



PETER AND THE WEIGHT

When Nurse Peter Fitzgerald joined our Practice in May 2010 he was a tall fellow with a ready smile and acerbic wit. He was also festively plump - weighing in at 20 stone! Three months ago he undertook a diet to raise funds for essential equipment for the Practice, with the benefit of his patients in mind. He had also felt hypocritical, expecting patients to lose weight when he was carrying more



than was necessary. After assiduously following the NHS Why Weight? programme for 3 months, with a little help from an unfortunate bout of food poisoning halfway through, he reached his goal on 7 June - a loss of 3 stone. He's aiming to lose more but wanted to start with a realistic yet challenging target. Peter is still tall, cheerful, witty AND a trim 17 stone. Inspirational!

So far he has raised more than £500 and is looking to put the sponsorship money towards several items of equipment for the surgery to help diagnose medical conditions and aid in the treatment of ongoing problems. His shopping list includes: a new mobile spirometer which is used to measure and help diagnose different respiratory and breathing disorders, finger pulse oximeters; which measure oxygen levels in the blood supply by shining a light through the fingernail and a hand held Doppler ultrasound which is used to detect and measure problems associated with blood supply in the legs.

He is still collecting sponsorship and would be delighted to exceed his expectations. Just ask at reception if you would like to help him along. He would also be very happy to tell you just how he did it. He is a shining example of a 'can do' attitude. A past broken back has been no excuse for his extra weight and proves that it is possible to overcome such hurdles.

Check out the website westsussex.nhs.uk/services-why-weight or call 0300 123 0892 for details. If you join the programme they offer 12 weeks free platinum gym membership to your local gym and 12 weeks free Weight Watchers attendance. PLUS if you lose 5% of your target within the first 12 weeks - they will offer you a further 12. That's almost half a year of free memberships!

The surgery takes infection control seriously. Waiting room chairs & screens in the GPs' rooms have been replaced with wipe clean seating and disposable curtains. Nothing was wasted though - chairs were cleaned and given to a local community project and curtains were cleaned, altered & dispatched to a hospital in Sri Lanka.

Victoria Road Surgery Patient Participation Group

This is a friendly group where patients and GPs meet to discuss ideas and concerns so that our patient services can be improved. It aims to meet for an hour every 3 to 4 months. If you are interested in joining us or would like more information, please leave your details at the VR or DHC desk, or email me: trevor.wimble@nhs.net

Farewell to Nina

It is with much sadness that we have to announce that **Dr Nina Barrows** is leaving the Practice on 30 June 2011. Dr Barrows does not live in Worthing and has decided that it will be better for her family if she works closer to her home. She has taken a post in Horsham. Many patients & colleagues will miss her and we wish her all the best for the future.

Twenty seven miles of sweat and pain. Was it worth it? Definitely. Did I enjoy it? Not really! The Three Forts Marathon is a beautiful local route - up Cissbury Ring, then to Devil's Dyke, Chanctonbury Ring, back to Cissbury Ring, then down the hill to finish in Worthing (Ye-Ha!).

Over the last three years I have kept myself in reasonable shape running, cycling and walking. This was my third cross country marathon and I knew that in the months leading up to a big run I needed to gradually wind up the distances. Getting up early at the weekends, going out evenings after work, taking my running gear with me on holiday, training every other day. I had lost weight, changed shape, and felt fit and tough.

In the final week I tapered my training and the last three days were spent stuffing my face with pasta. My race day carbohydrate laden breakfast had been eaten in plenty of time. But, for some reason, I did not feel right. I felt heavy and stiff. There was no way that I was going to bail out though (unlike last year when I fell ill two days before the race) so I got my head down, walked up the steepest climbs and chugged up and down the rest of the course, passing and then being re-passed by the same people. The constant gradient change made it difficult to find a rhythm. The sun bore down and a strong and unwelcome wind blew into our faces for the first two hours. I developed weirdly blurred vision on my descent from Devil's Dyke, tried to keep on top of my fluid and electrolyte losses with Gatorade and ate jelly babies until I was sick of them. I relentlessly placed one foot in front of the other and watched the miles tick by. The first twenty miles are normally fine for me. I do not actually hit a wall after then, merely start losing my form and slowing my pace. The battle to keep running towards the end is an intriguing test of body and mind. My legs have had enough, I am not really enjoying myself anymore but the desire to finish and not be overtaken by too many other runners forces me on. The marshals were great. 'Keep going, you're doing well. You look great!' they shouted. They knew and I knew that I looked awful! Four hours and fifty-six minutes later and it was over. Not a great time but I was relieved to finish. Time for a bath then a quick game of football with my boys in the garden!

Dr Jonathan Price



Jane de Jong Practice Manager

SUMMER is already with us but it won't be long before we start encouraging our patients to have their winter flu vaccine again. During the first week in October our flu vaccines will arrive and we will be offering you appointments. If you are eligible please do not forget to book, do not leave it like last year until there is a possible pandemic and you remain unprotected. We will start to accept bookings for this in **early September**. Some of you will have noticed that we have been asking for your **feedback** in the waiting room to see how we are doing? We have given you free text for comments. A good percentage of your comments state your frustration at being unable to get through on the telephone at 8am in the morning and also your inability to get an appointment. At this point I would like to provide you with a few facts that may provide perspective:

- We provide approximately 820 bookable doctors' appts per week.

- We see an average of an extra 30 patients per day, this equates to another 150 patients per week.
- We visit an average of 50 patients per week in their homes.
- We currently provide services for approximately 11000 patients.
- An average week sees 25 patients fail to turn up for appointments.

Our GPs do want to provide the best possible services for our patients and are continuously looking at ways to improve the Practice. At a recent meeting they decided to increase their appointments even further each week to try to meet the current demands.

The telephone lines at 8am are always busy with the majority of patients phoning to get an appointment for that day if they have just become unwell. We try to answer your calls quickly and we do not employ automated answering that puts you into a queuing system. In the past we have asked our patients if they would prefer this system but they advised us that they prefer to be answered by a person straightaway even if it means the phone line is engaged until you manage to get through. It may be we need to

conduct this survey again to see if your preferences have changed. We are encouraging patients to use the internet to book their appointments. This will save you having to phone in the morning (*see details below*). We did have some very lovely positive comments in the survey too:

'Excellent. The reception staff are brilliant, helpful and efficient. Appointments are reasonably easy to acquire'.

'Flexibility with appointments very good at this surgery'.

'All staff very pleasant and polite. I have been with surgery for years - I think that says how satisfied I am - Brilliant staff and Surgery - Thank you all'.

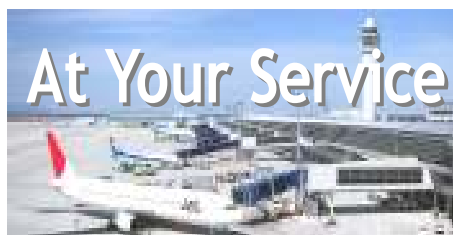
Please remember I can be available if you wish to talk about any good or bad issues regarding the surgery.

Just had a baby?

Please do not forget to bring in (or send someone in!) with your **postnatal discharge summary**. You also need to register the baby with us as soon as possible in case the baby needs to be seen or you would like advice. Just collect registration forms at the desk.

There can be little doubt that many of us are at a loss to understand the laws being passed in Brussels and whether they actually improve our daily lives. There is, however, one recent piece of legislation that is a real winner for those travelling by air to or from anywhere within the EU with any kind of disability whether physical or otherwise and regardless of whether it is temporary or permanent.

This is how it works. When you make your booking either through a travel agent or direct with an airline you inform them of your disability and assistance you require. It is then the responsibility of the airport and airline to ensure you get assistance. This was our experience on a recent trip to Italy. We informed BA that we had certain needs when we booked our flight. On arrival at Gatwick we checked in as normal and when we



pointed out that we had advised them of our need for transport we were directed to a particular seating area to await transport.

As my wife and I are in our 80's and I have a dodgy hip we can do without the long hike across the airport to the South Terminal.

After a short wait an electric buggy arrived and we were loaded, together with our luggage, and driven across the airport to the appropriate gate.

When the aircraft was ready for loading we were escorted to the front of the queue and were first to board. On arrival at Pisa we were met by two

members of the Italian Red Cross with wheelchairs and we were taken, again with our luggage, to the front of the terminal. When we arrived at the airport for our return journey the Italian Red Cross were in attendance again to help us on to the aircraft. At Gatwick we were met by Passenger Services with wheelchairs who took us, with a wave of the hand, straight through Customs and Passport control to the terminal entrance ready for our departure.

There are two important factors with this arrangement. Firstly, should the various airlines or airports fail to provide the service you require the EU will take appropriate action against them which can be very punitive.

Secondly, the entire service is totally free throughout the EU - but you must remember to advise whoever you book with of your needs at the time of booking. A free booklet sets out the whole thing in simple language - phone 08456 046610 or online at equalityhumanrights.com.

Cyril Selby

Victoria Road Surgery PPG member

Payment of fees for private services

The cheque guarantee card scheme in the UK is closing on 30 June 2011. We regret that after this date we shall no longer be able to accept personal cheques and all payments for private services must be made in cash.

Calling all Victoria Road patients

Have a computer, laptop, Sky, ipad (or similar device)? Then why not go on-line & make appointments (and save the cost of phone calls!) or order repeat prescriptions.

Bring i/d into either surgery and we can sign you up. For more details visit: www.victoriaroadsurgery.co.uk

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