



NEWSLETTER

**Church Street Practice
Patient Involvement Group**



MAY PAUL 1931-2015

The Pig committee met shortly after May's Funeral and we decided to put together a permanent tribute to her in the form of a special Newsletter. This would be made up of our memories of May and include part of 'The Story of PIG', written by May, the whole of which can be read on the practice website along with this tribute (*which will be added later*).

MAY MEMORIES

My fondest memory of May a very wise and kind lady was, opening a bank account with her to collect money for Dr Godlee's retirement present. The account was named 'PIG retirement fund'.

I went in the bank to deposit some money, the teller said what a lovely idea to have a retirement fund for pigs as she was an animal lover. The bank queue went very quiet as I explained that PIG was the 'Patient Involvement Group' for Church St Practice. This event amused May no end.

I had a lot of respect for May and I will miss her greatly.

Connie Tonks

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May had inner serenity. On a personal level I found her to be welcoming, positive, cheerful, sensitive, a good listener, patient and always kind.

Sincerely, Janet Shepherd

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Stalwart! – that is my word for May. I knew her for many years, since the inception of the PIG committee, then later as a volunteer driver for us at the Independent Advice Centre.

I have many other words to describe how I felt about her – dependable, caring, clear sighted and an ability to always take a balanced and rational view of a situation.

She was an excellent example of how to enjoy retirement, filling her days with such a variety of activities among her legion of friends. We are all feeling a little bereft just now but can take great comfort from the fact that she never became old and infirm which she would have found very hard to endure but left us while she was still in full possession of her considerable faculties.

I feel lucky to have counted her as a friend and will feel her loss for a long time to come.

Jeanne Felmingham

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I first met May many years ago when I was deeply involved in fighting the officers and ruling group on The Vale, to obtain Janssens on the then named Admiralty Site, because her late husband, Jim, was very interested in our work on this project. I then lost all contact until recent years when I got involved with PIG. May had not changed in all that time, she was cheerful, interested in everything going on around her and always willing to help anyone in need.

Francis Sketch

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I met May when I joined PIG over 15 years ago and during that time we shared many happy and sometimes frustrating aspects of the NHS. We worked on 'A Day in the Life...' together and her vision helped shape it into the informing booklet it became. We attended planning meetings to prevent the Health Centre site becoming a nursing home, spending hours honing our case for the appeal which won through. Afterwards, when approached by a reporter who asked her age, May was indignant telling him it was irrelevant and that she was a patient. You can guess the topic of conversation over the lunch that followed.

May was always interested in my family and endeared herself to my children who often attended meetings (halving the average age of the PIG group) and, despite our different generations, I never classed her as 'old' but a friend as she was fun to be around. I have many lovely memories of May and how proud she was of her family and how

dedicated she was to Church Street and wanted to help the practice alongside the patients.

I will sign off, as she always did after numerous phone conversations:

“OK then...”

Sue Hannon

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May was both formidable and approachable with a wonderful liveliness and intelligence. As a practice we were very lucky to have her as the chair of our Patient Involvement Group. As an individual I valued her judgement and support. She will be a hard act to follow but I hope PIG will continue to flourish, supporting the practice and representing patients' views.”

Joy Arthur

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I will best remember May as a supportive friend. She made me welcome when I first moved to Wantage to take up the post of practice manager and was kind and thoughtful enough to invite me to supper and out for coffee and a chat, particularly in the long months that I was house-hunting and waiting for my husband to move down here. I valued her judgment and will always have fond memories of our long chats putting the world to rights and of course, discussing Practice and PIG matters. May was certainly no shrinking violet and would express her views, those of the PIG Committee and any patients she was representing, with clarity and reason and, luckily for me, she was always willing to listen. She was intelligent and knowledgeable but so full of common sense and I really valued her insight and judgement on a personal and professional level. For me, she was a reliable sounding board and so often brightened my day with her humour and enthusiasm.

My heart goes out to all her family and friends at this sad time as I know just how much I am going to miss her.

I really hope that PIG will survive the loss of May, regain its momentum, expand to attract new members and develop its focus and

purpose. The Practice needs and values our “award winning PIG” and May would certainly want it to continue the good work.”

Sheila Dearman

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I first met May eight years ago. She encouraged me to go line dancing at Grove. May was light on her feet and very expert at the dances and different routines. She gave me great tips from her many years’ experience and it was great fun being on the back row next to her. May suggested that I might like to join the PIG committee which has been very satisfying and the experience has increased my knowledge of how the practice functions. Then May asked me to join Joyce on the first inter-care team which is a very worthwhile activity.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to be involved with such an inspiring person, and I will miss her very much as a friend. *Bridget Benn*

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May certainly embraced technology! She used computer, laptop, i-pad, mobile phone, etc!

The PIG committee was invited to the Bear hotel for a meal with Sheila, the Practice manager. Sheila circulated the menu in advance and May sent back a message to Sheila that one member would have "the vegetable tagine with filo pastry".

At least that's what she wrote. But the predictive text thought otherwise. May noticed it had written vegetable "tagging" so sent a quick "oh dear" to Sheila whereupon Sheila replied that it wasn't the vegetable tagging that confused her as much as the "filofax pastry"!!

This appealed to May's sense of humour very much.

Ken, May's son, told the above story at her funeral

After Christmas I decided to attack my loft, it was chock-a-block with unused and mostly unwanted things and if they were gone more insulation could be added.

Through January and early February my bins were regularly filled to the brim with both recyclables and non-recyclables.

May got involved! She would knock on my door on Monday afternoons to see if she could take away a bag of “stuff” and put it in her green or black bin to help ease the situation.

She enjoyed getting involved in her friends’ “goings on” and was always ready to lend a hand or an ear where possible.

She saw the funny side of situations too and during this period would phone just to make sure I wasn’t “stuck” in the loft! *Christine Lisi*

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I first met May about 40 years ago when, for a brief time she was a member of my drama group. Many people probably do not know that among her many other talents May was a fine amateur actress. I directed her in an Ayckbourn play “How the other half loves”.

We lost touch for a while but met again about 20 years ago when PIG asked that patients who would be interested in forming support groups in a number of different conditions come forward. I volunteered and found myself running an arthritis support group and, shortly after, joining the PIG committee. I worked closely with May from this time.

On a personal level May was a very dear friend and I find it very difficult to believe that we will never meet or talk again. This world would be a better place if there were more people in it like May.

Jean Sutherland

Now please read “The Story of PIG” as written by May.

PIG's aims are twofold: to ensure that the "patient voice" is heard in Practice considerations and to increase the easy flow of information, views and concerns between the practice staff and patients.

History: In the spring of 1995 some 18 or so patients of the practice responded to an invitation to meet with two of the GPs to discuss the formation of a Patient Group. It was made very clear from the outset that while the practice would support and encourage the group it was up to patients to determine how such a group would work and develop.

A small working group was formed and a target date some six months later was set for the group's launch. It was decided that the group should be called the Patient Involvement Group, thus leading to PIG with its formalised and easily recognisable logo. Publicity leaflets and a questionnaire about practice matters and concerns were prepared and 1000 copies distributed. Good relations had been established with the local Sixth Form which then analysed the returned 356 replies and made an exhibit with graphs diagrams and photos. This formed the topic for the launch meeting in October 1995 attended by over 120 people... standing room only! A committee was elected and PIG was on its way.

Finance

Initially the practice supported the group in costs of hiring rooms, printing etc. However PIG earned money through distributing MAAG surveys for the Practice. The practice continues to help PIG financially.

What have we done?

Major Events

1996 Formation of Arthritis self help group. This met monthly with talks, discussions etc. It ceased to meet formally in 2004, but a small group remain in contact. **Also** Started the newsletter

1997 Health Watch Day and 2001 a Health Odyssey. Some 30+ stands covered a wide range of health promotion with information from both professional and voluntary organisations relating to health and general well being, e.g. social services provisions, dieticians, drug testing, road safety etc. Music and drama was provided by the Sixth Form and on another occasion people were encouraged to try some line dancing and watch a yoga demonstration. Both these events were attended by well over 400 people. The costs were covered by grants from the local authority and sponsorship by local groups.

- 2001** Encouraged by Dr Mark Drury, PIG submitted an entry to the Royal College of GPs for the National Award for Patient Groups. We won and were presented with a cheque for £1000.
- 2003** Move to new premises. A PIG committee member had been closely involved in the planning of this project. PIG produced a special newsletter with plans of the new surgery and PIG helpers were there for 3 weeks to help as guides.
- 2005** Activities Day: A joint venture with LINK but on a much smaller scale than the earlier Health Watch days..
- 2005** 10th Birthday Celebrations attended by patients, our founder GPs Dr Mark Drury and Dr Phillip Ambler, and representatives from the PCT.
- 2007** Healthy Eating Stand . This was outside W.H.Smith and Waitrose in an effort to take some of the health issues away from the Health Centre and to where people were doing their weekly shop. A range of information, leaflets, healthy snacks and a children's activity were on offer. Some 200 people were engaged.
- 2008** Website This was finally launched with a new volunteer web master. This initiative had been started with the Sixth Form much earlier, but had failed to "get off the ground" due largely to the time limits of the students with exams and moving on to universities etc. (*We now have a section on the practice web*)
- 2009** Practice Diabetes Group. This was a Practice initiative but some PIG members are involved in its running . This group meets every two months with speakers and discussions
- 2009** "A Day in the Life of Church Street Practice" looking at a typical day in the Practice. Members of staff were asked to record their routines throughout a day and talk with a PIG committee member about them. All disciplines within the practice were covered and these accounts were then written up and made into a booklet. Some 800 were printed and it was put on the web. PIG has been reliably informed that it has been read not only in this country but even in America and Australia! Such is the value of the web!
- 2010** Age Concern Information Fair. PIG had a stand – an opportunity to talk with people - One person said that her copy of 'A Day in the Life of' had been sent to her son, a GP in Surrey and it had caused quite a stir so it has got around!
- 2010** Retirement party for Drs Phillip Ambler and Mark Drury , over 200 people attended this highly successful event. Gifts and cheques were presented to both GPs.