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Dimbleby Cancer Care:
Making life better for people
living with cancer



THE DCC TIMES

The Dimbleby Cancer Care newspaper www.dimblebycancer.org

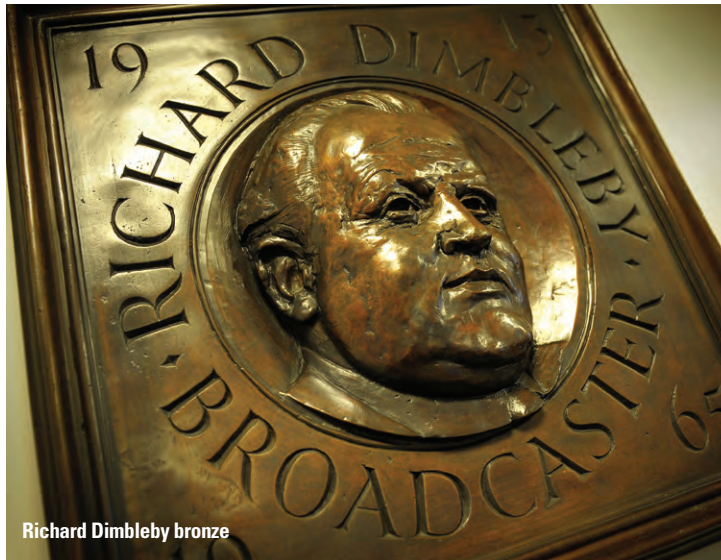
Where it all began

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter which we hope will bring the work we do to a wider audience: sharing news and bringing into focus the individuals who strive to provide the excellent standards of care and support to those living with cancer. We also hope that by raising awareness of the charity we can attract further fundraising. Dimbleby Cancer Care is a small charity, but one with big ambitions.

In 1966, following his battle with cancer, Richard Dimbleby, one of Britain's best loved broadcasters, died at the age of 52. Back then, cancer was not something you talked about. His decision to go public did a huge amount to challenge this public taboo and change not only the way cancer was viewed, but the way in which cancer care would evolve. When asked what would have made a difference, Richard said simply, "a comfortable pillow". It is this understanding of the big difference a simple thing can make that has helped revolutionise cancer care over the past 45 years.

In response to the many letters and donations that came flooding in, the family set up a charity in his name to support people living with cancer. And so the Richard Dimbleby Cancer Fund was established, changing its name to Dimbleby Cancer Care in 2005.

One of the charity's first acts was to endow a chair in cancer research at King's College London, currently held by Professor Tony Ng, who leads a pioneering research team



Richard Dimbleby bronze

using advanced tissue imaging techniques to develop methods of pinpointing drug treatment for each individual cancer patient.

Today, the main focus of DCC is the care and support needs of people both living with and affected by cancer. A long and established relationship with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in London has resulted in the Dimbleby Cancer Care Support and Information Services Centre at St Thomas', and most recently a close involvement with the Cancer Day Unit which opened at Guy's earlier this year. Research is also a key part of the charity's work. Since 2005, the Dimbleby Cancer Care Research Fund has provided up to £500,000 a year for national research into the care needs of cancer patients and their families. Dimbleby Cancer Care has also partnered with Marie Curie Cancer Care to provide a £500,000 research fund, focussing

on end-of-life care.

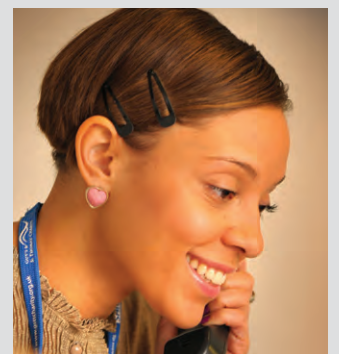
However, Dimbleby Cancer Care remains a family run charity. The Board of Trustees comprises Richard's sons David, Jonathan and Nick Dimbleby, the younger generation of the family represented by Henry and Joe Dimbleby, Kate Howe and Kitty Hodges, together with the support of Gavyn Davies and Baroness Julia Neuberger. Jonathan explains, "As family trustees we are all very committed to DCC. We are advised by some of the best Care specialists in Britain which means we can direct our resources where they can really make a difference". The charity operates on a daily basis with an office of just 2 part-time staff, keeping administrative costs exceptionally low compared with larger charitable organisations. As a result, a high percentage of the income generated by the charity is spent on care work.

Issue 1

December 2011

Your Charity Needs YOU!

For our next issue we would love to hear from **YOU**. If you have ideas, comments, articles or pieces of writing you would like to share, please do get in touch – full contact details can be found on the back page. This is your newsletter and we want to hear from you.



Explaining how cancer care has changed in the last 40 years, DCC Chairman David Dimbleby says, "Many people who have cancer are living far longer than seemed possible when we started our work. It makes it all the more important to develop and expand the care we offer. We were pioneers when we began and we intend to go on pioneering now – discovering what people need and trying to provide it."

twitter News

Since the beginning of July this year Dimbleby Cancer Care has been busy tweeting away on a daily basis. It's a great way to be part of the online discussion and debate of charity and cancer issues, of keeping abreast of cancer care and care research in the news and of course of connecting with like minded people and organisations. In fact it was through twitter that Melanie Stern first contacted us and has now gone on to write for us in this first edition of the newsletter.

If you're not following us already, please do! - @DimblebyCancerC. Some other really great resources we've found so far include:

www.mymameisnotcancer.com - a great website full of helpful advice and ideas run by Fiona Fletcher who you can follow on twitter @Fiona_Fletcher; for charity news you should follow @ThirdSector; another fantastic resource for news and articles is @BeyondDiagnosis.

If you would like us to follow you, do get in touch! All our tweets and links to news items and interesting articles can also be found at www.dimblebycancercare.org
Robin Pritchard

DCC & Me

Barbara Van der Merwe is Manager for Dimbleby Cancer Care & Clinical Oncology, St Thomas' Hospital

As manager of Dimbleby Cancer care my role is split into two. Firstly there is the information service co-ordination role and being the directorate lead for patient information. This involves ensuring any literature given out to patients within oncology is up to date, accurate, easy to read and understand and appropriate. We have a database of all the literature within the directorate and ensure that it fulfils the Trust's requirements for patient information.

As part of the information team I provide back up for the drop-in service. The team has seen many

changes over the last few years but is well respected and has built up good links with all areas of the oncology directorate.

The other part of the role is to manage the whole service and ensure we work in an efficient, cost effective way whilst fulfilling correct governance and infection control regulations. Overseeing the work of the teams and developing the service in the current climate is challenging but enjoyable. We are gradually developing plans for the new cancer treatment centre and how the service will look within the new build. Strategic development



of the service and developing funding streams alongside reviewing the way we work will continue to be the focus for the future.

Finding the best research

Almost all cancer research funding in the UK, from charities and from government sources, goes towards studies on the treatment and cure of cancer, or finding its cause. Of the hundreds of millions of pounds spent each year, only a tiny percentage is spent on researching the practical and psychological effects of living with cancer.

The Dimbleby Cancer Care Research Fund was set up to support national research projects which address the everyday needs and problems faced by people affected by cancer. For instance, how can older people who live alone and who have cancer be better supported? Do telephone helplines really help? How can District Nurses best be helped to deal with patients' psychological and emotional needs?

The Research Fund is one of the UK's leading funders of this type of research. It makes several large grants available each year. Competition is fierce and applications have been flooding in for the 2011-2012 funding round. By the recent closing date, DCC had received nearly 50 initial bids. These will be carefully considered by our panel of cancer care experts from around the UK. The standard of applications gets higher every year, so the panel have an extremely difficult task in selecting the bids which will receive our grants.

Full details of the Research Fund can be found on our website www.dimblebycancercare.org
Georgie Grindlay

Moving on

Dimbleby Cancer Care and the psychological support service team at GSTT recently said goodbye to a leading pioneer and one of its shining stars when Dr Margaret Evison retired at the end of November. Margaret, a clinical psychologist, joined St Thomas' in 1999 as part of the fledgling Dimbleby psychological support service. At that stage there was just her and one part-time counsellor at St Thomas', and at Guy's there was no psychological support at

all for people with cancer. Over the years, she has led the development of the full psycho-oncology support service for patients at GSTT, as well as support services for the families and carers of those affected by cancer. Speaking to me earlier in the year she said, "At a personal level, I like the idea of being able to help people who are caught in unbearably difficult situations – both patients and their carers – and I like the feeling that they feel they've got someone they can talk



Dr Margaret Evison

to who understands their issues and problems". Margaret will be missed by patients and staff alike and we wish her the best of luck in her future plans.

A look to the future

DCC sit on the planning group for the proposed new GSTT funded Cancer Treatment Centre to be built on the Guy's Hospital site by 2020. An exhibition of design drawings and images will on display throughout December 2011 at various places around both hospital sites and the local area. For further details of the exhibition, please contact Richard Winterbone on 020 7188 9765.

Mel is a freelance journalist from south London writing on business, finance, travel and the arts. She was editor of *Financial Director* magazine until May 2011

Best laid plans



Even when my oncologist told me to cancel the two holidays I'd booked for my summer off, I didn't grasp that the routines and schedules making up my life were to disappear. On the day of my initial diagnosis I was four weeks into my sabbatical. The plan was to spend four months travelling through Europe with my partner - and then October through to the summer as a full-time Master's student. After that we would go to Latin America - where we'd met five years before - him, to teach, me to extend my journalism career on my favourite continent, maybe staying for two years.

Of course, it's true what they say about best laid plans: I had left my job as editor of a financial magazine, telling everybody in a blaze of glory that I was dumping the daily grind for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Then, eight weeks to the day after I put my last issue to press, I was signing in at the chemotherapy ward for my first session of ABVD, mother and boyfriend in tow.

It was only then that I was told I was stage three: rather than the 2-4 months of chemo and radiotherapy I had originally been pitched, I would need six full months of chemo.

This was a problem for my scheduling. Four months would have only touched the start of my course. But six months took out the rest of the year. The biggest issue I had with cancer's way of interrupting my masterplan was that it put a question mark over my university place. On my first day in the ward, I asked my oncologist if he thought it realistic that I could enrol and have chemo at the same time. He

reminded me that often people continued working. As I breathed a sigh of relief, Liz, the Macmillan nurse present, sucked air through her teeth. "It's not always like that," she said. "I think it might be unrealistic."

I was surprised how these very different views could come from two people working so closely with cancer: which one was right? I signed up to the web forums and asked if anyone had successfully gone through university while on chemo. But no clear answer came. I soon realised that I'd be starting my course halfway through the treatment; I'd been warned that this was the point where 'chemo brain' would set in and the cumulative effect of ABVD would start to grip me. Did I want to plough on with my schedule, accepting that I might not be well enough to do my best? Or accept my fate, and defer for a year.

Come September I deferred. I was gutted. I'd been so happy when I resigned. Now without something big to look forward to, cancer was my only focus.

A friend recommended me for a freelance job and I accepted: I shouldn't have. The time it demanded ended up being disastrous. Deadlines are king and journalists are paid to hit

"Cancer had not been the diary-obliterating hell I had imagined"

them, however much they move: whenever something came in with a 24-hour turnaround, the email would hit my inbox as I sat in the chemo ward with another infection, waiting for another blood test in-between chemo appointments. It was too much and I had to bail out. I bitterly turned down work in order to



Massage therapy at Dimbleby Cancer Care

focus on my health, not my career. But in time I started to enjoy the freedom. Ironically, I did get the time off that I'd hoped leaving my job would give me. And I used it to look after myself much more than I otherwise would.

As summer came, I found it so relaxing to wake up, open the kitchen doors, have breakfast, check a few emails and while away the day without an agenda. With my immune system weakened, I didn't feel confident leaving my little part of town, but friends came to visit or stay over.

Massage and counselling

By the end of the summer I realised a schedule had evolved out of my new lifestyle. After my fortnightly chemo, the next 5 days were given over to recovery, with all the worst effects colliding

at once. But by the Wednesday I started to feel well again and by the weekend I was back on my feet. Once I realised that I had every other week to feel close to normal, I planned things so I had something to look forward to in my 'off' week.

A new addition to that schedule has been the Dimbleby Cancer

Centre, where I have massage and counselling. As my body struggles against the effects of my treatment, I really look forward to a gentle massage which takes the pressure off a little. My last appointment at Guy's was just hours after hearing my grandma had passed away, succumbing to ovarian cancer. Deciding whether I was well enough to go to Glasgow for the funeral, it was invaluable to have that massage which helped me to calm down, think things through and decide to get on the next train. And having much less money coming in now, the fact that the services DCC offers are free really helps.

As I reach the last few treatments, having that week to look forward to and do something of value - not just sit around waiting - is really important. Cancer has not been the diary-obliterating hell I had imagined. I have time to think, to take a walk, to cook - and to read up for my course. I can look forward to starting my Master's next October and getting on with my life - a long way from the day when my oncologist, trying to lighten the mood when he told me to cancel those holidays, quipped: "you're mine now"

Melanie Stern

Run for your life!

We are always grateful for new donations and recently we were very excited to receive sizeable fundraising donations from 2 teams very close to Dimpleby Cancer Care.

First off, the team at **Hanover Communications** took part in the **Richmond River 10k Run**. Back in October Pippa, Natalie, Katie and the team raised almost £1,000 for us. A fantastic effort from everyone involved.

24,000 runners

In October, DCC's very own Robin Pritchard - who joined the team earlier this year - took part in the **Great South Run** with his two friends Paul and Ben. 24,000 people took part in the 10 mile run and there was a fantastic atmosphere there on the day, despite the drizzle. Between them the boys raised over £1,500.



If you would like to find out more about how to raise money for us, please do let us know. You can contact us in the main office or get in touch via Facebook and Twitter. Or you can set up your own fundraising page at www.justgiving.com



Pillow Stories

Have you been given a Dimpleby Cancer Care pillow during your treatment? If so we would love to hear from you. We are gathering together the very personal and individual stories from people affected by cancer to which the simple pillows have made a real difference. If you would like to share your story please get in touch (details below).

Bupa London 10,000 2012 10K

The Bupa London 10,000 is run on the course that will be used for the 2012 Olympic Marathons. The 2012 race will be held on Sunday 27th May. This is your chance to take part AND raise money for **Dimpleby Cancer Care**. We have 3 places up for grabs. To find out more please contact Robin or visit www.london10000.co.uk and find us in the Run For Charity section.

A Night To Remember

Our 2nd Annual fundraising event with **Marie Curie Cancer Care** is in the diary for March 2012. Full details to be confirmed, but it promises to be a fabulous evening of fantastic entertainment and fine food. Last year we raised £50,000 for the **Dimpleby Marie Curie Research Fund** and we hope to beat that this year. For further information on when tickets will be available please contact Robin Pritchard in the DCC Fundraising office.

Poster Girls

Have you seen our brand new information posters? We wanted to come up with something fresh and eye catching to put up around the hospitals to show people we are here! We took our ideas to **Red Engine Design** who came up with 6 different posters for us using specially commissioned photographs taken in and around the **Dimpleby Cancer Care Support and Information Services Centre at St Thomas'**. The posters feature members of the team and give information on how to find out more about us on the Dimpleby Cancer Care website, our new twitter address and also information on how to get in touch if you are needing help and advice. Keep an eye out for them anyway and let us know what you think.



How to Contact us

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Or follow us on **twitter @DimplebyCancerC**.

