

“DO YOU DO THIS IN SAINSBURY’S MUM”/“SHOW ME YOUR BREASTS”

Roald Dahl, in his book “Boy and Going Solo” ISBN 0-14-034917-0 points out that in his view, when writing about oneself, and in particular about his idea for the great and daring Mouse Plot, one should strive to be truthful. He goes on to say that truth is more important than modesty. So here, without modesty and with truth is what happened when I went in to shop, helped myself to goods and walked out without paying. Did that eight times, over a few months that is. Did it again today, for the ninth time. But this time I unusually hadn’t got a carrier bag to put the goods into so went up to the counter and said, as I held the item up for him to see, “May I have a bag for this, please”. “Yes, of course”, he said “and to pay for that also?” “No”, I said, “I don’t have to pay for it. I got it out of that special place where you leave it for customers to help themselves. I paid for it ages ago, by credit card”. “No, no”, he said. “Yes, yes” I said. “Doesn’t work like that” they said. “You do need to pay for it at the time”. So pay I did “but” I added, “I’ve done this several times before and, it seems, never paid a penny”. Shock, horror. “Sorry, sorry, sorry” I said. “Never mind”, they said. “Don’t worry about it. Don’t have a sleepless night over it”. “I’ll do this and that and put it right” I said. (It transpired I had paid only for issues 1 and 2 with my Switch card.) Walked out of shop. Walked down the street. Was suffering acute embarrassment as I imagined, and oh *how* I imagined, what might well have happened on any of those occasions. The more I thought about it the worse my thoughts about the possible implications got. Didn’t know where to put myself.

And I rashly told Jim about it all. I should have known better. He and Pat phoned up to say they were in Cambridge and could they call in for a cup of tea. He said it was clearly a case of anti-capitalist terrorism and I must be an anti-capitalist terrorist. He said he would add it to his list. What list I asked. You know, he said, and then he went on and on and on and on. I just thought he was being unreasonable. Two days later he sent me an e’mail which said:-

‘FREE MAGAZINE: Our contribution to anti-terrorist capitalism week! Simply pick up your free magazine from the appropriately numbered drawer and we will arrange for you to be escorted somewhere by a very nice gentleman or two in blue uniforms driving a car with a flashing blue light. Don’t delay - offer must end on April 1st.’

So I thought, right, young man, just wait until you want the next cup of tea.

My Cambridge son said “do you do this in Sainsbury’s Mum?” And my Thailand son said “Khun Mer, jai rawn ching ching.” Which apparently means something like “Mum, your head must be in the sky”. However, he said, a Thai person may interpret that sentence differently and consider it an impolite thing to say to one’s parent. He went on to say “I would stay away from interpreting Thai into English. I had coffee the other day and asked for milk. Problem is I said it with the wrong intonation and the recipient would have heard (so I was told) “show me your breasts.”

Anyway, since I was in such a state when I left the shop I bought Dylan’s “Street Legal” C.D., because our baby likes to be held in her Daddy’s arms while she dances to “Changing of the Guards” (she kicks her legs and waves her arms) and I like the sound of it for exercising to. I do what the Royle Family do when they are decorating and cooking - it is, after all, a kind of exercise. You should see me in my kitchen. Well, p’raps not. Not with these legs.

(Incidentally, David B says that when I get to heaven I should look out for a guardian angel who looks particularly frazzled, worried and worn out because then I’ll know that’s my own overworked guardian angel.)

CAMLETS: Was attempting to fix another piece of fence, in my garden, which was at an angle to the rest of the fence. Hit thumb nail twice. Had short 1" nails only. Needed 3" nails really. Impasse. Aha....three men in neighbour’s garden, at the bottom of my back garden, fixing roof on new garage so I went up to them and said if I make you three cups of tea will you let me have 3 long nails. Sounds like a good deal they said and after I gave them the tea and cake through the fence they said they would actually send someone round to knock the nails in when he got back. They told him to do it when he returned to the site and he thought it was a wind-up but he did the fence thing and I made them more tea. All this reminds me of CamLets - Ros says that CamLETS enables members to exchange skills by means of a sophisticated barter system. You get things done for yourself by doing things for other people. Members list the services they offer in a directory. The directory is regularly updated and distributed to all members, so that they can exchange services. A list of small ads is published and distributed with each mailing. This allows you

to buy and sell goods and advertise wants. All members get a 'Cam' cheque book for making payments in a local currency, used only by members. This way you don't have to have direct bartering. Normally one hour's work is worth 10 cams. I looked through the directory - it is available at the Centre. Millions of things to choose - from, well, just everything you can think of. There's cycle repairs, cycle lessons, bed and breakfast, portraits of people, pets, horses, punt chauffeur, sailing crew, small household DIY jobs, creative darning, childcare, ballgowns, plumbing, rent of DIY equipment, library search in University library...



AGE CONCERN By switching to Age Concern for your gas/electricity you may well save money. Transferring over is extremely simple. If you are interested please phone Rose-Ann on 01354 696677. You need to be age 50/55 to benefit from their scheme.



CINNAMON TRUST - Judith gave a leaflet to me about the Cinnamon Trust, which is the only specialist national charity which seeks to relieve the anxieties, problems, and sometimes injustices, faced by people and their pets, thereby saving a great deal of human sadness and animal suffering. They'll offer practical help to the elderly e.g. walking dogs and suchlike. Anyone of any age can make arrangements for pets that may outlive them to come into the Trust's care. The information is at the Centre.



TAXOL: Are you taking it? If so, please tell me - it's just that someone at the Centre would like some feed-back about it.

I've put the following in this newsletter because I know this boy and his Dad, his Mum and his brother and because I know that there are people at our Centre who are well into looking after youngsters with Asperger's and autism, and because it, the poem, and this young man, are as beautiful as autism is cruel.



MARTIN

A lovely boy, our pride and joy
But he is not with us.
He's in a world all of his own
Somewhere there is no fuss.

I look at him and can't decide
What future will there be
When we are not around to help
Him meet reality?

His world is full of routine acts.
It really is a shame,
But life is not so difficult
When each day is the same

His mind has wandered far away
To memorise the past.
It's safer there, no need to care
Who's winning, first or last.

We cannot live forever
One day we must let go,
For his sake he must go away
It's sensible, we know.

But it won't ease the heartache
Of knowing that we feel
That life has been unfair to him.
He's had a lousy deal

I watch him in our garden
So handsome, tall and strong
Will someone be there for him
To help him get along?

He's gentle, placid, loving
There's so much he can give
Will there ever be a cure
To set him free to live
A life of normal feelings?
But when all is said and done
We only want him back with us
Our first-born, lovely son.

RCPG

Coordinator's Report to the Annual General Meeting on 27th February 2002

“Please write a report for the AGM” said David.

“Give me a clue”, I said.

“Rally the Troops” he said, quick as a flash.

Looked in dictionary.

Under “rally” it says

“Bring or come together as **support** or for action”
and “assume or **rouse** to fresh energy”

So this report is headed **Supporting and Rousing**

Supporting

and I’m just going to say what I think we all know, but if we are in a troop-rallying frame of mind it’s good to remind ourselves of what a very special place this is. That this Centre does its best to support those people who have cancer and those people who are carers of someone who has to face the cancer journey. I believe the support is particularly best given by people who have had or have got cancer, backed up by those of us who haven’t had to personally face that devastating blow of such a diagnosis. For example Gill, who was our first volunteer and who runs the Centre when I’m not here on a Tuesday, and Tricia who looks after everyone on Wednesdays when I am absent.

Perhaps it’s helpful to remember Dulcie’s comment a few weeks ago when she said to me “what is so special about this place is that it tries to provide what people’s individual needs are”. And I think well, we try but perhaps we won’t always succeed, because we aren’t perfect.

And then we come to

Rousing

I’m not sure we need to rouse something that is obviously inherent at this Centre. But what we do in a gentle way is to waken up everyone’s fighting spirit, to rouse it into action, and thus to take on the cancer, to fight it whilst, at the same time, (and this is a big bonus) we all make new friends and benefit from the contact we make with each other.

And the **support** and **rousing** comes in strong measure from people who are battling away against what they have to battle away at and yet they still find the time and inclination to put some, maybe a lot, of their energy into supporting other people, to show them what to do and how to do it.

And, yes, I do know that although a new person at our door may well have been asking themselves “do I really need to go to this Centre?” before their first visit, they will leave with some joy in their hearts and realisation that the visit was a good idea, that there is some hope emerging, and we should all be proud of that because to have that effect on someone, on many people, is incredibly inspiring.

What a team - everyone plays a part. There isn’t a single person at our Centre who doesn’t contribute a sparkle to the success of this Cambridge Cancer Help Centre. Our healers and counsellor - unpaid for what they do for us but certainly contributing in their different ways to our success. Our librarian, who has set up our library in a proper manner - so that all our books are listed, labelled and cared for. Collectively we make tea, provide lifts, gather for lunches/dinners, social events, raise money, man stalls, make recycled cards and try to put into action the most difficult skill - listening. What gems we have in this place. It is amazing. We all offer something different, because there are so many extraordinary ordinary people here, to make the complete picture of a place that offers so much in such a loving way. And another thing we have learned is that our informal way of going on is, for us, the best way of doing things and that the person who has cancer is one of the best ambassadors for this Centre. Ours is the right way. And that Right Way didn’t fall into our laps. We learnt it through very difficult times. We devised it ourselves. Our Way doesn’t appear in the text books on how to run a support group.

And the office team is the greatest of office partnerships. Tricia and I are able to share our strengths, admit our weaknesses to each other - not an easy thing to do for most of us perhaps but Tricia and I can do it easily and comfortably and thus combine our strengths ,to work in the best way for the benefit of the Centre and the people who join us here. And our trustees are not just names that appear on the back of the newsletter. They all play strong parts in our rich tapestry, working away at all sorts of things that are part of the important background of the Centre. And with the good of the Centre at heart. So David Wilson (our superb treasurer - and we often tell him that!) David Barylko, Jane Cornell, Fran Dawson, Paulette Dupuy, Mark Howe, Viv Neville, Gill Overhill and Tricia Smith are, I can assure you, trustees of note.

And what a privilege it is to be a part of what goes on here. Can anyone wish for anything more rewarding and pleasurable, than to take everyone's side in their fight against cancer.

In the Snakatak café a couple of Tuesdays ago about a dozen of us gathered for lunch and because of the good-natured teasing and such goings-on a roar of laughter or two welled up from our little group. Such proof, you see, that our Centre isn't a dismal place but a place of hope and optimism and outstanding battling against the hardships our friends experience.

So my realisation is that in this very special place we **do** come together to offer **support** to the person who has cancer and **support** to their carers and we **do** hope to **rouse** them to fresh energy. And we do it our way, which is the right way.

All is well in this place.

Ann



Extract from Jane's Therapists' Report for the A.G.M.:

We are very fortunate, here at the Centre, to have a group of such dedicated therapists who give their time and expertise free of charge.

I would personally like to thank them all for their commitment, good nature and professionalism: they are a great team to work with and I would like to acknowledge the contribution that they all make to the Centre.

BAREFOOT DOCTOR & LITTLE TOES Cure for indigestion, discombobulation and, er...um... you know...

He says "feel the fear". Do read the whole article from "Life magazine, The Observer", it's in our library but here is a bit of it. To make you less timid of life, and for other reasons (as mentioned in his article) he says, along with other things, that you might like to place all your fingertips pressed together in the middle of your chest, and then he recommends stroking lightly and slowly down your midline to the top of your pubic bone, then he says separate your hands so that your fingertips can stroke across your lower abdomen and then you need to draw them up each side of your torso, over the breasts (chest) to meet again at the centre of your chest so that you can begin a new cycle, until you have done it 18 times. Barefoot Doctor suggests you breathe out on the downwards stroke and breathe in as you pull back up. He adds that this technique has a myriad self-healing applications ranging from curing your indigestion to stimulation of sexual drive. And, he says, when you feel discombobulated it is unsurpassed. Well, that's what it says here.

Actually, I've never had indigestion so don't need a cure for that and I don't think I've ever felt discombobulated either....and..... what was the other thing?

BAREFOOT DOCTOR also suggests we should stay supple in mind, body and spirit and then discover the older we are the better. And if you have gone through half the sand in your egg timer then feel yourself to be merely at the start of a limitless adventure, he says. He suggests ways of doing that and says that by the time you reach goodness knows what you will feel as young as a spring rose and have the wisdom of experience to lend you some psycho-emotional weight. And to acquire more energy in

your little toe than most nuclear power stations, BD says it is important to be mentally challenged to keep your brain active and to be thus challenged you need to be creatively engaged with a project that fires your fascination to the quick. You want to see my little toes? I tell you they have their moments of being creatively engaged with projects that fire my imagination, like our Centre and other things I play at in various places.

LINDANE

A couple of years ago we printed in our newsletter some information about the chemical Lindane. This information came from Channel 4's "Dispatches" programme. The U.K., it said, is one of only a few countries which still allow its use and there have been great worries about its effect on all of us and in particular about its implication for breast cancer. Very many countries banned it completely or in part, because of fears regarding its persistency and possible carcinogenicity. These countries include Hungary (1968), Japan (1971), Israel (1978), Philippines (1983), Singapore (1984), Ecuador (1985), Belize (1985), Korea (1986), Poland (1987), Finland (1988), Sweden (1989), Holland (1991), Denmark (1995), plus Bangladesh, Bulgaria, New Zealand and Portugal years and years ago, but we still have it in the U.K..

In our Centre library we have the book LIVING DOWNSTREAM by Sandra Steingraber, an ecologist. Some of us met the author when she came to a Cambridge bookshop to talk about this book and she has inscribed our copy "for the good folk of the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre, with thanks for your good wishes". She wrote about Lindane - here is some of what she said:- "Lindane, chlordane, dieldrin, aldrin, heptachlor - a roll call of some pesticides. Sandra says that all are classified as known, probable or possible carcinogens. She goes on to say that laws banning their use does not prohibit their export and that U.S. Customs reveal that several million pounds of unregistered, cancelled or suspended pesticides were loaded on ships and exported in 1992 and as of 1994 nine tons per day of domestically banned pesticides left U.S. shores for foreign lands. I also read, in this book, that banned pesticides have not entirely disappeared. They are still among us. They languish

underground BUT they are beginning to surface in the tissues of women with breast cancer. And apparently in 1990, this book goes on to say, Finnish researchers reported that women with breast cancer had higher concentrations of a lindane-like residue in their breasts than women without breast cancer. I could quote from page after page of this book so apart from telling you that it also says that six million Americans contract lice each year and that Lindane, an organochlorine, is banned for agricultural use in several countries and is tightly restricted in the United States and yet, nevertheless, some lice shampoos still contain lindane, I'll stop now and urge you to borrow Sandra's book from our library.



Diane Story wrote about Lindane to Anne Campbell, Member of Parliament for Cambridge

"Dear Mrs Campbell, I am writing to you as a member of your constituency in Cambridge, and as a member of the Cambridge Labour Party, as I understand that you are to attend the All Party Parliamentary Group on Breast Cancer, to be held on January 17th, 2002.

The ever increasing numbers of women being diagnosed with breast cancer in this country should concern us all. In fact I am appalled that breast cancer (a mainly female disease) has overtaken lung cancer (male/female disease) as the most common form of the disease in the U.K. I am just one of a multitude of women in the country who is fighting this disease. I understand statistics inform us we now have 39,500 new cases a year. These figures have soared dramatically in the post-war era.

One of the issues which concerns me is that the rise in numbers for women being diagnosed with breast cancer over recent years has coincided with the increased use of man-made chemicals in the home, agriculture and industry. Most of these chemicals, I understand, have not been adequately tested and assessed for safety before being marketed (1:12 women contracted breast cancer in 1995 compared with 1:9 in 2001)

The concern for many women, including me, is that product manufacturers are allowed to produce and sell products which build up in the body and the environment. Also, that chemicals which interfere with the hormone system are allowed to be used in household products. According to articles

I have read it is believed that breasts are particularly amenable to storing such chemicals with possible devastating effects later on.

I believe very strongly that the public should be fully informed as to the content of chemicals in the products they buy, and also informed about alternative products which are safer and “cleaner”.

One example I would cite is milk, where cows are injected or fed hormones to produce more milk. Any woman who understands this would probably prefer to pay the extra amount for organically produced milk. I do.

I would like to see new laws passed that protect better health. Then we would all feel safer with our purchases at the supermarket. We need far more stringent safety standards in place.

Furthermore, I hope you will voice the concerns of myself and countless other women, and many people in the medical profession who are concerned at the dramatic increase in the incidence of breast cancer, and, of course all the families and friends this terrible disease of breast cancer harms, in respect of possible linkage with chemical use in manufacturing products.

I would appeal to you, as my M.P, to voice your concern, and that you will take a strong lead in ensuring that the government follows the example of other countries in applying a precautionary approach to environ-mental health. After all, we all want a safer and healthier world in which to live. With many thanks for your interest and hoping you will support the issues I have raised. I wish you and your family a Happy and Successful New Year. Also I wish to thank you for all the interest and concern you show for the people of Cambridge.

Yours sincerely,

Diane Story

Anne Campbell replied,

I have attended a number of meetings about cancer and cancer care over the past few weeks, including that on 17 January, and do agree that the rising instances of Breast Cancer give serious cause for concern. I am trying to put forward the points you have raised. I have also written to

Yvette Cooper MP, Minister of State for Public Health to ask for her comments on the issue.....I will pass on her reply to you....if you wish to pursue further matters raised by the reply, please do not hesitate to contact me.....I shall also be asking a question to Margaret Becket in the House this Thursday Jan 31st about the use of Lindane. I am asking her to ban it completely.

Yours sincerely, Anne Campbell

**And then Diane received the following extract from Hansard
31 January 2002 -**

Mrs Anne Campbell (Cambridge): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will ban the use of the pesticide lindane. (29537)

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett):

The use of all lindane-based products is being phased out. No products may be sold or supplied in the United Kingdom and all products intended for agricultural use must be used up and disposed of by 20 June 2002.

The approvals for the use of lindane wood preservatives have already been revoked and stock must be disposed of by November 2002. Some insecticides remain approved for storage and use until January 2003, but must then be disposed of by January 2004.

Mrs Campbell I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. She will be aware of the link that has been made between the use of lindane and the worrying increase in the incidence of breast cancer. Can she assure me that, as well as being phased out for commercial, agricultural and horticultural use, lindane will be phased out for domestic use throughout Europe?

Margaret Beckett: Obviously, what happens throughout Europe is a matter for other authorities, but I can assure my hon. Friend that we keep closely under review issues relating to lindane. I am aware that concern has been expressed about a link between its use and breast cancer, but my hon. Friend will also know that reservations have been expressed about the strength of that link and whether there is a risk. It remains the case, however, that lindane is on the way to being phased out for the uses listed by my hon. Friend.”

(Note I buy Waitrose organic milk - the skimmed variety is £1.35 for a four-pint bottle and I freeze it. And I think I'll ask Diane if it's possible for us to have a visit to the Houses of Parliament and tea on the terrace. Ann)

CANDLES We have a large quantity of used Church candles. Looking for someone to make them into new candles so that we can sell them on our fund-raising stalls. I'm told it is best to build the new candle around the old one so that you don't then have to actually replace the wick.

THERAPIES AVAILABLE AT THE CENTRE

Healing - Reiki and Spiritual 10a.m.-1p.m. on Tuesdays and 10am-midday on Wednesdays

Relaxation - midday to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays

Counselling



**WILD THURSDAY (THE EYE)
OR TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED
OR JUST PLAIN PORKY PIES**

The day had finally arrived.

Most of us didn't get any sleep the night before due to the excitement. Personally I thought that going to the Eye would be the exciting part.

Then there was the added thrill of the first lot of road-works we had to pass through on the M11. When we came through the second lot so easily I realised the day was ours. Quite soon we were nosing our way through the East End with the aid of Fran's excellent directions.

Having parked and wondered in which direction lay the river, Maria bless her cotton socks, chased a ninety five year old woman for information, only to receive a blank stare when she mentioned the word Thames. We didn't get downhearted, though, and in no time at all we had found the aorta of our capital city. The boat was waiting for us. David kindly volunteered to go up top as lookout. During the trip I mused on how quiet the river was and how few craft there seemed to be. It was a kind of eerie feeling tinged with sadness - the sadness of a great port reduced to stillness. Endless blocks of flats stared back at us across the swollen waters. Further beyond, in the taller buildings, I thought I could detect the quietness of money being made.

Then we saw Tower Bridge - a fantastic construction. We craned our necks and were soon staring, shivering slightly, at the old Traitors Gate on the river wall of the Tower. It was then that I noticed that Mary had become somewhat agitated and was (we all learnt this afterwards) phoning to make a liaison with a young man from the City. We looked away and pretended we couldn't hear any of her conversation. Anyway, it was all a misunderstanding and, some time later, we met her charming son Alex. Panic was far from our minds as we approached the Eye but it was then that excitement took over once more and caused a near catastrophe. The trouble

was we all tried to get into the Capsule at the same time and pressure from the member of staff from behind pushing the last person in, caused our little Group to collapse on the floor. The door closed behind and we were trapped. I tripped twice before I managed to steady myself with my stick which I thrust into the spokes of Ron's wheelchair. I wasn't hurt - honest.

We picked ourselves up, dusted ourselves off and set about shouting abuse at the Flight Attendant who hardly noticed us as he tried in vain to stop a woman with four large dogs getting into the next capsule. Someone asked where the flight would take us. Round and about came the reply. Our Leader, Ann, then brought us back to order and calm. She is a Wonderful Person. I think we all feel better when we just concentrate and listen to her. The view was wonderful too. We just stood and stared and took in the bowl of London with, on its rim, the scribble of hills in the distance. There's Primrose Hill and Hampstead Heath and, if you really look closely, Mrs Queen walking the corgis. No, she's in Australia, it must be a look-alike!

There was a delay on our return to Greenwich - an exceptionally high tide prevented us from getting onto the jetty. Without prompting Ron put out his arm and the water immediately went back into the river, which is where it should have stayed in the first place. Round the wardroom table we fell to discussing future Wild Thursday activities. Someone suggested Paris via Eurostar but that was thought to be much too exciting and it was Tony and Ingrid's coffee at the Grafton Centre that won most votes.

The next morning I put on Vaughan Williams' haunting London Symphony (which strangely I had bought a few days earlier) and was reminded of yesterday and the moods of a great city. *Robin*

The Didn't we have a loverly day
Day The day we went to London
We left at eight
Not too late
Chatting and joking we travelled in style
We With Tony as chauffeur and
Ron as the goaffer!
Three in a car
Not too far
Arriving at ten
Coffee and bun
Went Five gals and four lads
Oh what great fun
The day we went to London
To
London

Afloat

at eleven
Oh, what heaven
The Thames we sailed and viewed
The girths of London with all it's feuds
Alighted at twelve
“Big Ben” someone yelled
The Eye in view
And food on our minds
Across Westminster Bridge
We hurried and climbed
The day we went to London

The Eye at two
Oh, what a view
Thirty two cabins and tons of
steel
We moved slowly round
On London's big wheel
Half past two
We were through
Elated and moved
The day we went to London

David, with Ron in a chair
Oh, what a fantastic pair
Lunch at one
More great fun
Nine meals carefully picked
Baked potatoes, lasagne, salad and chips
Ron with his fish and tea
Coffee and milk and a coke for me
The day we went to London

Such a wonderful feeling
Seeing all of London's ceiling
Back at three
Last boat, unfortunately
High tides with flooding
Delays boats back to Greenwich
So wading and paddling our skirts we up-hitch!

Four o'clock arrives
The tide subsides
As the sun goes down
Our boat trip back
Is full of laughter
And wonderful chat
The day we went to London

Five o'clock tea
Cakes and hot coffee
We're now homeward bound
What a wonderful day
We said our goodbyes
Kisses, hugs and tears in our 'eye'
The day we went to London

Love and xxx Ingrid



Quote from Ron! He left his eggs in our car so when we got home there was a message from him on our answer phone, saying "Ingrid, please post my eggs to me! xx

What did I think of the Eye trip? I liked the coming together of friends, which is something that always gratifies me and, as we went by Traitors' Gate, imagining the feelings of the people as they were taken into that place, through that watery gateway, to face execution. *Ann*



More Wild Thursdays coming up -We are about to explore Saffron Walden and then Sid is taking us to lunch in his favourite Audley End pub.

A WOMAN'S LOGIC - *Steve Peck*

There I was, standing in the sunshine in the middle of the day in Papworth...bored. So, out came the radar gun. A spot of "harassing the motorist" was called for.

There wasn't long to wait. Soon it came into view, nicely over the limit. Checked with the gun, locked on the speed and out I stepped in all my glory to stop the offending car.

"Good morning, madam" I said. "Are you aware you are speeding?" I showed her the speed registered on the radar gun.
"I'm sorry, officer," she replied.

So I duly filled in the fixed penalty ticket. When I got to the part that requires the offender to give a reason for the offence, I asked "is there any reason why you were exceeding the speed limit?"

"Well, yes, it's my budgie's fault!"
"Sorry. Can you explain?"

"Well, I am on my way to the pet crematorium. My budgie is dead, and I'm late, so it's really his fault, isn't it? Look, officer, I'll show you." And with that, she reached behind and opened a shoe box, which had a beautiful green and white budgie lying in cotton wool in it.

"See, it's dead" she said.
"Well, I'm sorry," I said. "But why is it his fault you are speeding?"
"Because if he had died earlier in the day, I would have had more time to get to the crematorium, wouldn't I?"

You work it out, Reader, 'cos I couldn't!

Sounds perfectly logical to me - perhaps he let her off. *Ann*

DELAYED GRATIFICATION In the past I ran, and sometimes nowadays run, a course on Time Management for the Health Authority. One of the things I say on this course is that a psychologist said something like “if you give a two-year old child a piece of cake with icing on he/she will probably eat the icing first. If you give the same piece of cake to an adult he/she will perhaps eat the boring bits of cake first and save the icing until the last. In other words, delayed gratification. So.....

When I arrive at the Centre in the mornings, I do the boring bits first. Such as putting bleach in the toilets. Then fill up and put on the urn, tidy up the place, open the mail. Then if I get all that done quickly, the best bit (the gratification) comes and that is when I lie in the Cambridgeshire Constabulary velvety relaxer chair - feet up, head back, do the relaxing breathing thing saying to myself “all is well” as I breathe in and breathe out as I think “there is nothing to fear” (do it if you can’t sleep), while I listen to Pachelbel or The Perfect Day or The First Time Ever I saw your Face (reminds me of Nic and Mo and how Nic planned that song to be played for Mo at his funeral)) or Eva Cassidy’s “Songbird”. Then in the quietness, but with the music, I often think of the friends we have lost, and a small tear or two may find a way out, but I go on to think of the many more people who have survived and who are surviving their cancer. And the carers also who have gone through the thick and thin of it all. I am sure it helps to come to a place like our Centre where it’s O.K. to talk about anything. To perhaps talk about our worries in a way that at home it may not be comfortable for us to do, because of concerns for our families. After all, it isn’t unusual for someone to choose **not** to tell their families all the bad news they have received. And it doesn’t take much imagination to appreciate what that must be like and how isolating it must feel and how crucial it is to have friends to talk to at the Centre.

So we find that people who have cancer are brilliant helpers to someone else who has cancer. They are usually good listeners and can offer encouraging and positive help and advice, forgetting about their own concerns for a moment or two while they help someone else.

So, because we aren't locked into a rigid system of "volunteers" helping people who have cancer, and with all the rules one would have for volunteers, it seems timely to remind ourselves that all of us learn things about each other and perhaps it must be that they are confidential to people at the Centre. In other words, we need to remind ourselves about that when we leave the Centre.

Our way of operating works well and that is due to the most amazing people who visit our Centre - thank you to everyone for making it so.

THANKS TO Pauline and Richard for all the good and lovely things they give us to sell, or use at the Centre, Robert Sayle Charities Committee who sent us an un-asked for, surprise cheque for £400, (what a brilliant place that Robert Sayles is), Cambridgeshire Constabulary for the stationery cupboard (and they delivered it and we made them some "thank you" cakes), Maureen, Gill and Sid who deposit our collection tins in pubs and shops, John and Ken who restyled (from 7' high to 6'6" high) an existing cupboard, outside and in the freezing cold, so that it would fit into the relevant space in my office (which forever onward will now be tidy!)

SAYS HE WOULDN'T WANT TO TAKE ME ON

So I looked at the cupboard, early this morning, was all by myself and thought how brilliant it would be if I could get it into my office by myself, rather than wait for some help. First things first - made some tea. Then found some fireman's gloves, because the edges of the metal shelves were sharp, and I'm glad to say I then managed to navigate the way up the steps and into the office, with the cupboard. Someone was amazed that I managed to do it by myself and said something like "you did that? Good grief, I wouldn't want to take you on". Well....

(Fran found this for us)

“REGULAR MAMMOGRAMS REMAIN A CRUCIAL TOOL”

By I. Craig Henderson “February 9, 2002

At the heart of the current debate over the value of annual mammograms are seven clinical trials conducted 20-40 years ago. In those trials, women were randomly chosen either to undergo routine screening mammography or to wait until the appearance of symptoms, such as a lump in the breast.

Two Danish statisticians recently re-examined the results of those trials and found that mammography is not beneficial.

But a recent review of the same evidence conducted by a committee (on which I served) of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences reached the opposite conclusion. The committee’s report, issued last spring, said the preponderance of the evidence suggests that if a woman without any signs or symptoms of breast cancer has mammograms at regular intervals, she will substantially decrease her risk of dying from this disease.

These differing conclusions are not terribly surprising. All of the clinical trials are old, and they vary in the ways they were designed and conducted. For many years, experts have argued over which studies are more valid than others. The report by the Danish statisticians, which deemed only two of the seven clinical studies to be acceptable, represents one more analysis of the same data.

The Institute of Medicine committee - made up of 16 respected specialists including mammographers, epidemiologists, statisticians and clinicians - did review the work of the Danish statisticians before issuing its report. No one doubts that there are flaws in the clinical trials. But we also knew that when only some of the trials are examined and others are ignored, new biases are introduced into the interpretation of the results. When all the results are pooled, the data show a clear benefit from mammography.

It is now time to move beyond the debate about the seven old studies and find ways in which we can build on these results. New

technologies like digital mammography, M.R.I. and PET scans could potentially improve our ability to detect early signs of breast cancer. These methods are very promising, but the Institute of Medicine panel concluded they have not been adequately evaluated to determine whether they could replace more traditional mammography. We urged that government and insurers facilitate their development as tools for detecting early breast cancer. For example, the National Institutes of Health should co-operate with the companies that developed these technologies to set up randomized trials to determine if they really represent important improvements.

There are also entirely new approaches, like genetic microarrays that detect precancerous genes in breast tissue; identification of tumor markers - proteins that appear on the surface of some cells; and blood tests that might detect secretions from cancerous cells. Some of these methods may someday offer greater hope for reducing breast cancer death rates than mammography. They, too, need to be studied.

For now, however, no governmental agency, including the National Institutes of Health, and no established private organization in the United States has changed its recommendations for early detection of cancer by mammography as a result of the Danish report, and in the foreseeable future, none are likely to. The vast majority of American breast cancer specialists have concluded from all of the available evidence that early detection can make a difference in saving women's lives. This is reflected in the conclusions of several expert panels.

Mammography is certainly not a perfect screening tool, but it is currently the most effective tool we have for finding breast cancer in its earliest stages. That is why it is important for the government to ensure that all American women have adequate access to mammograms.

I. Craig Henderson, adjunct professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, was vice chairman of a National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine committee that studied

early detection of breast cancer."

WEST ANGLIA NHS CANCER NETWORK PATIENT/ USER FORUM Standards for Health Professionals Communicating Significant Information

Erica Lowry participates in the Forum and was once a volunteer at our Centre in our early days and the first Sister I worked for when I started my nurse training. I can only say that if I were ill I'd like Erica to look after me and if I were a nurse again I'd want to work for Erica.

These are the minutes of their meeting held on 12 January. They represent the final version of the Terms of Reference and Communicating Significant Information standards. The minutes are on the Centre's notice board but the following is what is shown under "Standards for Health Professionals/Communicating Significant Information"

Patients will be informed of their diagnosis (and on other occasions bad news is given) with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

Health professionals will communicate with patients/carers particularly where children and parents are involved in a friendly as well as sensitive manner.

Patient/carers will be made aware and agree with the method adopted to inform them of their diagnosis.

Patients will be given the choice of having a relative/carer with them when they are informed.

The conversation will be conducted in an area where the discussion cannot be overheard.

The number of people present when the conversation occurs will be kept to the bare minimum.

The conversation will be conducted by an experienced health professional with an appropriate level of knowledge to answer the patient's questions who has:

Received training in communication skills

Will have an ongoing relationship with the patient/carer

The patient's permission will be sought prior to information being given to a relative/carer

Sufficient information will be given to the patient (plus or minus carer) on all the treatment options available to them to enable them to make an informed choice. This will include verbal/written information on:

Disease

Diagnostic procedures

Treatment options and effects

Outcomes

Post treatment symptoms

Contact details for co-ordinator of specialist team

Psychological support and/or voluntary support groups

The depth, quantity and rate at which this information is given should be based upon an individual patient/carer's needs.

In instances where the treatment option includes entry into a clinical trial, additional time and information will be offered to patient/carers to enable them fully to consider all the potential benefit/disadvantages of entering the trial.

Written information on the outcome of the consultation, e.g. letter, will be forwarded to the patient following a decision on the final treatment plan.

A programmed schedule of dates for treatment will be given to the patient once the treatment plan has been agreed.

All patients will be given the contact details of a specific individual they may contact for additional information or advice, as well as a

24 hour emergency contact number (this may be the G.P.).

For patients where English is not the first language or they have a visual or hearing impairment or other disability, every effort should be made to ensure information is provided in an appropriate format. Prior notification will need to be given of a particular patient's needs. Every effort should be made to ensure there is an independent translator available for the consultation if the patient wishes.

Information on services that can be accessed by patients and carers will be made readily available within hospitals, health centres and G.P. surgeries.

To prevent unnecessary distress, the patient will always be made aware of the contents of information contained within their patient held records where these are used.

Information on the Network Patient/User Forum and Locality Patient Groups, voluntary and support groups will be made readily accessible to patients within hospitals, health centres and G.P. surgeries.”

THE CENTRE NEEDS, PLEASE Envelopes measuring 9" x 12", geraniums for the "patio" and, please, towels.



"GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING" (and Desire, Pain, Longing and Shame) Harper Collins ISBN 0-00-651320-4.

The author of the novel is Tracy Chevalier. Tricia bought this book for me for my birthday last year.

The picture on the cover was painted by Johannes Vermeer and should it ever be exhibited here I think we should have a Wild Thursday visit to see it. One of the descriptions of the book is that it is mysterious and almost unbearably poignant. And if you are walking through a bookshop and her face is suddenly on view, you will see her expression revealing (in my opinion) Desire, along with Pain, Longing and Shame - all of that and all at once. And looking at this picture brings a lump or two to the throat or maybe a tear to the eye. But then, I'm funny like that.



BED AND NO BREAKFAST

There I was, compromised in a compromising situation, (as also were Fran, John and Tony - so the Centre was well represented as flouters of the law) like in a small place with heavy locks on the door and a window you can't see out of. And I'm pretty sure I detected more than a modicum of delight in he who was enjoying showing me where to go. Did quick recce of the place and asked if I pressed the red button whether someone would bring me breakfast. No go I was told (very hurtful that I thought) so I sulked. Then someone who looked a lot like Tony, and who was, I have to say, aided and abetted , took my photograph by pointing his camera through a conveniently placed hole in the door.

Laugh, I could have cried

JUBILEE - We could celebrate the Jubilee as well as celebrating 16 years of the Centre's existence. Ideas please - we have thought about bringing in curry, Chinese food or fish and chips or all three. We have thought about everyone bringing in food to share - bit like the Christmas Party. With those options we cannot toast the Queen, or the Centre, because we aren't permitted to consume alcohol. So we're looking for a large garden please - any offers?

THE HASLINGFIELD FOLK DANCE BAND are having a Big Barn Dance on Saturday 10 October, 2002 at 8 p.m. at St Bedes School in Cambridge in aid of our Centre. Tickets are available now and cost £7.50 and include a ploughman's supper, bring your own drinks. I said I thought lots of us would make cakes to help with the catering. Clive tells me that even if we don't want to dance it is entertaining just to sit and watch . Let me know if you require a ticket. Or phone Clive direct on 01223 870741. The Big Barn Dance in 2001 raised £1000 for charity. They hope to raise more this year. - for us!

PROSTATE CANCER KILLS 700 MEN A MONTH IN BRITAIN. BUT IGNORANCE AND EMBARRASSMENT ARE OFTEN TO BLAME That's what it says in a headline in an article I read in the Observer Magazine. To read all of Jim Pollard's report please look in the Centre's library. One sentence in the report establishes that an enlarged prostate is a normal part of ageing and not usually life-threatening but it goes on to say that any growth still needs to be viewed seriously for the obvious reason that it could be cancer.

HISTON FEAST

Ros Nightingale and I went to talk to the Histon Feast Committee, applying for some funding from the Feast Week they organise every year. I'm glad to say our application was successful. We'll let you know the date of the feast, and their committee will be asking as many of us as possible to help sell the feast programmes and join in the fun during the week. We plan to use the money we are given to help provide free complementary therapies - the ones we cannot offer at the Centre because of the lack of privacy..

PYHICIAN, HEAL THYSELF is the headline in The Observer Review on 17 March 2002

Jane Wardle has written about being diagnosed with cancer herself after being appointed director of a research unit carrying out psychological research into the prevention of cancer. She was told she had CLL - a cancer of the white cells in the blood. Lots of interest to read in this article (which is in our library). One thing she said was that she explained to her friends that if she expressed distress she didn't want solutions or cheering up. She wanted sympathy - such as "there ,there". She said that would be just fine. In the newspaper article mention is made of Cancer Research UK information service at cancer.info@cancer.org.uk., Their patient information site is on www.cancerhelp.org.uk. Other useful sites are www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/leukemiaadultchronic.html and also www.healthtalk.com/cllen/index.html.



OUR JOURNEY

March 2002 - a date in our lives we were so looking forward to. A date when the rest of our lives were going to be racing ahead of us. A date that signalled the end of one era and the beginning of a new one. How wrong we were. How quickly we couldn't wait to get March 2002 over and done with. For us March 2002 was the all-clear date. Now March 2002 is 200 hours into another round of chemotherapy, 200 hours chemo to go, 21 radiotherapy sessions ahead of us, another operation and countless trips to the children's oncology day unit.

In March 2000, my handsome, cheeky 8 year old Matthew got a tummy ache. Not just any old tummy ache - but a drama tummy ache to an 8 year old and he had his appendix removed. Not just any appendix as it so happens but a perfectly fine, healthy (and, because it was Matthew's appendix - handsome) appendix was removed.

My first thought was, oh Matthew, you've made such a fuss, over nothing, but it wasn't over "nothing". The tummy ache remained. The tears flowed and a scan was done to assure us that Matthew was O.K. But it did the opposite. Matt was anything but O.K. and within a week a Wilms tumour had been removed and the following week chemotherapy commenced.

Still handsome, still cheeky he (we) watched all of the summer Olympics - night and day, whilst throwing up in the lounge following chemo and with two cocker spaniel dogs and a distraught cat to keep us company. An older sister, who wasn't old enough to fully understand the full impact of Matt's illness revelled in the 'sleepovers' at friends and family and her "adventures".

Ignorance was bliss. The chemo finished and the three monthly check-ups followed.

We became blasé. We actually enjoyed our 'outings' to the oncology day unit. We pinched the nurses' sweets - we told them old (and new) jokes. We actually looked forward to meeting the same smiley faces, patting our heads and saying "see you in 3 months" before pinching another sweet and going home.

But the week before Christmas, with one "see you in 3 months" ahead of us. We didn't see a smiley face after the scan. Another tumour had grown.....The rest is still ahead of us. Matthew is still handsome, cheeky but ignorance is no longer bliss. Every day brings a challenge, a new (or old!) Joke and sometimes heart-wrenching despair. Every day is one day past our March 2002 milestone. We haven't set a new date but we know we won't be being sick when the next Olympics is on - and we know we'll only be watching it in the daytime (because we'll be sleeping through the nights!)

We have a lot of hope and so, so many positive feelings. We know that "whatever it is it will pass" and every time we walk into Addenbrooke's we know it will.

We would also like to say "thank you" to all of you at the Centre.

You let “big sis” Hannah play her violin to you at Christmas. You happily took the mistletoe which was ruining our apple tree and you remember us by sending cards - so thank you, it means a lot.

From Matthew’s Mum



How do you get Pikachu on a bus?

Pokemon

2 men on a train.

First man said “can you see the forest over there?”

Second man said, “no, there are too many trees in the way.”

Knock, knock,, who’s there?

Luke

Luke who?

Luke through the keyhole and you’ll see

Doctor, doctor, I feel like a dustbin

Oh, stop talking rubbish

What do you get if you cross an elephant with a sparrow?

Bent telephone wires!

How do you keep cool at a football match?

Stand by a fan!

Matthew - thank you for these jokes - you’ll have to explain one of them to me because I don’t understand it! We’ll put the rest of them in next time when we have got a bit more space. And we look forward to receiving what you have written for us when you are feeling better. Lots of love from all of us

TWO TRAVELLING ANGELS *Anon*

Two travelling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room. Instead the angels were given a small space in the cold basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied

"things aren't always what they seem".

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food they had, the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest. When the sun came up the next morning the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel "how could you have let this happen? The first man had everything, yet you helped him", she accused. "The second family had little, but was willing to share everything, and you let the cow die."

"Things aren't always what they seem" the older angel replied

"When we stayed in the basement of the mansion I noticed there was gold stored in that hole in the wall. Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it."

"Then last night as we slept in the farmers' bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave him the cow instead."

"Things aren't always what they seem"

Much love *Ann* x x x
(aannd@cs.com).com

P.S. Man goes to pub. Has had a few drinks too many. Thinks he had better head for home or his wife will be angry. Tries to stand up from his chair but just couldn't make it so decided to have one more drink. After that he tried to stand up from his chair again but still couldn't do it. Getting worried now because wife is not known for patience when he has been to the pub and has over-indulged. So, asks for a coffee but still cannot find the energy to get himself up and on his way so has another coffee or two and finally manages to get out of chair and crawls home to his house which is only a couple of doors away. Makes it into bed. Wife doesn't wake up. Sighs of relief. Phew he thinks. Made it, she will never know and he sinks into a deep peaceful sleep. Next morning his wife brings him his morning cup of tea. "You were drunk last night?" she said. "Course I wasn't" he said. "Yes, you were" she said. "Don't know why you think that", he says indignantly."

"Because", she said, "you left your wheelchair in the pub."



P.P.S. This policeman looked me in the eye and said, "you do not have to say anything, but anything you do say"no hang on a minute, that must have been before - oh yes - got it - he said, "please thank everyone who made those delicious cakes for us." We distributed them to the Crime Training Team and the Traffic Police.

Ann