

Breathe Easy Warwick & District Group

Summer 2006 Newsletter

Chairman's Message

Meeting Reports: 6 February 2006

6 March 2006

Something that May has to offer every year in some of our woodland is a carpet of bluebells. Why should a sight that is so simple give such a 'feel good-factor'.

I can't answer that for you. This year, though, for the first time for many years the chance came along for me to participate in a bluebell walk and enjoy them before too many insects or large amounts of pollen were in the air. Next month the English strawberries should be ready. I do hope you can find something special to look forward to this summer.

Tony Brown, Chairman

Our first gathering of the year was remarkable for the attendance.

Dr. Hill, Consultant Chest Physician, gave an illustrated talk on Bronchiectasis. We had publicised the meeting in the local press and as Dr. Hill is well known this resulted in over 70 people attending. It was standing room only for late comers. Dr. Hill allowed us to tape his presentation and we can loan this out if you would like to contact us.

His clear message to anyone with the disease, and wanting the best advice for managing its effects was – **Physiotherapy, Physiotherapy, Physiotherapy.**

Our speaker for March was Trudy Hudson, Nurse Practitioner from the Priory Medical Centre.

She gave some guidance on the Management of Chest Conditions.

The main headings were Inhalers. E.g. Asthmatics rely on Inhalers such as Ventolin to dilate the airways, inhaled steroids such as Flixotide and long acting broncho dilators, with doses tailored to the patient.

Exercise, and how important regular exercise is to maintaining health.

Self Care, avoid going out in frost, fog and windy conditions. Try to maintain a steady weight and eat the five portions of fruit and vegetables per day.

Room temperature can help. The ideal level for your lounge is 21 degrees and 18 degrees for the bedroom.

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3 April 2006

Try to avoid infections. This is one reason that we stop our meetings in December and January.

Thank you, Trudy, for a very commonsense approach to our problems.

Last year we had a talk about Yoga from Sandra Lavens. She has been an Instructor of Teachers as well as giving her own classes, so I was very pleased to welcome her back.

The extreme positions shown on the cover of some Yoga books might make you think it is only for fit agile people. Sandra, though, showed us some simple exercises that we all did just sitting down.

Firstly we had to become aware of our posture. Not to slump forward, sit upright, the correct chair will help, and become aware of just how you are sitting and breathing.

We also did some relaxation exercises using the same basic position.

So thank you, Sandra, for taking us through some very helpful exercises and for talking to individual members during the coffee break.

5 June 2006

We had a very enthusiastic address by three people from the Patient and Public Involvement Health Forum (PPI Forum).

Nicki Pulman has just started working for PPI Forum and this was her first public speaking engagement.

Her summary of their work is that they collect information from us and then use it to influence future trends in Health Care. This can be done quickly in cases such as hospital cleanliness where they do have some statutory powers to improve matters, or more long term to help direct spending on local services.

We had a lively question and answer session about the alarm felt by members concerning the Ambulance Service and Warwick Hospital. Many doubts were raised about the loss of local services and a general lack of confidence that new centralised provision was inadequate for this area.

Volunteers Joan Rook and Keith Bell spoke separately about their work with the PPI Forum. They go out to meet

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Meeting Programme

**'Dave' - David
Baird Baratt**

**BLF Midlands
News**

the public to find out what they want. They are looking at matters such as better communication from staff to patients and transport for hospital appointments.

3 rd July	Rachel Booker – National Training Respiratory Centre
7 th August	Cathy Silk - Aviation
4 th September	Margaret Hine – the designer Clarice Cliff
2 nd October	AGM & Caroline Johnson, BLF
6 th November	Social Services and the assistance they can provide
4 th December	No meeting
1 st January 2007	No meeting

Dave sadly died in March and many group members attended his funeral on 24th March at Oakley Wood Crematorium. He will be very much missed for his humour and company.

Our condolences go out to his wife Rachel and the family.

Tribute to Dave from Tony Brown our Chairman

"I remember Dave complimenting me on being able to chair our meetings. I'm certainly not a natural speaker in public and I took that as a very real compliment. We also shared the microphone at one of our evening meetings and he was full of fun. As part of his treatment he had to lose weight and as I came to understand it was typical of him that he used the opportunity to raise money for the group.

He also came to help at a collection day in bitterly cold weather. He was a stalwart supporter of our group.

I also want to pay tribute to Rachel, for without her support Dave would have been completely lost".

The group held a collection at recent evening meetings and £125 has been donated to the British Lung Foundation in memory of Dave.

The campaign for Breathe Easy week is 'Lungs are for Life'. Groups are asked to raise awareness that lung disease is not just a 'smokers' disease' but often stems from a childhood illness. There is evidence to show that

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Midlands Regional Conference(s)

breathless children often become breathless adults. 60% of all adult asthma originates in childhood. The majority of respiratory diseases have a genetic basis – i.e. they are determined before birth.

Were held on 9th May at Park Inn, West Bromwich or 11th May at Riverside Church, Derby. The programme included speakers on research, an update on BLF activities and workshops on beating the blues, nutrition and exercising for health. Several group members attended and we hope they will speak at a future meeting about the experience.

Below is a report from the Malvern members who attended the conference.

Main topic was "Breathe Easy Group Finance review: Supporting BLF Services. A summary paper for groups. A review is needed because the financial guidelines are out of date and processes must be in line with the charity law. The review will include consultation with groups and will offer choices to groups. There are 5 choices which groups can comment on by 1st of September about how they would like their donations to be spent over the next 12 months. We will need to decide if group or committee should vote.

The Choices

1. To expand the Breathe Easy Support Network (expansion of BE groups, the penpal scheme and the development of Breathe Easy on line)
2. To give children and babies a healthy future (expansion of baby Breathe Easy)
3. To offer further information to those living with lung disease (to include development of the BLF helpline and leaflets and publications)
4. To find some future answers to lung disease through our research programme (group donations are currently put towards this)
5. To provide dignity and comfort to those living with lung disease through to the end of their days (to include BLF nurse).

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National BLF News

Health forecasting for COPD

BLF Website

BLF Helpline

The Breathe Easy Sub-Committee is advertising for people with lung conditions/carers to join their sub-committee. The committee has been in place for 12 years and has progressed the development of Breathe Easy groups from their inception. If anyone is interested they can email breathe.easy@blf-uk.org or telephone 020 7688 5555 for an information pack.

In some illnesses the severity of symptoms can vary throughout the year because of changes to weather or the presence of infections. The Met Office has studied the relationship between the weather and certain illnesses and used its findings – with other factors such as virus levels and air pollution – to produce health forecasts. To find out more visit the Met Office health forecasting website www.metoffice.gov.uk/health/index.html

The BLF website www.lunguk.org has information about Breathe Easy activities, leaflets and fact sheets which can be downloaded from the site.

The phone number is 08458 50 50 20. Lines are open 10am – 6pm Monday to Friday. An answering service operates at all other times.