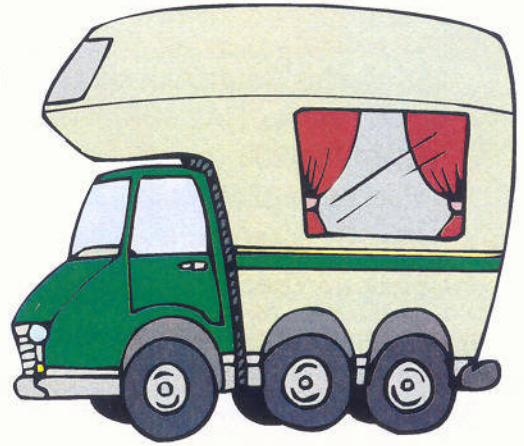
I wish you all the best of health

Diane Owen, Secretary

020 8248 6684

Overseas Experience

Bob has persuaded a new member, Martin Clarke from New Zealand, to tell us how he came to be a patient at St Mark's. It is quite a long and interesting story, so we have decided to serialise it in the newsletter. The first part appears below and the remainder will be printed in the next newsletter. Anyone who cannot wait can have a copy of the complete story if they contact Joan Greenwood.



It seems a really long time ago when my problems first began, but in fact it was only three years ago, at the end of May 2000.

My wife Gill and I had left our home in New Zealand in December 1998, to undertake what in that country is referred to as our 'OE' - our 'Overseas Experience'. It is usual, however, for the 'OE' to be undertaken by young people rather than just-over-fifty-year-olds, and thus our decision to travel overseas was more often referred to as 'a mid-life crisis' or, as we preferred it, 'a mid-life adventure'!

Everything had been going really well on our trip and my traditional good health had continued as normal. We had purchased a large American motorhome in New Hampshire prior to leaving New Zealand, and then we spent seven months touring around the States and Canada before shipping the vehicle across the Atlantic into Liverpool. We worked for some five months to put some money into our very empty bank vault, and then had the opportunity to house-sit for some old friends at Kalamata in Greece for three months. On our return to the UK, we decided to spend the summer of 2000 in the Republic of Ireland, so in April that year we made the base for us and our 'house' in a small village about ten miles east of Cork; we commenced working again within a couple of days of our arrival there.

It was after only a few weeks in Ireland that a discharge of blood from my nether regions resulted in a GP visit, and a subsequent consultation with a surgeon at Cork's South Infirmary. My condition in general

(and my loo-visit regularity in particular!) deteriorated rapidly, and I began what was to be a seventeen-month period of investigations to try and discover exactly what my problem was, how it should be solved - and then fixing it!

My illness resulted in two separate ten-day stays for me in the South Infirmary that summer (not quite the Irish hospitality we had expected!) while the ongoing and fluctuating symptoms of anal bleeding, dramatic diarrhoea, lethargy and 'unwellness' were being checked and treated. Through the surgeon's preliminary diagnosis of 'Inflammatory Bowel Disease', I was introduced to Prednisolone in varying doses - and I was destined to take that drug (and many more!) for a very long time.

After a three week trip in the motorhome around the lovely Emerald Isle, with a sister-in-law from New Zealand, we returned across the Irish Sea, and found work in London. During this period from November 2000 to April 2001, despite a number of outpatient and inpatient visits to Winchester Hospital, (where the diagnosis was initially 'Indeterminate Colitis'), my condition continued to be kept under some control by the use of steroids. I remained comparatively stable (with odd patches of unstable 'ups and downs'!), to the extent that plans to head into Europe were developed - with the knowledge and blessing of the Winchester medical staff. We made the cross-Channel trip to Calais (with lots of packets of Prednisolone in the vehicle!) on 30 April 2001.....

Concludes in the next issue of Inside Out



Spotted in a Safari Park
Elephants please stay in your car

Notice in a field
The farmer allows walkers
to cross the field for free,
but the bull charges.

Seen during a conference
For anyone who has
children and doesn't
know it, there is a day
care on the first floor.

Chairman ~ Bob Azevedo-Gilbert

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Useful Contacts

Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Support Group
0800 018 4724

NACC
01727 830 038

Urostomy Association
0800 018 4724

British Colostomy Association
0800 328 4257



**Want to join
the support group?**

If you have a colostomy, ileostomy or a urostomy and you would like more information, please complete the form below and send it to:

Sarah Varma c/o Stoma Care Department, St. Mark's & Northwick Park Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3UJ

Name _____
Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____

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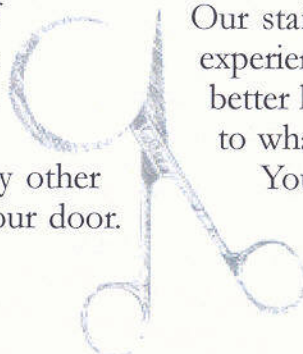
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