

Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund

Stepping up for PCRF

Nine boys aged 7–12 years from Diggle FC Juniors in Oldham completed a 16-mile walk from Saddleworth to the John Smith's Stadium in Huddersfield, raising over £3,000 for PCRF.

The fundraiser was in tribute to Martin Brook, the partner of team coach Tom Matley's mum.

Wearing their PCRF T-shirts, the boys and six adults set off just after 6am, shored up on bacon and sausage sandwiches made by Tom's mum, Pauline.

Says Tom: "They entertained themselves along the way and I think they forgot how far they were walking. A support car carrying drinks and snacks helped keep them focused – and they loved it when cars pulled over to donate money!

"My mum was so proud of them. Martin was diagnosed in 2016 and died 6 months later, shortly after marrying mum in the hospice. He was a wonderful grandad figure to my three boys Max, who's in the U12 team, and ten-year-olds Teddy and Felix, who also came on the walk."

The boys completed the walk in 5 hours and on arriving at the stadium, were treated to watching Huddersfield Town play against Coventry City. For some, it was their first experience of a live Championship match, and to their delight, in recognition of their fundraiser, the Diggle FC logo was displayed on the giant stadium screen.

"It was an early start for them and quite a distance - especially since the youngest was only 7 years old - but there were no complaints, injuries or dropouts. They were brilliant."

"They were representing something really close to our family's hearts and did it so professionally and with such enthusiasm," says Tom. "As a team they've played together for a couple of years now and while we don't win particularly often, we don't take that side of things too seriously. They love playing football and they're all best of friends and knock about together so their team spirit is really strong.

"We had no idea that we'd be able to raise over £3,000. It's amazing!"



Diggle FC Juniors at the John Smith's Stadium, Huddersfield

Near normality...?

We're very pleased to finally see the return of many national and regional organised events such as walks, 10km runs, marathons and cycle rides. They, along with the many and varied events organised by supporters themselves – some of which are featured here – give us hope that our income for research will also return to more usual levels.

Speaking of research, following the pandemic our research awards timetable has returned to normal, which means that this year's new awards won't be decided

until after the publication of this newsletter. Rest assured we'll publish the successful projects on the PCRF website as soon as possible.

Still, we've got plenty of research news to report, with exciting developments for both the PCRF Tissue Bank and a project we funded back in 2014 (see P2).

And as ever, we've packed this newsletter with stories of your creative fundraisers that help make research progress possible. Thank you for your continued support; it means so much to us.

Maggie Blanks, PCRF Founder

The Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund Tissue Bank launches internationally

Scientists from universities, research institutes, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies all over the world are now able to apply for tissue samples to help their research into improving the diagnosis and treatment of pancreatic cancer.

Launched in 2015, the PCRFTB aimed to solve the research challenge of high quality pancreas tumour samples being so scarce in the UK. The longer term international ambition was dependent on sufficient sample numbers being collected. This milestone has now been reached, with over 3,500 pieces of pancreatic tumour and normal pancreas tissue donated and stored.

Says PCRFTB Director Prof Hemant Kocher: "We are really proud of this achievement and extremely grateful to the patients who have made this possible."

These anonymised 'parent' samples have been further divided, so over 20,000 samples, along with other biological materials such as plasma and serum (products derived from blood samples), urine and saliva – all of which are valuable for research – are now available.

Alongside these patient samples are hundreds of samples of blood, urine and saliva donated by PCRF supporters at our supporter conferences, which are used for 'healthy control' comparison against patient samples.

The Tissue Bank has a small core staff based at Barts Cancer Institute, London, who liaise with the seven partner hospitals across London, Leicester, Southampton, Oxford and Newcastle upon Tyne.

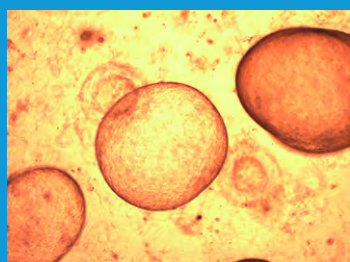
Each of the partner hospitals has a dedicated Tissue Collection Officer who discusses tissue donation with relevant surgical patients to obtain their consent

Tissue Bank in action

A UK research collaboration is using the PCRFTB to develop a way to predict which pancreatic cysts are at risk of developing into pancreatic cancer. Most pancreatic cysts cause no harm, but around 20% become cancerous – and current tests cannot tell which may do so with any certainty. The team will use 'machine learning' to analyse information on pancreatic cysts held at the Tissue Bank to discover hidden patterns and features that may indicate which cysts are likely to develop into cancer. As early detection offers the best chance of survival, the team hopes the resulting algorithm will help to identify which patients may need surgery.

for their removed tissue to be stored. They also ensure that the samples are processed to strict protocols and gather some 300 pieces of data about the patient, their medical history and treatment to date, which is key to the samples being such high value for research.

"Every piece of tissue donated is very precious," says Tissue Bank Co-ordinator, Catherine McMaster-Christie. "The more information we have, the more researchers can be sure that the sample is exactly what they need to accurately answer the research questions they are asking."



Tissue Bank Research Technician, Ahmet Imrali, uses cutting edge techniques to produce 'organoids' - patients' cells that have been specially nurtured to grow into tiny 3-D structures. Very difficult to produce and highly valuable for research, organoids enable much more accurate insight into the disease and how potential treatments might work in the body than traditional 2-dimensional cell lines allow.

PCRF-funded drug research progresses to clinical trials

A PCRF-funded project has underpinned the development of a potential new drug to tackle pancreatic cancer which could be tested in clinical trials as early as next year.



Professor Stephen Neidle and his team at UCL in London tested two compounds they had developed on mice and showed that they blocked the actions of key genes responsible for driving the cancer's growth.

The compounds work in a completely new way from current available drugs, targeting specific abnormalities in the human genome that are seen in several cancers that are resistant to chemotherapy – including pancreatic cancer.

"It's important to us that PCRF's supporters know that our early work that they enabled has been a critical part of the story to date, and at the time it was an important psychological boost for my team and myself to keep going."

Since the PCRF grant ended, Prof Neidle has created a new version of the compound with the most potential to make it even more potent.

In early 2022, UCL licensed the compounds and technology behind them to a small US biotechnology company who plan to take the drug into clinical trials in the US, hopefully in late 2023, and then in Europe.

"Once the regulatory toxicology tests are complete, we'll be ready to test the drug against a number of different cancer types, but pancreatic cancer will be part of this mix," says Prof Neidle. "And we have several leading US pancreatic cancer oncologists in the team who are cautiously excited about its potential."

He adds: "It's important to us that PCRF's supporters know that our early work that they enabled has been a critical part of the story to date, and at the time it was an important psychological boost for my team and myself to keep going."

We look forward to being able to report progress in due course.

Flying high for Tim

Jane Anderson from Bramhall near Stockport completed a wing walk in tribute to her brother, Tim Voltzenlogel, who died in March 2021 aged 60.

Jane recalls: "On January 1st Tim phoned me, and I assumed it was to wish us all a Happy New Year, but it was to give us the devastating news that he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and that it was terminal. He died in the March and it broke our hearts."

Tim had initially qualified and worked as a solicitor, but decided to re-train and, at the age of forty, he was ordained as a vicar. In a touching tribute, his parishioners at St George's Church in Swallowbeck, Lincoln, have planted a tree in the church garden in his memory.

"Tim was my big brother and one of life's good guys," says Jane. "He was quiet



Jane and Tim



but could be very funny, and he was very intelligent, but was always humble, gentle and unassuming. We all adored him. After he died, I wanted to do something positive. I'd always rather liked the idea of a wing walk and Tim's death provided the push to do it as a more unusual way to raise some money for PCRF.

"There was a really long build up to the day itself which meant the combination of excitement and fear grew as it drew closer. It turned out to be a wonderful, exhilarating experience but my overriding memory is how bitterly cold it was up there, despite wearing three fleeces, two T shirts and a long sleeved top - I was absolutely frozen!"

Raising over £3,000, Jane adds: "I'm so grateful to everyone who donated - but it is really testament to the person Tim was. He would be amazed and humbled but also, I hope, a little proud of me."

24-hour marathon raises £6k

Veterinary surgeon Alison Hamel from Aberdeen devised a new take on a fundraising marathon - she ran 1.1 mile every hour for 24 hours in an exhausting challenge, raising £6,000!



Alison and Omar

"When my friend was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, I felt helpless and wanted to do something positive," says Alison. "I thought that what I'd devised was do-able, but after I'd publicised it I thought 'What on earth was I thinking?!' Not so much on the running front as I could run that distance - but more on the sleep deprivation side!"

Alison started at 7pm so she would feel fresher through the early hours of the morning when it would be dark and cold and probably running alone.

But Alison didn't do a single leg on her own. Her son Omar returned from university to run all 24 with her, with each mile taking around 10-12 minutes. They were also joined on individual runs by numerous friends and colleagues - and 16 people ran the final leg with them!

She described finishing as a mixture of elation, exhaustion and relief. "Friends had mocked up a finishing line outside my house and there were lots of people cheering us home, including my friend and her husband who presented me with a huge bunch of roses, one for every mile we'd run, which was a lovely touch," she says.

Epic broadcast raises £2,500

Part-time DJ Barry Sullivan broadcast a mammoth 24-hr radio show to raise over £2,500 for PCRF!

Barry (right) lost his dad, Michael, his grandma and great grandma to pancreatic cancer, and as the 10th anniversary of losing his dad neared, he wanted to fundraise and raise awareness of pancreatic cancer symptoms as widely as possible.

Alongside his job as an educational psychologist, Barry presents a weekly radio show on PTown Radio in Plymouth. "Radio is such a fabulous community resource,"

he says. "I realised it's a perfect platform to raise awareness of something really important to me as well as having fun."

PTown's fans heard Barry interview pancreatic cancer researchers, PCRF founder Maggie Blanks and pancreatic cancer survivor Cathy Cobley, who donated her removed tumour tissue to PCRF's national pancreas tissue bank. The show was also packed with quizzes, music requests and a hilarious live 'scavenger hunt' game with show producer Zara and Barry's wife Emily competing to locate as many specified items as possible around Plymouth.

In the final hour, a co-presenter asked Barry to play a new track by his band - which was instead an emotional compilation of messages from friends and family. Nobody listening had dry eyes! To close, Barry's family joined him in the studio for a playlist of tracks to celebrate his dad.

Says Barry: "What a day (and night)!"

Thanks to all who supported and contributed to the show - it couldn't have happened without PCRF and the close relationships Maggie has with the pancreatic cancer community."



Jessica swims the Channel for her Grampfy



Pocket rocket 10-year-old Jessica Briggs (above) from Paignton in Devon swam the distance of the English Channel in memory of her grandfather Gregory Paull, clocking up 1352 lengths of her local swimming pool and raising £700 for PCRF.

Jessica carried out her huge 21-mile achievement in just over a month, completing between 70 and 110 lengths during her regular three swimming club sessions each week and adding extra swims every weekend, joined by her mum Katherine.

"My Grampfy was the best and I really miss him," says Jessica. "Because he was 68 when he died, when me and mum were swimming together at the weekends, every 68th length we would do it in a special stroke that I made up. It's called the twister and you have to twist from your front to your back," she explains.

As an extra tribute, Jessica also organised her tally so that there were exactly 68 lengths to complete in her final swim to complete the Channel distance.

Says Katherine: "When she finished, Jess looked over to me, grinned and raised her arms in triumph, and then just carried on with her swimming lesson. We're all so incredibly proud of her."

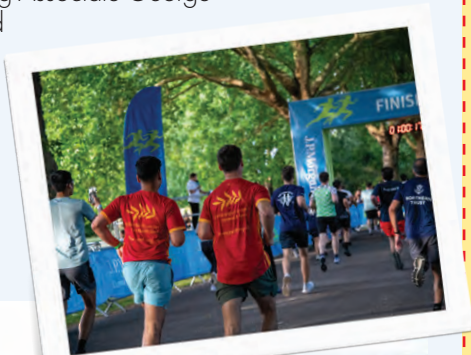
Jessica says she has no plans as yet to swim the Channel for real when she's older, but then why would she – she already knows she can do it!

Fab fifty's fun run

Many thanks to the London office of global financial advisory and asset management company Lazard, who fielded fifty runners drawn from across the firm in the JP Morgan Corporate Challenge.

The first held since the Covid-19 pandemic, over 12,500 runners of all ages and abilities from London-based companies set off in waves for the 3-mile run around Battersea Park.

Venture & Growth Banking Associate George Hailstone, who organised the Lazard team, said: "The day is always brilliant, really good fun and it's great to run beside and chat or say hi to friends and colleagues along the way."



Some of the fifty-strong Lazard team

"There's always a bit of rivalry between companies, so we were especially pleased with our overall team time which beat many of our key rivals!"

The team raised a total of £545 - generously matched by Lazard as part of its 2-year commitment to PCRF as its Charity of the Year.

Clearly an energetic lot, further events for PCRF throughout the summer include fielding 12 teams in a 5-a-side football tournament and a 'Tough Mudder' challenge.

I'd like to donate to PCRF

We value all donations to fund vital research

Please complete this form on both sides in block capitals and return to:

Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund
P. O. Box 47432, London N21 1XP

Please make cheques payable to Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund

Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone
Email

Keeping in contact via email helps us to keep costs down.



Cheque presentation

Bowled over by Purity's support

Purity Brewing Company held their annual company cricket match and used the occasion to present PCRF CEO Maggie Blanks with a cheque for £6,000.

Purity has been fundraising for

PCRF following the death of much-loved company co-founder, Jim Minkin. Launching a new Best Bitter in 2020, named 'Jimbo' as an affectionate tribute to their friend, Purity donates 5p from every pint and can of the award-winning brew to PCRF.

Hosted at Exhall & Wixford CC near Stratford-upon-Avon, the teams retain the same names each year – The Sloggers and The Sweepers – made up from Purity staff and friends of the business. This year the Sweepers triumphed, with 80 runs compared to the Sloggers' 40; however the scoring is a rather bespoke affair.

"It can be a bit confusing to newer staff," says Alex Cosgrove, Purity's Customer Marketing Manager. "Every player bowls and bats 2 overs (12 balls) and each team starts on 100 runs then loses ten for every wicket lost. It's great fun and it was always the highlight of Jim's year, so it's a great way to pay tribute to him."

The trophy the teams compete for was renamed the Jim Minkin Memorial Shield and will be engraved with the winning team each year.

Purity's Co-Founder Paul Halsey and new CEO Andy Maddock also confirmed that Purity will continue to raise funds for PCRF through the sales of Jimbo, The Very Best Bitter.



Best foot forward for Frankie

Keen hill walker Jim King (75) from Lanarkshire completed the 154km West Highland Way to mark 10 years since losing his youngest brother Frankie to pancreatic cancer.

Joined by his nephew John Paul, 51, the duo finished the classic route which runs from Milngavie, north of Glasgow, to Fort William in the Scottish Highlands in six days. They averaged around 15 miles a day, stopping over at hostels along the way.

"This is the fourth time I've done the West Highland Way and John Paul's first," says Jim. "It was great to do it with him as family means a great deal to us both. I'm one of eight siblings – Frankie was the youngest. I do miss him, he was such a happy person and loved life."

"The first two days were too warm – it was absolutely scorching, then on the last day there were 30mph winds and driving rain in our faces for the last 15 miles!"

"We were able to reminisce about both Frankie and my younger brother John, John Paul's late father, and spend time in a stunning environment where the views are breathtaking," adds Jim.

Whilst the scenery may have been idyllic, the weather certainly wasn't. Says Jim: "The first two days were too warm – it was absolutely scorching, then on the last day there were 30mph winds and driving rain in our faces for the last 15 miles!"



Jim (right) with nephew John Paul

Together they raised over £4200 - including generous match funding from John Paul's employer, Morrisons.

There may be more adventures together as Jim says that John Paul has definitely got the walking bug now. But sadly for Jim, he wasn't able to put his feet up on his return: "There's no rest for the wicked - my wife Elizabeth had me painting the lounge the day after we returned!"

I would like to make a donation to PCRF and enclose a cheque for

£ (payable to Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund).

giftaid it

☐ Yes, I am a UK taxpayer and would like to Gift Aid my donation (please tick).

I want to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund, until I notify you otherwise. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature:

Date:

☐ Tick the box if you would like us to send you a receipt.

Alternatively, you can donate with a credit or debit card by phoning us at 020 8360 1119 or via the website.

☐ Tick this box if you would like to receive future newsletters

We don't pass your details on to any other organisations.

Registered Charity No. 1155322



There are many different ways you can help us fund more research and make more progress in tackling pancreatic cancer:

Take part in an event

Mass participation runs, walks, cycles etc. are a great way to take part in an organised event. Whether you sign up for a PCRF guaranteed place in an event (see our website) or secure your own place, it's a great way to fundraise for the charity and we'll provide fundraising advice and free charity top.



Give in celebration

You can celebrate a special occasion such as an anniversary, wedding or birthday by asking for donations to PCRF in lieu of gifts. Contact us for ways to organise this.



Organise your own event



Many of our supporters organise their own events including quiz nights, bake sales, charity balls, concerts and coffee mornings. We're keen to help make your own fundraiser a success. Just email or phone to let us know your plans so that we can discuss the promotional materials we can offer.

Set up a Facebook Fundraiser



If you're on Facebook, it's easy to set up a Fundraiser for PCRF directly from your profile. Many of our lovely supporters set up one for their

birthday. People can donate to the fundraiser in just a few clicks without leaving Facebook, and the final sum gets paid to the charity automatically.

Shop online and fund research

You can be raising funds for more research just by shopping online! Here are two easy ways:

- Shop from thousands of leading retailers through the **Give as you Live** website and a percentage of your spend will be donated to us at no extra cost to you! Visit **www.giveasyoulive.com** and select Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund when you sign up.
- If you love **Amazon**, did you know that 0.5% of the net purchase of your eligible purchases can be donated to the charity, at no cost to you? First visit **smile.amazon.co.uk** to select Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund as your chosen charity, then you can support us every time you shop!



Buy PCRF merchandise

Support research with PCRF merchandise – including T-shirts, pin badges and trolley token keyrings. See our online shop.



Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund

PO Box 47432, London, N21 1XP

020 8360 1119

www.pcrf.org.uk | info@pcrf.org.uk



www.facebook.com/PancreaticCancerResearchFund



@PanCanResearch

For more information, check our website, email us at **info@pcrf.org.uk** or call on **020 8360 1119**