

Warwick & District Breathe Easy Group

August/September Newsletter

Chairman's Report

One Today!

This time of year often seems to be full of promise, nature comes alive and the extra daylight is very welcome. The extra pollen is not such good news for some of us though. The addition of expected pollen levels to weather forecasts as well as the sun index is helpful, but doesn't make it go away!

The reduction in our fuel bills is another reason to welcome the spring season, and the celebrating of our group's first birthday is good news as well. So do try to keep going, and I hope you can keep motivated to carry on taking your medication, resting and exercising or whatever is needed to help you.

Tony Brown, Chairman

We celebrated our first birthday at the evening meeting on April 4th and we had an excellent attendance. Caroline Johnson, our regional Support & Development Manager, and Mo Fowler, the Regional Recruitment Officer, were both there to wish us well. We had an excellent speaker for this meeting Rachel Booker, from the National Respiratory Training Centre. She talked about COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), which is her particular interest and passion, and her area of expertise. Rachel gave a very detailed PowerPoint presentation, which explained what is COPD, how does it effect one



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June's Meeting

and what are the solutions. She said COPD cannot be cured but it is treatable. She covered in detail the individual medicines and how they work and explored other ways in which you can help yourself, such as keeping fit and enjoying life. However, if you do get low and feel depressed, which is an understandable reaction to being breathless all the time, then you should talk to your doctor. He/she will be able to help you. She explained about the new GP contracts, which will mean more regular support for those with COPD, such as regular monitoring of lung function. She also strongly advocated the benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation as it will improve your general feeling of well-being and quality of life and will keep you out of hospital!

This evening's talk was about the Buteyko method of breathing. Our speaker, Linda Meads, and her colleague Susi Brantford, both Buteyko practitioners, gave us a very interesting talk about this treatment.



The originator, Professor Konstantin Buteyko, studied patients with asthma and other lung conditions. He worked in the former Soviet Union where the supply of medication was limited, so he devised a method of treatment that could help patients reduce their reliance on inhalers.

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July's Meeting

An Australian visitor taken ill on a visit to Russia was so impressed by the success of this treatment that it was decided to publicise its benefits. Since then the treatment has become available in many countries and is given by trained practitioners. They study the patient's normal breathing pattern and help them to relearn to breathe correctly.

Clinical trials with small groups have proved that the technique can help asthma sufferers become less reliant on their medication/inhalers. Their symptoms were reduced by following the Buteyko method.

Thank you to Linda and Susi for your time. Linda Meads can be contacted on 01789 298290.

Later on in June, our secretary Linda Kay became Linda Smith, so congratulations go to her on her marriage. Linda was presented with flowers at the meeting and thanked for all her hard work in running the group.



Please note Linda's new phone number 024 7669 7262

Our speaker was Dr R Jones, Chest Consultant at Warwick Hospital, and he talked to us about Medical Ethics.

When we first heard the proposed subject it didn't seem

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The group benefits from David getting smaller!

Future Meetings

AGM on 3 October

Lottery Money

one case a young accident victim has been in a persistent vegetative state. The family want everything possible done to maintain life. Does the doctor honour the families request? There is no clear answer.

As patients, we have the right to understand our diseases and treatment, and we should all think about making a living will without the pressure of imminent treatment and to help our family make our choices clear if we cannot. Many thanks to Dr Jones for a very interesting talk and for answering our questions.

David raised over £200 in a sponsored slim and very generously donated the money raised to the group. Thank you very much David.

5th September	Jo Radley on Acupuncture
3rd October	Heather Adams on well-being and keeping healthy This is also our AGM
7th November	Linda Heritage on Pulmonary Rehabilitation classes

We will be holding our AGM as part of the evening meeting on 3rd October – it will be a very swift part of the meeting. If anyone is interested in joining the committee they would be very welcome. We need all sorts of help such as meeting and greeting members at the door, helping with tea and coffee, typing up newsletters, organising speakers and general participation at committee meetings. Speak to any of the committee and we would be pleased to answer any questions.

We have just spent part of the money we received from the national lottery to help with the running of the group on a microphone and amplification system. We appreciate that it can often be very hard to hear the speakers and we do encourage them to use the microphone.

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Midlands Region of the BLF

Midlands Lung Run

BLF news

BLF Helpline

A Midlands Regional newsletter has been produced and copies of these are available to read at evening meetings.

News from our region includes:

Goodbye to Mo Fowler, the Recruitment Officer who has accepted a post with the Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) Association. Mo was very helpful organising press releases and attended several evening meetings.

If you have any suggestions of news we can share with other groups please speak to Linda. We can send articles and photographs.

The 12th annual Midlands Lung Run took place on Sunday 24th April at Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield with over 2000 runners.

The respiratory unit at Warwick Hospital decided to participate this year. The team comprised of Lynn Fletcher, Respiratory Nurse Specialist and Vice Chairman of the Breathe Easy Warwick and District Group, Lesley Gotschy, Lung Nurse Specialist, Dr. Chris Bassford, Respiratory Registrar, Dr. Dan Smith, SHO, Lynne Brownlee, Secretary to Dr. Hill (Chest Consultant), Sue Poulloin, Respiratory Unit Nurse Receptionist, Mick Paver, Student Nurse. The three male participants ran the 10km all achieving very fast times with Dr. Dan Smith coming in the top 50 competitors. The ladies all ran in the 5km race, we all finished the course but didn't break any world records and no oxygen therapy was required. All the teams effort and hard work raised in excess of £300 for the BLF.

To mark the 20 years that the BLF has been funding respiratory research there are plans for a very special event. On 8th December the biggest names in respiratory research have agreed to speak at a research evening held in central London. If anyone is interested in attending they should contact Head Office for further information.

The phone number is 08458 50 50 20 and the line is open 10am - 6pm Monday to Friday. An answering service

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UK Breathe Easy Conference 2005

Photography Competition

operates at all other times and enquiries from here and via e-mail are responded to as quickly as possible. The demand for this service has been phenomenal, and it looks as if the line will handle around 10,000 enquiries in the first year.

This was held at Radisson SAS, London Stansted Airport, and had the highest turnout yet. Out of 131 groups invited, 81 attended which amounted to 220 group members and 50 health professionals. The conference opened on the Friday with the Breathe Easy Team updating everyone on the BE vision for the future and the progress of the BLF nurse, Lung Exercise Pilot Project and Baby Breathe Easy. Everybody was moved by Hannah Taylor's talk on how Baby Breathe Easy has helped her and her experience of raising a child with lung problems. Tariq Sethi, a Professor of lung cancer research, gave an enlightening talk on the importance of research into lung disease, and in the process dispelled many of the myths surrounding lung disease. In the evening there was a gala dinner and Dame Helena had the room in stitches with her hilarious anecdotes of 'encounters with royalty.'

Saturday's programme included Ian Jarrold, BLF research manager, who gave a talk about how research grants are awarded. This was followed by an over-view of the Expert Patients Programme. After lunch there was a question and answer panel with the senior officials from BLF ready to answer a whole range of questions. The conference ended on a high note with the annual Breath of Fresh Air Awards.

The British Lung Foundation has launched a photography competition to mark its 20th birthday. The competition is open to amateur photographers of all ages who are invited to submit a photograph on the theme of air. There are three categories for entries: children (under 10), juniors (aged 11 to 17) and adults. The back of the photograph must have the person's name age category, address and contact number written on it. Any photographs submitted cannot be returned. The winning photograph in each

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Useful tips and websites

Evening meetings of Breathe Easy Warwick & District Group

category will be printed in Breathing Space magazine and receive a pair of red Hunters Wellingtons. The closing date for entries is 8th December 2005.

There is a good website about travel for those who are disabled or less mobile. It is written and maintained by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. www.dptac.gov.uk/door-to-door/index.htm

The British Thoracic Society have information on their website about what patients should do if they are unhappy with their doctor.

www.brit-thoracic.org.uk

There is a useful NHS website for patients called 'Best Treatments' –it is designed to help patients find out which treatments really work and is based on the best available research evidence translated into patient language.

www.besttreatments.co.uk

Disabled drivers with tax exemption who use the M6 toll road can apply for exemption from toll charges by phoning 0870 850 6262.

Just a reminder that everyone is welcome to attend the meetings of Breathe Easy Warwick & District – don't worry if you cannot come regularly; everyone is welcome to attend when they can. There is no charge. We ask if possible if you could make a donation to help cover the cost of a cup of tea/coffee and hire of the hall. We meet on the first Monday of every month (except when this is a bank holiday) at 7pm at St Mary's Church Centre, St Mary's Road, Leamington Spa, CV31 1JW. If you would like further information please phone Linda on 024 7669 7262.