

# Breathe Easy Warwick & District Group

## Spring 2006 Newsletter

### Chairman's Report

### Meeting Reports: August 2005

'Reasons to be Cheerful' was a song a while ago by someone who had plenty of reasons not to be very happy at all.

The staff that care for you in hospital are very inspirational, yet their hours and pay are poor compared to what they might expect in the private sector.

Many people who have plenty of reasons to be anything other than cheerful have a great energy and zest for life and have inspired me to keep on when poor health has been a very negative force.

I urge all our members to keep going, to try to influence any change in our health for the better, and I wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

*Tony Brown, Chairman*

Sandra Lavens spoke to us about Yoga. The message that Sandra delivered to us was one of self-awareness.

Awareness of how we are feeling and breathing. She took us through some basic breathing exercises. To increase our attention to how we are breathing we had to make the 'Haa' sound on the out breath. To make this more entertaining she introduced us to making the 'Haa' sound to Elvis Presley songs. Just try it yourself, think of the tune to 'Wooden Heart' and off you go! It really can make you concentrate on your breathing.

Sandra also explained how much our mental state can help our physical well-being and conducted an experiment to show how effective the mind can be in concentrating our strength. One volunteer was seated holding his left arm straight out and told to resist Sandra's pressure to push down the arm. She was unable to do so. This was repeated, but this time our member was told to concentrate on a negative thought. This time the arm was easily deflected.

We finished with a five-minute relaxation session, to complete a very different way of feeling very calm.

Our speakers are very generous in their support of our group. Thank you, Sandra, for making it such a worthwhile evening.

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### September 2005 Meeting

Our speaker was Jo Radley, an Acupuncture Practitioner. If you are ill in this country you would normally see a Medical Doctor first. If the treatment isn't successful then you might try 'alternative medicine' such as Acupuncture. In China your first choice would be Acupuncture. This form of treatment is gradually gaining acceptance here and is available in some areas to NHS patients. Acupuncture is thousands of years old, so it must be taken seriously.

A consultation with an acupuncture practitioner begins with an interview to look at the patient's life history and medical problems so that they can be treated as a whole person. Their present condition can be assessed by taking twelve pulses in the wrist.

Jo illustrated the lines of energy that run through our bodies on a model of the human figure, which also showed the many acupuncture points. Imbalance in these levels of energy can cause many health problems; the use of short fine needles can then correct an imbalance, to restore the patient's health.

Treatment is available from a fully-trained acupuncture practitioner or from a student.

We are fortunate to have a College of Traditional Acupuncture in Leamington at Tao House, Queensway, tel. 01926 831379 or [www.acupuncture-coll.ac.uk](http://www.acupuncture-coll.ac.uk)

Thank you, Jo, for a very interesting presentation. I certainly would feel much happier now about considering this alternative form of treatment.

### October 2005 Meeting

Heather Adams gave a very interesting talk about the benefits of using Aloe products. She told us about its use in times gone by, for example by the Egyptians, and its use in today's hospitals for helping burns to heal. Group members were able to sample some of the products and take home free samples, which were funded by a kind benefactor of the BLF.

### AGM

The group's AGM was also held on 3 October 2005. Our Chairman was enjoying a holiday in Canada, so Lynn

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### AGM Cont'd

Fletcher chaired the meeting. Lynn read out the **Chairman's Report**

"Welcome to the Annual General Meeting. This month is another milestone for our group. As well as being our regular monthly meeting it is also our second AGM. My own highlight of the year was a meeting that I could not attend. This was the April meeting and was also our first birthday.

Our main fundraising effort was at Asda Superstore in Leamington Spa when we raised over £300. A big thank-you to Dave Barrett for his contribution of over £200 from his sponsored slim.

We have had a good variety of speakers, from Professor Burge to our own Carole. We have learned something about acupuncture, Buteko, Medical Ethics and Yoga. Not forgetting Lynn's contribution on inhalers. We are always looking for new ideas about speakers so please let us have your thoughts.

Thank you to the committee for all your help in running this group. To Sheila and Alice and Jim for sharing the Treasurer's role. To everyone who puts away the chairs at the end of the evening and ESPECIALLY for my wife Edith's support in keeping me going. Everyone's effort is very much appreciated by me and also, I'm sure, by you the members."

The following appointments were made:

<b>Chairman</b>	Tony Brown
<b>Secretary</b>	Linda Smith
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jim Poulter
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Lynn Fletcher
<b>Refreshment Coordinator</b>	Carole Palmer
<b>New Member Host</b>	Bella Major

Thanks were extended to Sheila Gibbons and Alice McGucken who stood down as committee members.

After discussion it was agreed that there would be no meeting in December as this was unlikely to be well attended.

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### November 2005 Meeting

This was our last meeting of the year and our speaker was Linda Heritage.

Linda is a Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist who organises the South Warwickshire Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service.

The service has been running since April and is for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. This can be Bronchitis, Asthma, Emphysema or Air Flow Limitation. Smoking is responsible for 95% of cases.



As COPD costs the NHS £500 million a year the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service that can help patients to manage their condition is cost effective.

The service is led from the Physiotherapy Department and is a programme of exercises and education. It consists of twice weekly sessions for six weeks, and is available at: Warwick Hospital, Stratford Hospital, Royal Leamington Spa Rehab. Hospital, Southam Clinic, Alcester Hospital, and Ellen Badger Hospital, Shipston.

Patients requiring Oxygen must attend Warwick.

Courses contain assessment and reassessment, exercise with a warm-up, a circuit of seven parts for strength, flexibility, and endurance followed by a warm down and stretch session.

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### Forthcoming Meetings

Patients are taught the benefits of exercise, breathing control, relaxation and sputum clearance. Further sessions cover occupational therapy, clinical psychology and instruction from a dietician, pharmacist, and GP practice respiratory nurse.

This is only a general outline of the service. One of our members, Dave Barrett, has been on a course and spoke very enthusiastically about his own experience and the benefit that other people on his course gained.

Provided you are registered with a GP in south Warwickshire any health professional you see about your COPD can refer you. For more information about the service contact the area's surgeries or Linda Heritage, Physiotherapy Dept., Warwick Hospital, Lakin Road, Warwick CV34 5BW. tel. 01926 495321 extn. 4166.

Thank you, Linda, for telling us in your own time about a service that would be of great benefit to anyone with COPD.



**January**  
**6 February**

**No meeting**  
Dr Hill, Chest Consultant, on  
Bronchiectasis

**6 March**

Trudy Hudson, Nurse Practitioner, on  
General Management of Asthma and  
COPD

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### Forthcoming Meetings Cont'd

### Lottery Money

### World COPD Day

### Midlands Region of the BLF

### PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FLU THIS WINTER

**3 April** to be advised

**1 May** no meeting (Bank Holiday)

Forthcoming speakers and topics include Cathy Silk on 'Flying', Trudy Hudson, a nurse from Priory Medical Centre, on 'Breathing' and Sandra Lavens on 'Yoga'.

Our grant of money from the lottery fund has been spent on two new leaflets promoting the group. The leaflets are to be handed out by staff at Warwick Hospital and Walsgrave Hospital. If you can help with distributing leaflets to doctors' surgeries and chemists, please see Linda.

Warwick Hospital, and Rugby and Stratford libraries took part in World COPD day on 16 November 2005, promoting awareness of COPD. It is estimated that there are about 2 million people who have COPD without knowing it. The BLF is also supporting spirometry testing in 30 Superdrug stores and has mailed posters to 11,000 GP surgeries.

The annual UK Breathe Easy Conference will not be taking place next year. Instead, to make travel easier and keep costs down, regional conferences will be taking place across the UK in April and June. We will be informed of the dates from our Midlands Office soon.

If anyone is not receiving the new magazine called 'Breathing Space', please let Caroline Johnson know on 01332 834 753 or [midlands@blf-uk.org](mailto:midlands@blf-uk.org). Dates for future issues are 14 April and 10 July.

With winter fast approaching, the Department of Health launched the 2005 national flu campaign on 3 October 2005 urging those most at risk to get immunized. Up to 4,000 deaths a year are attributable to flu.

Dame Helena Shovelton, Chief Executive at the British Lung Foundation said: "For another year The British Lung Foundation is supporting the Department of Health's national flu campaign. Outbreaks of influenza A, deaths and hospitalisation occur mostly in winter, with epidemics every 5 to 15 years. Those most at risk of developing more serious problems, for example infants, the elderly

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### Protect yourself from Flu this Winter Cont'd

and those with a chronic underlying disease such as lung disease, should visit their GP to be vaccinated.”

The vaccine is provided free of charge to people with serious respiratory, heart, liver or renal disease, and diabetes, or anyone who has lowered immunity as a result of an illness, and to those aged 65 and over.

The jab only takes one minute and as it contains no live virus it cannot give you the flu.

For further information please contact your GP or visit [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

For more information on flu, go to <http://www.lunguk.org/flu.asp>

### What is Bird Flu?

This is a strain of influenza that normally only affects birds - chickens, turkeys and ducks. There are now a small number of cases where this strain has transferred to humans. Bird flu (or avian flu) is fatal in 90 per cent of birds that contract it. First thoughts show that it will be equally as fatal in humans - to date there have been 60 cases of bird flu in humans, with 46 deaths. All the cases have been in South East Asia. There are 15 different strains of the virus - it is the H5N1 strain that is infecting humans.

### What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms of bird flu in humans are respiratory problems, fever, muscle aches, chest pains, eye symptoms and headache.

### What is the cure?

There are anti-viral drugs available that should help to limit the symptoms and minimize the spread of the disease. Prototype vaccines are being developed against the H5N1 strain of bird flu.

### How do you catch it?

Humans contract bird flu by handling infected birds. Experts have said bird flu cannot be caught by eating chicken.

There are now some cases where the virus has spread from human to human, between close relatives. This evidence has given rise to fears that this will lead to a worldwide epidemic.

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### BLF Helpline

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

### Changes in Oxygen Provision

Oxygen therapy is used to supplement the Oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) available in atmospheric air. By increasing the percentage breathed in, the amount available to the body increases.

### Main Types of Oxygen Therapy

#### **Ambulatory (or portable)**

These O<sub>2</sub> cylinders are smaller and weigh between 1-5kg. They usually deliver the O<sub>2</sub> at 2 litres per minute (l/min) and last for 2-3 hours. Addition of a Conserver to the system means that the O<sub>2</sub> can last up to 9 hours at 2 litres. A Conserver is a device that is triggered when the user inhales. It delivers the O<sub>2</sub> for the first third of the breath and then automatically cuts out. This means the O<sub>2</sub> only flows when it is effective in the breathing cycle and is not wasted. This mechanism ensures the O<sub>2</sub> in the cylinder will last longer and give the user more time away from the fixed O<sub>2</sub> supply at home.

#### **Short burst**

This is usually administered from a cylinder that is in the home. The cylinder is about 1 meter (3 feet) high and weighs 16 kg. They are used for short periods of time, 2-3 minutes following exertion. They are not portable.

#### **Long Term Oxygen Therapy (LTOT) via a Concentrator**

An O<sub>2</sub> concentrator is a 'small suitcase' sized machine. It sucks in room air, sieves out the O<sub>2</sub> and delivers it, via tubing and nasal cannulae, at 2 l/min.

It runs off mains electricity. It has a meter counter to enable the electricity costs to be reimbursed to the user and has a back-up cylinder in case of machine failure.

It is usually used for 8-16 hours per day. Several machines can be linked together to produce a higher flow rate if needed.

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### Main Types of Oxygen Therapy Cont'd

#### Liquid

This is stored in the home in a special 'thermos flask' type of cylinder. By keeping the O<sub>2</sub> very cold, it is stored as a liquid and therefore a much greater quantity can be delivered at one time. Users decant the O<sub>2</sub> into smaller portable cylinders as needed.

It lasts for the same amount of time as other cylinder systems but does evaporate when not in use. This system has been popular in Europe but is now being used less and less.

#### So what are these changes?

Oxygen costs money. The government has looked at streamlining the service nationally and divided England and Wales into eleven regions. All companies were invited to bid to run the **complete** service for each region. Air Products won seven out of the eleven regional bids.

For East Midlands this means our supplier will change on 1 February 2006.

#### What does this mean for Oxygen users?

If you have a concentrator, you need do NOTHING. Existing users will be directly transferred to the new company. The technician servicing the machine may even be the same. The concentrator machines will be replaced over time.

If you use cylinders you should re-order from your GP in the usual way. DO NOT let the supply diminish too low or you may run out. From January 2006, the GP will use a different order form (that is the same nationally) and instead of the prescription going to a chemist, it will go directly to the new company, Air Products, who will deliver the oxygen supply you need.

Whichever source of O<sub>2</sub> you use, the support and advice, the re-ordering and emergency numbers will all be direct to Air Products and not the GP. Each user will receive a welcome pack, including a leaflet on common questions, a car sticker, safety instructions, holiday service etc.

**Please Note:** from 1.10.05 any user who needs more than 2 cylinders a month will be transferred to concentrator use.

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### Main Types of Oxygen Therapy Cont'd

### Other Changes

#### Assessment

Every user of Oxygen should be assessed formally by measuring blood gases. This is done at the hospital. From 1.2.06 a respiratory consultant will assess each new user and he/she will order the appropriate O<sub>2</sub> therapy. Over the next two years all current users will be reassessed at hospital.

#### Holidays

Currently the service is disjointed. From 1.2.06 if you wish to travel within the U.K., you will need to ask your GP or Respiratory team to write an order form for your holiday and they will fax this order to Air Products, who will arrange for a supply at your destination. This service is free of charge BUT they do need time to set it up so give them a few weeks' notice. This reduces the need to carry large volumes of Oxygen in your car and lifting a concentrator about.

Train companies are generally OK if you use O<sub>2</sub> in their carriages. Bus operators are more particular. Check with your travel company.

Some airlines provide supplementary O<sub>2</sub> on flights. Others do not. If a user wants to fly, they should have a 'fit to fly' consultation at their local respiratory clinic. This usually involves some lung function tests so that the user knows **exactly** what extra help they will need at 30,000 feet. Discussion with the airline medical officer will get this organised. Some companies are better than others at this, and some will charge.

There are European agreements where 'local' companies will supply the Oxygen. This can be arranged through Air Products but there is a charge and the service is only as good as the local provider.

Cruise ships are not classed as UK addresses so a charge has to be made, but the system is well used and efficient.

#### Useful tips

- If you are using a cylinder in the car, it **MUST** be secure. Ideally stored in a bag that can be strapped in via the seatbelt system, or across the back of the seat (rucksack style) or using bungee straps.

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### Other Changes Cont'd

### Evening meetings of Breathe Easy Warwick & District Group

### This newsletter

- Each car carrying oxygen should have a sticker on the rear window driver's side saying O<sub>2</sub> and NO SMOKING.
- Car insurance companies should be informed that O<sub>2</sub> is being carried. This should not affect the premium but the insurance company may try to wriggle out of a claim if they are unaware.
- You can use O<sub>2</sub> and drive.
- Air Products have regional nurse advisors who will be in post to help users with enquiries.

#### Summary by:

Alison Sutherland, Respiratory Nurse at Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham.

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 that you 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.

During 2005 our grant from the National Lottery paid for the production of our quarterly newsletter, but this money had to be spent by the end of the year. In order to continue with the newsletter we need your help. If you would like to continue to receive the newsletter through the post please complete the tear off slip overleaf and send a cheque for £1 made payable to Breathe Easy Warwick & District. Further donations are very welcome to assist with the costs of running the group. For those who attend the monthly meeting copies of the newsletters will be available to take away.

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## Spring 2006 Newsletter

**Order your  
Newsletter NOW!**

I should like to continue to receive a copy of Breathe Easy Warwick & District Newsletter through the post during 2006.

I enclose a cheque made payable to Breathe Easy Warwick & District.

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