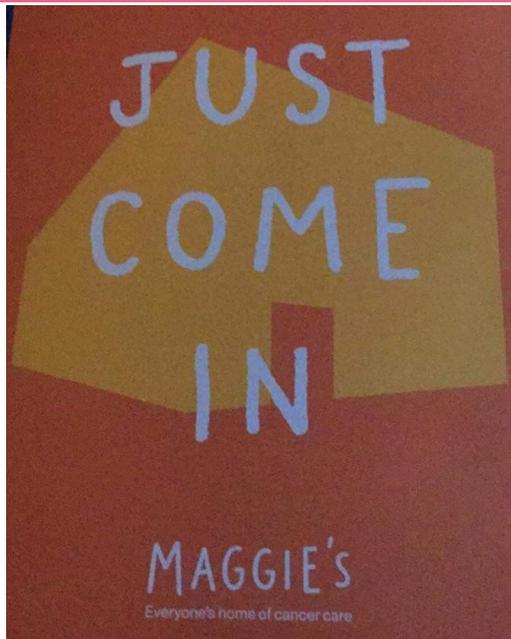


Breastfriends Cardiff and Vale Breast Cancer Support Group

September 2019

Maggie's Centre opens in Cardiff
A very warm welcome for our members at new
cancer centre (see page 3)



Don't miss
our October
bra evening!
(See page 4)



Who are we?

Breastfriends, described by one of our members as a source of instant friendship, is a friendly support group for anyone who has had a diagnosis of breast cancer, whether it was last week, last month, last year or many years ago.

Breast cancer can be isolating and scary, but meeting others in a similar situation and sharing information and experiences can make a real difference.



Walk with us or talk with us

We meet once a month in Cardiff and once a month in Barry as well as meeting regularly for short walks in lovely surroundings. See back page for more details.

We know that walking into a room of strangers can be off putting, so please get in touch if you'd like a buddy for your first walk or meeting.

www.breastfriendscandv.org.uk

Velindre role in advanced breast cancer breakthrough

Giselle Jones explains how ground-breaking research offers hope to patients with advanced breast cancer.



Researchers at the Velindre Cancer Centre and The Christie in Manchester have made a breakthrough in the treatment of women with advanced breast cancer. Their study, called FAKTION, tested a combination of drugs in women with incurable oestrogen positive (ER positive) breast cancer.

The trial found that women in the capivasertib group had their cancer controlled for about six months longer than those who received hormone therapy alone (10.3 compared to 4.8 months). About 40% of women in the combination group also had a significant shrinkage in their cancer compared to 12% who did not get the combination.

About 75% of new breast cancer cases in the UK each year are ER positive. This type of breast cancer needs oestrogen to grow and is treated with drugs that interfere with the action of oestrogen on the oestrogen receptor.

About 75% of breast cancer cases are oestrogen positive

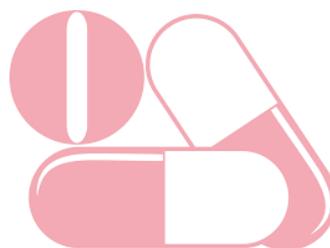
Dr Rob Jones, consultant in oncology and trial co-leader, said: "The benefit of having the treatment was quite remarkable".

In women with advanced ER positive cancer, hormone therapy such as the drug fulvestrant can help but eventually the cancer becomes resistant and the therapy stops working. The FAKTION trial looked at whether combining a new drug 'capivasertib' with fulvestrant in post-menopausal women with advanced ER positive cancer could reverse or delay resistance to hormone therapy.

He added that "We've talked about averages but there are plenty of examples in the trial of patients who have lived for two or three years without their disease yet progressing."

The next step is for a much bigger trial to be conducted that the researchers hope will confirm the positive results of the FAKTION trial. If it does then a new standard of treatment could be offered to women with advanced ER positive breast cancer.

Capivasertib can block a protein in cancer cells called AKT, which can affect cell growth and stop the cancer growing. Women in the trial were randomly assigned to two groups: one group received capivasertib plus fulvestrant while the other received fulvestrant plus a dummy drug (placebo).



Coffee, cake, a vase of flowers, and so much more at new Maggie's Centre for people with cancer and their family and friends

A warm welcome and delicious chocolate cake greeted our 30 or so members who visited Maggie's Centre, Cardiff in July.

Headed up by oncologist nurse specialist, Samantha Holliday, the centre is designed to feel like a home from home and well done to the architects, Dow Jones, for achieving this. As we gathered around the huge kitchen table drinking coffee and eating cake we could have easily been in a friend's house.

Conveniently situated in the grounds of Velindre Cancer Centre, Maggie's offers an oasis of peace and calm to retreat to after treatment. There are small intimate areas and bigger rooms for larger groups. (My personal favourite is The Cwtch, a small cosy room with light flooding in from a skylight). It's no surprise that some visitors are overwhelmed emotionally the first time they visit this safe haven after the clinical environment of the Cancer Centre.



After a tour of the building, Sam gave us a talk on the history of Maggie's (Maggie's Centres are the legacy of Margaret Keswick Jencks, a terminally ill woman who had been given bad news while sitting in a windowless corridor of a small Scottish hospital) and details of the evidence-based sessions on offer to patients and their families which range from Art therapy to Tai Chi and Nordic Walking.

Sam and the Finance and Benefits advisor will shortly be joined by a second cancer support specialist and a psychologist. This is good news for those of our members who don't require treatment at Velindre and therefore don't qualify for the services it provides.

Our visit to Maggie's was a resounding success and no doubt a number of our members will be returning.

Thank you so much to Sam and her volunteer colleague, Pauline, for making us so welcome!

Sue Youngman, Breastfriends committee

Maggie's is a drop-in centre for practical, emotional and social support. The Cardiff centre is open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

Chris McGuigan building
Velindre Cancer Centre
Velindre Road, Whitchurch
Cardiff, CF14 2TQ

Cardiff.maggiescentres.org

Dates for Your Diary



Moving Forward Courses

This free four week course (one morning per week) covers a range

of topics to help you move forward after treatment. Expert speakers are happy to answer questions and there's time to share experiences with people in a similar situation to you.

Moving Forward, Llantrisant

10am - 1pm

Thursdays 3rd-24th October 2019

Moving Forward, Newport

10am - 1pm

Tuesdays, 5th-26th November 2019

Moving Forward, Cardiff

10am—1pm

Wednesdays, 20th November—11th December 2019

Breast Reconstruction Information Session

Tuesday, 17th September 10 – 12.30pm

Family & Friends, Cardiff

5pm—7.30pm

24th September

Lingerie Evenings

Maggies, Cardiff, Tuesday 22nd Oct 5-7.30pm

Maggies, Swansea, Tuesday 12th Nov 5-7.30pm

Rutherford Centre, Newport, Wednesday 27th Nov 5-7.30pm

Booking is essential for the above events.

Please call 0345 077 1894 or e-mail cym@breastcancer.org.uk for more info

Managing Menopausal Symptoms

A free 2.5 hour session on managing the menopausal symptoms that are all too often a side effect of breast cancer. The session is presented by Gail Williams, Oncology Nurse Specialist in breast cancer and takes place at Velindre Hospital.

For more information or to book onto a session, please call Gail Williams or Karen Kendell. 02920 615888 ext 4678

Living with Secondary Breast Cancer has been designed to give you the opportunity to meet other people living with a secondary diagnosis and get relevant information and support.

In Cardiff there are regular (usually monthly) meet-ups where you can chat and share experiences with others with a secondary diagnosis. Topics include pain management, fatigue, benefits, and side effects sessions – we also welcome suggestions for topics you would like to cover.

If anyone is interested in the Living with Secondary Breast Cancer service please ring 0845 077 1893 or email secondaryservices@breastcancer.org.uk

Friday, 20th September 2019, 11am – 3pm

Relationships and communication

Friday, 18th October 2019, 11am – 1pm

Meet up

Friday, 19th November 2019, 11am – 3pm

Living with uncertainty

Friday, 20 December 2019, 11am – 1pm

Meet up



Join us for an evening of body image and bras

with

Jane Shatford

(Breastfriends)

Jane O'Dwyer

(Amoena)



Canolfan Beulah, Rhiwbina

Monday, 14 October 2019

7pm - 9pm

Limited bra fitting sessions available

If you are over 70..... Message from South East Wales Breast Screening Centre

'We will not invite you but you are still able to be screened if you wish. Please ask us for an appointment by getting in touch with your local Breast Test Wales screening centre. Screening is only available every three years'.

South East Wales Breast Screening Centre, 18 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ. Telephone: (029) 2039 7222

Pins, needles and petals

Coming to terms with a mastectomy is a challenge for many women and there are a number of post-surgery options to consider. Polly Davies describes her own breast cancer journey and why she ended up covered in flowers.

Ten years ago I found a small lump in my left breast, which my GP said felt like a cyst so he suggested I got it checked out. A biopsy confirmed it was indeed cancer but the type remained elusive. Unfortunately, not knowing made advice as to surgery difficult; a lumpectomy to remove a 14mm lump in my double D breast would not be much of an issue, but any larger and I could lose my breast.

It was a very difficult week trying to decide, but in the end I opted for a mastectomy and sentinel lymph node removal.

The night before surgery I sat on my sofa looking down at my boobs, trying to imagine nothing on the left side. The reality was not quite as bad as I'd imagined, but still a shock, and I felt very lopsided!



A big thank you to my tattooist, Sam Fisher at Emerald Tattoo Company

A week later I found out I had invasive lobular carcinoma (ILC), grade 4, and it was in the lymph so the rest of them would have to come out.

However, it wasn't the small lump that was cancerous but the tumour underneath it which was in fact 60mm! Around 10-15% of women a year are diagnosed with ILC and it rarely forms a lump so here's the Awareness bit. Possible symptoms include:

- ◆ an area of thickening or swelling
- ◆ a change in the nipple
- ◆ a change in the skin, such as dimpling or thickening

I admit to rarely checking my boobs and was only feeling for lumps anyway, so please, my friends, check for the above too.

A year after finishing chemotherapy and radiotherapy, I decided to have the right breast removed (it was heading south at a great rate of knots, anyway!) and double reconstruction. Unfortunately radiotherapy had damaged the muscle and skin on the left side so reconstruction was not perfect.

To celebrate 10 years cancer-free I decided to have a tattoo to cover my scars. I absolutely love it!



Congratulations and a massive thank you to Mick McCormack, who ran the London Marathon for Breastfriends and raised £710.

Well done!



Talk of the walk

Breastfriends weekly walks are a great opportunity to make new friends who know what you're going through. Here, one regular Roath Park walker shares her experiences.



I was rather nervous as I arrived at Roath Park that Tuesday morning. I'd been told that the Breastfriends 'walk and talk' group met by the lighthouse at 10:30am, and as I approached I could see about a dozen ladies in lycra doing star jumps and press ups and lunges. Luckily, this turned out to be an outdoor fitness class. The walking group was standing just behind them, wearing anoraks and flat shoes, just like I was. They turned to greet me with warm, welcoming smiles and my anxiety melted away. I've been coming to Roath Park on Tuesday mornings ever since.

When I went through a lumpectomy and radiotherapy in 2018 I was, like everyone, given a daunting pile of leaflets to read. This included the latest Breastfriends newsletter, and my lovely breast cancer nurse suggested I might like to go to the weekly walk at Roath Park (there's also a group that meets in Barry). 'No way,' I thought, 'I'm not going to join a social group that's all about cancer...'. My intention was to just get through it and move briskly on with my life.

After a few months, though, I realised that I was still striving to make sense of what I had been through. When I finally summoned the courage to check out the group, I found it was a tremendous

relief to meet other people who had been through it too. Something about being out in the open air makes it easy to talk, and everyone is happy to share advice, support and understanding based on their own experience. Even when I'm having a hard time, I always feel better for making the effort and coming out.



However, the group isn't 'all about cancer'. As we walk our circuit of the lake, we also talk about families, travel, food and hobbies, or simply enjoy watching the ducks, geese and swans as they raise their babies. There's no pressure. No one takes names or counts heads, you just come whenever you can and for as long as you feel like. There are women of all ages and stages among us, from the recently diagnosed to the 'twenty years clear and just here for the cake.'

Ah yes, the cake... our walks always end at the Terra Nova Café where we are welcomed by the lovely staff as we swarm in, brandishing our loyalty cards. If you want to find us, we are invariably the table that's roaring with laughter. Come and join us, we'll pull up a chair for you!

See back page for more information about Cardiff and Barry walks

Strawberry Tea and AGM

July saw our annual **Strawberry Tea and AGM** event, held at Canolfan Beulah in Rhiwbina.

Our guest speaker was Velindre Consultant Oncologist, Dr Annabel Borley (right), who gave an illuminating talk about the latest developments in breast cancer treatment and delved into the facts behind some recent headline-grabbing stories about the relationship between alcohol and breast cancer risk.

Dr Borley was joined by Oncology Nurse Specialist, Gail Williams (left), who discussed issues faced by women experience menopausal symptoms. We are immensely grateful to both speakers for their informative contributions.



Thanks, also, to the generosity of everyone who attended— we managed to raise £270, which will help Breastfriends continue to provide support and friendship.



T-shirts now available

If you would like to buy a t-shirt featuring our Breastfriends logo, please email:

info@breastfriendscandv.org.uk



OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH & YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO JOIN US AT OUR

Pink Ball

Saturday 19th October 2019
at Hilton, Cardiff CF10 3HH

- 7pm Drinks Reception
- 3 Course Black Tie* Dinner (*Pink Welcome)
- DJ & Dancing
- Carriages at Midnight

- Individual Tickets £55* or £500 for a table of 10
- *£50 ticket Early bird offer available until Friday 16 August

To book your tickets email:
Sara.oherlihy@breastcancercare.org.uk

IN AID OF
breast cancer care
 Cymru

Breast Cancer Care is a working name of Breast Cancer Care and Breast Cancer Now, a charity registered in England and Wales (1160558) and Scotland (SC045584)



What's on at Breastfriends

Join us at one of our meetings

Cardiff Meetings

Our Cardiff group meets on these dates from **1pm-3pm** at the **Margaret Whittaker Lounge, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF14 6LX** unless otherwise stated

Friday 13th September
Coffee and chat

Friday 11th October
Latest research
Julie Gee

Monday 14th October 7pm—9pm
Breast Awareness Month Amoena Bra Evening
at Canolfan Beulah, Rhiwbina

Friday 8th November
Tenovus choir

Friday 13th December
Christmas get-together

Barry Meetings

Our Barry group meets on these dates from **2pm-4pm** at the **Mary Lennox Room, Barry Hospital, Colcot Road, Barry, CF62 8YH**

Friday 20th September
Prosthetic/Bra fitting
Caroline from Amoena

Friday 18th October
Changing Body Image
Jane Shatford

Friday 15th November
TBC

Friday 20th December
Christmas meal

For more information on the Barry meetings please call Rosina on 01446 745269 or Linda on 01446 710516 / 07967 806073

Walk and talk with Breastfriends

We meet **every Tuesday (weather permitting)** for a short leisurely walk followed by coffee and maybe cake!

Barry walks alternate between Barry Island and the Knap and start at 10.30am. Please contact Rosina on 01446 745269 or Linda on 01446 710516/07967 806073 for more info)

Cardiff Walks meet **by the lighthouse in Roath Park at 10.30 am** for a walk around the lake
(Please contact Sue on 07773 500525 for more info)



Contact Us

Phone: messages care of Breast Cancer Care Cymru on 0845 0771894

Please check our website for up-to-date information

Email: info@breastfriendscandv.org.uk

Data Protection Act 1998 Notice

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