



TO HELP IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL NECK BREATHERS

Dear Friends

Once again Wendy and Bill are taking a long winter break in sunnier climes and so this message is coming from Carole Stainton. On behalf of all the Trustees I thank you all for the many Christmas and New Year Greetings we were delighted to receive and wish you all the very best for 2006. Thank you also to everyone who participated in Race Night 2005. With your generous support we managed to raise a record amount of £3365 for the continuing work of the Trust.

There were 36 Absent Owners Races and you can see a photograph of two of the lucky owners receiving their trophies from the Mayor of Calderdale. The presentation took place at the Christmas Lunch for West Yorkshire members held here in Halifax. I was also pleased to attend the lunch in Chesterfield and enjoyed meeting members there for the first time.

While Wendy and I were busy with Race Night we managed to take time out to attend the Macmillan Cancer Voices Seminar held at York Race Course. There were some excellent presentations and plenty of opportunities to make contact with others working or living with cancer. It was a particular pleasure that the event was held in a location with such special memories for all members of the Norgate family. Those of you who have read Laryngectomy is not a Tragedy will recall how Sydney describes The Miracle of being able to achieve oesophageal speech with ease when he meets up with his farming friends at the York August meeting. It was an honour to be there representing the charity he founded.

Best Wishes to everyone, Carole Stainton



*Mayor of Calderdale presenting Race Trophies*

### **Star Fund-Raiser**



Each month when the bank statements arrive I check through to make sure the items are correct and very often I am delighted to see an entry Paid in at North Walsham. This means that one of our members by the name of Baden Cook has been busy again with his fund-raising activities. Over the past year he has raised over £460 for us and we really appreciate his efforts.

What Baden does not know is that I have recently been researching the Norgate family history and have discovered that Henry Norgate grew up in North Walsham before he left Norfolk to move to Yorkshire for work. His son Matthew was my grandfather although sadly he died while Sydney was still at school so we never knew him.

### **Help with the cost of cancer**

We all know there are many issues around the diagnosis of cancer, some are psychological, others more practical and the matter of the financial cost is not insignificant. Macmillan Cancer Relief have produced an excellent booklet with the title Help with the Cost of Cancer and I have a few copies at the office or alternatively you can contact them directly on 0808 808 2020

We advise all members to apply for Disability Living Allowance if under 65 years of age or Attendance Allowance if 65 or over. If your initial application is turned down don't give up but try again. An excellent self help guide to claiming benefits for laryngectomees is available from NALC on 020 7730 8585

Also please remember that as a charity we are able to offer grants to members in financial need. We do not have vast reserves so please don't all rush in requesting thousands of pounds but we are able to make small grants. If anyone is in need of assistance and would like to be considered by the trustees please get in touch and we will send you a Grant Application Form to complete. Phone or write to the address in the box or e-mail to [info@cancerlt.org](mailto:info@cancerlt.org).

## In a Strange Land by Robin Reid

Book review by Rosalind Oswald

This book tells the story of one man and his experiences from his initial diagnosis through his radiotherapy treatment and on to his laryngectomy and subsequent progress. It also tells of the relationship between his illness and his faith which is of tremendous importance to him.

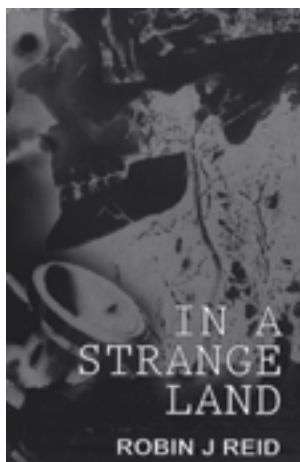
It is very detailed and provides a great deal of factual information about the various different steps he has to take along the way. Although he tells of the painful and difficult times it also conveys his patience, courage and his desire to help other people in a very sensitive way.

I found the book interesting as I had had three major operations and also share the same faith as the writer of the book. Therefore, I was able to empathise with some of his experiences. However, my surgery was less far-reaching than a laryngectomy. Having read the book I feel much more informed about the day to day aspects of life for the writer and better able to understand the difficulties that he has faced. I also feel encouraged by his courage and his attitude to his faith which shines throughout the book.

I feel that the book would be particularly useful for carers and health professionals because it touches on some subjects which it might be difficult to discuss verbally. Therefore it is practical without being as clinical as a medical book. However, it does discuss aspects of his treatment which were less than satisfactory. I am not sure how some readers would deal with this particularly if they were going to have the same treatment at some point.

There is a useful list of references at the back which includes NALC and Macmillan Cancer Relief amongst others.

The book ends with the writer expressing the view that he has a lot to learn both as a Christian and as a laryngectomee. After reading the book I feel that he has already learnt a great deal and has taken the time to pass this on in order to help others. Although he does not hesitate to deal with the most difficult aspects of his illness and its treatment he does so in a way which makes it clear that there is light at the end of the tunnel.



## Let's Talk by Evan Hunter aka Ed McBain

Book review by Rosalind Oswald

This book tells the story of the writer and his experiences from his initial diagnosis through his radiotherapy treatment and on to his laryngectomy and subsequent progress. Evan Hunter is a very skilful writer and this makes the book much easier to read than it might otherwise be.

In Chapter One Evan makes it very clear that the book is about his cancer. However in Chapter Two he takes us back to 1992 and explains the various stages along the way before the diagnosis was made in 2002. This enables him to weave into the story of his illness details about the other important aspects of his life including the breakdown of his marriage.

We are introduced to Dragica who by the end of the book is his wife and soul mate. In 1992 he was married to another woman whose name I struggled to find in the book. This makes the book a great deal more than an account of an illness even one as far-reaching as throat cancer. However, Evan himself recognizes that this may cause the reader to lose sympathy with him. At page 48 his words are as follows:

".....another good way to lose sympathy for your lead character is to make him a 68 year old man who after 22 years of marriage falls in love with a woman 23 years his junior.....But I met the love of my life when I was 68. So shoot me."

We hear from his partner Dragica as well as Evan himself. The book is factual and takes us through the chronological story of his diagnosis and treatment but also deals with his relationship issues and his working life. It is a very balanced account so far as the treatment of the illness is concerned. At one extreme there are diagrams relating to the illness which are helpful in explaining some of the medical issues discussed. At the other extreme there are emotional accounts of the development of his relationship with Dragica.

It is interesting to read such a detailed account from such a talented writer. His explanations of some of the practical aspects of caring for him after his laryngectomy helped me to understand some of the aspects of my father's life which I had not previously understood so clearly.

The book is written with honesty and can only help to inform the reader about a subject which merits attention. Once again it helps any person undergoing treatment for throat cancer to understand that they are not alone.



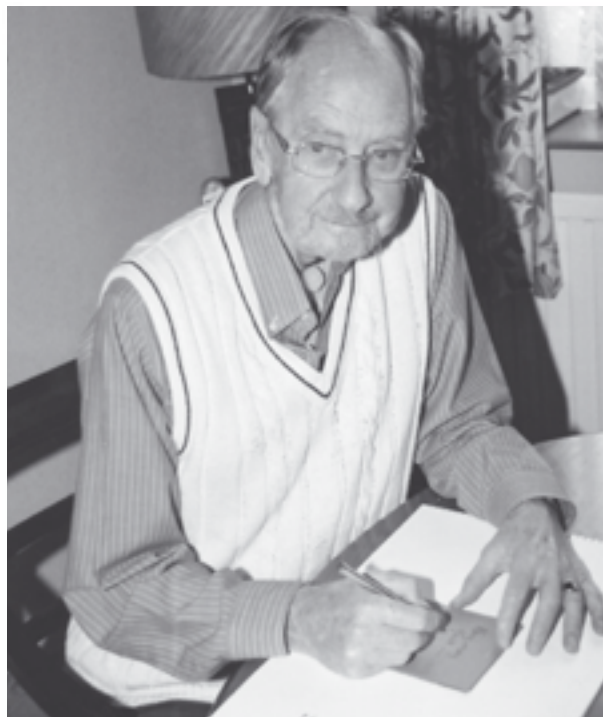
### Other People's Hobbies!

Burghley, Harewood, Sandringham, Tatton, Holkham – what do the names bring to mind? Great houses, fabulous parkland, historical connections – yes, of course, but for me ... the National Caravan Rally.

I'm a laryngectomee, yes, and if life goes on (and it must) that means caravanning and the National Rally each year. Imagine putting a small town together in a few weeks and then causing it to go away again, without a magic wand. That's what happens with all that it implies – accommodation (bring your own), food (varied), health (important), entertainment (top class), transport (careful), shopping (retail therapy), fun, fellowship and friendship.

The National Caravan Rally is organised by The Caravan Club each year in the spring at a stately home, in parkland and with basic services laid on for up to 3000 outfits. I have been happy to be part of this great event over many years and could write pages about it .... And probably will BUT what about your hobby? Did we ought to try it? Why is it such a big part of your life? Tell us, please!

Tony Curtis



### CHANCY

This interesting name stands for Communicating Head and Neck Cancer Yorkshire and has been devised by a group of health professionals and patients who came together to raise the profile of head and neck cancers. The group was formed in 2004 and consists of six people with personal experience of one of these cancers and their carers, four specialist Macmillan nurses and a dietitian.

Win Stocks, who is a laryngectomee and is one of our members, and his wife Angela have been involved with CHANCY from the beginning. The group's first major project was to arrange a conference at Pontefract Racecourse in May 2005. The conference involved a combination of clinical presentations from consultants, nursing and psychological issues and very importantly the patient and carer perspectives. The event was very well received by the 58 healthcare professionals who attended.



*Win Stocks, with his wife and other attendees at the Pontefract meeting*

### The Thoughts of a Laryngectomee

Regular readers might remember the poem to his nurse written by Len Hynds which appeared in a previous issue. Len continues with his studies in Creative Writing and was asked by his fellow students at Canterbury to explain how he could still talk after his surgery and so he wrote down The Thoughts of a Laryngectomee. The article is rather long to reproduce in full so what follows is just a brief extract. If anyone would like the complete article I can send a copy or it can be downloaded from the web page in the section where previous newsletters appear.

Len's Thoughts begins:

I am a laryngectomee, which means that I have no vocal chords, and breathe only through a small hole in the neck, where the Adams Apple used to be. My vocal chords were surgically removed due to cancer of the throat, on the 22nd of June 2004. That is when I lost my true voice or the ability to make any sound, and I felt that I was trapped inside my own head.

To be a Laryngectomee is a strange thing, because suddenly you have lost the power of instant communication, and in many people it tends to want them to hide away and retire from life.

After describing the many facets of life affected by his operation

Len concludes:

In spite of all these setbacks, which have to be overcome, if ever you have the misfortune of becoming a Laryngectomee, do not worry. You will be a survivor. You will still be with us, and believe me, it's great to be alive.

We Laryngectomees do not consider ourselves disadvantaged in any way, but rather privileged to have our speech back, and to be one of the few that survived a very trying time, and to be given the opportunity to live life normally once again.

### Members enjoying Christmas Lunches



web site: [www.cancerlt.org](http://www.cancerlt.org)  
email: [info@cancerlt.org](mailto:info@cancerlt.org)



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LARYNGECTOMEE  
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