



HULL & EAST RIDING GLAUCOMA GROUP

Patron: Mr C Burnett: Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon & Glaucoma Specialist

based at Sight Support (formerly HERIB): Tel No: 01482342297

Newsletter: May/June 2020

Welcome to the Hull and East Riding Glaucoma Group Newsletter for May/June 2020, (I'm thinking of renaming it The Coronavirus Chronicle), with many thanks to Alison and Sight Support who made it possible to get it sent out. This year May will be remembered not just for Spring Bank holiday but also for the 75th anniversary of VE day which many of you may have managed to celebrate, and the world of shielding and self isolation many of us, including Martin and myself, find ourselves in. However in spite of everything that's happening at the moment, the sun is out, the birds are chirping, the flowers are blooming, and the garden is growing. It serves perhaps as a reminder of nature's power to heal, and that non human

animals, plants and ecosystems on the planet still go on in spite of us, and the onslaught of Covid 19. I loved the recent picture of the deer in the paper taken as they had a stroll along the front in Bridlington. I just hope they were observing the 2 metre rule!

The meetings that never were

The past: April: Breathlessness is a condition which affects many of us for various reasons e.g it's very common in long term conditions such as COPD, heart failure and cancer. It can have a detrimental effect on daily living, with many of us also becoming breathless when we exercise or exert ourselves and it's quite normal to experience this from time to

time. With that in mind, we had invited Dr Ann Hutchinson, from Hull/ York Medical School and the creator of the 'Bringing Breathlessness into View' exhibition, to talk to us about living well with breathlessness, and we were very disappointed to have to cancel the meeting. The team however has produced a booklet which addresses many aspects e.g. how it can affect day to day living not just physically but emotionally and mentally as well etc . Practical suggestions for ways of coping are also provided. e.g. managing energy levels, anxiety, and exercise. More information and copies of the booklet can be downloaded at <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/research/research-centres-and-groups/wolfson/breathlessness> There is also a blog for those of you who are technically minded: <https://breathlessness.hyms.ac.uk/?p=39> We very much hope to have the pleasure of Ann's company at one of our future meetings.

The present: June: As always we had planned for our annual

visit from Mr Burnett, Glaucoma consultant and our patron, but unsurprisingly, this has also had to be cancelled, and Mr Burnett has sent his best wishes to the group. Along with eye hospitals and clinics across the country, the situation in Hull is one in which they identify an inevitable delay in appointments, but that they are in the process of "validating" all patient records to stratify each patient's glaucoma risk and therefore prioritising appointments according to need.

The future: As the recent easing of the lockdown restrictions hasn't involved allowing public gatherings or more freedom for shielding and high risk groups, it's impossible to identify whether any of our planned meetings will be going ahead as scheduled. Also given that Sight Support are still closed to the general public with no date on when the building may be open again, and even so unlikely to be able to provide meeting facilities straight away, it's safe to say that all Glaucoma Group

meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Other news: Sight Support

Even under the restrictions of Covid 19 Sight Support are still working to offer support and advice. Recognising that lockdown and the isolation it brings is hard for people with a visual impairment, staff have been working from home in a number of key support services including: providing a listening ear, for advice, practical or emotional support and reassurance; making welfare calls to all people on the database particularly those living alone and/or with little family support; shopping trips to collect and deliver shopping and medical prescriptions by both volunteers and staff.

Although offices remain closed to the general public, telephone lines remain open Monday - Friday from 9am - 4pm. If you need urgent support, or just want to talk to someone please call on 01482 342297 or email info@sightsupport.org

IGA: While reminding us that hospitals are deferring all routine work e.g. outpatient

appointments and surgery, in order to protect patients and staff from the risk of infection, with urgent cases only being seen, the IGA stress however that although appointments are being deferred they are not being cancelled for ever. They suggest that if you haven't heard from the hospital once the crisis has passed you may wish to make contact to check you are still in the system. If you would like to talk to someone about your situation you can call their helpline on 01233 6481 70 Monday to Friday 9.30am - 5pm.

Specsavers Specsavers have identified some handy tips for hand hygiene and eye health: e.g. when washing your hands prior to putting in eye drops or contact lens, give extra attention to the tips of your fingers and thumb as these touch the lens and eyelids more; there's no need to wear surgical gloves if your hands are properly clean. Clean your glasses regularly, especially if taking them on and off during the day or putting them down on a surface and avoid using

hand sanitiser to clean glasses as some ingredients may affect the quality of the lens surface. For more information and advice visit www.specsavers.co.uk

And finally: This has been and still is a very challenging and difficult time with many different emotions and concerns involved. From feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and helplessness, to apprehension about the ongoing aches and pains and underlying conditions which add to our uncertainty about our health and medical future; frustration at a loss of independence, to an appreciation of the care and kindness of others; moving from laughter to unexpected tears at the drop of a hat (this happened to me when I saw the results of my attempts at cutting my hair!). Passing each day can be difficult - someone once said "The problem with doing nothing is that you never know when you're finished." ! We all see the world differently and bring different things to the experience, even in the same household, and I think the following poem I found by

chance the other night sums up the situation beautifully.

And the people stayed home.

by Kitty O'Meara (2020)

'And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.'

We look forward to when we can meet up again and send best wishes for a positive outcome for all of us.

Kay Slingsby.

