

GENERAL MEETING

Old Church Rooms on Monday 18th November 2019 at 7.30pm

Present: David Silver [Chairman], Tom Evans [Vice Chairman], Nick Hawkins (Secretary), David Cargill (Treasurer), Eric Blackwell, Bob Roberts, Ian Thomas, Cllrs Rod McKerlich, Helen Lloyd Jones, Clive Morgan and Ralph Vaughan, and 15 members.

Apologies: Allan Cook, Cllrs Huw Jones & David Suthers, Val Allen, Julie Davies, Terry & Betty Fitzgerald, Nick Holms, Judith Marsh and Chris Wills.

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Dr Barry McDonnell: 'Cardiovascular health'.

The Chairman introduced Dr McDonnell. He said that Dr McDonnell is a Reader in Cardiovascular Physiology and leads the Cardiovascular Physiology Research Group at Cardiff Metropolitan University, focussing on Hypertension, arterial ageing and microvascular damage. He graduated from Cardiff University in Cardiology and undertook a Post Doc in Cambridge University before taking up a tenured position at Cardiff Metropolitan University in 2008. He has honorary appointments in both Columbia University Medical Center, New York, and MacQuarie University, Sydney and, for the past three years, has led the Wales national blood pressure screening campaign, as part of the global May Measurement Month initiative.

In a fascinating talk, Dr McDonnell gave everyone an understanding of cardiovascular risk - how it affects the heart and other organs. He explained that the heart pumps in bursts and, in a young 'elastic' artery the elasticity buffers those bursts, thus transferring a smoother flow to all parts of the body. However, in an old 'stiff' artery, there is no buffering and the high pressure bursts travel through the system where they can cause damage to microvessels in various organs such as the kidneys and the brain. Diabetics are particularly at risk because the condition causes the arteries to age quicker. However, most people's arteries become stiff over time because of an increase in calcium deposits - although keeping active delays this effect. There is also a relationship between lung disease and arterial problems.

His laboratory at Cardiff Metropolitan University has been carrying out blood pressure 'MOTs' on the staff and the public for some time. This is not a diagnostic MOT, merely research leading to evaluation and awareness. Conventional arm (brachial) pressure monitoring (via a cuff) is a very basic measure. His laboratory measures 'pulsatility' via ultrasound techniques and can measure flow velocity in the eye (one of the organs that can be affected by high blood pressure). He also noted that monitoring blood pressure in the centre of the body is a more accurate determiner of risk.

He asked how many people present actually knew their blood pressure and was surprised at the relatively high number who did - which probably reflected the age range and interests of those attending the meeting. He is involved with the International Society of Hypertension (ISH), which is a campaign to get people to understand their blood pressure. Worldwide (over 120 countries) only 46% of people are aware they have a blood pressure problem. ISH have established a worldwide campaign 'May Measurement Month', a hugely cost effective way of determining what is actually happening and has the potential for a unique analysis of globally based solutions. (*Secretary's note: rather than giving a lot of statistics in these notes, readers may wish to look at the [MMM website](#), which is vital information on the topic and also carries good practical advice.*) Dr McDonnell was disturbed to report that, of the 7714 people screened in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, 23% had raised blood pressure, of which 40.5% were not being treated. This is very high, bearing in mind that treatment is free in these countries.

Dr McDonnell ended his talk by mentioning the interesting topic of people who have been fitted with a 'left ventricular assist device' (LVAD). This device is a battery-operated pump fitted to patients who have reached end-stage heart failure. It is a 'constant flow' device, so the patients do not have a conventional pulse. The LVAD has two main interests to him. How do you measure blood pressure when there is no pulse, and why do LVAD patients suffer from strokes etc when the blood flow is constant? Fortunately, his ultrasound techniques are proving an answer to both questions. It is

possible to measure the blood pressure in LVAD patients using ultrasound and 24 hour monitoring has established that , even with an LVAD, patients still have a number of daily ‘hypertensive crises’ as they go about their daily lives. It is a complex area.

There were a number of questions at the end of Dr McDonnell’s talk:

The best exercise to take at any age? All exercise is good, but it must be built up gradually

The linkage between high blood pressure and Alzheimer’s? A complex area but he noted that aortic arteries (which are the ones normally considered) can have a different stiffness to the carotid arteries (which transfer blood to the brain).

The effect of fitting a stent? A hotly debated topic!

How does blood pressure medication actually work? Another complex area... Different treatments work on the body in different ways and people differ in their reaction to them, so all treatment has to be bespoke to a certain extent. There are also ethnic differences in people’s reaction to the various treatments, and most research has been done on white people. He also noted that there is no medication currently available which will make arteries more flexible.

Why are men over 60 being screened for an abdominal aortic aneurysm? Aneurysms are caused by gradual damage or hardening of the arteries and this, combined with high blood pressure, is deemed worth checking in this higher-risk group.

At the close of the talk, the Chairman thanked Dr McDonnell for giving such a clear explanation of such a complex scientific area. He also noted that his talk was particularly well timed as the Association had agreed to adopt the British Heart Foundation as its nominated charity starting in July 2020. He presented him with a token of the Association’s appreciation.

Minutes of the previous General Meeting on 23rd September 2019

The minutes were approved. There were no matters arising.

Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer started by thanking Bob Roberts, previous long-serving Treasurer, who still keeps collecting the money and issuing all the cheques... He reported that the Association had, to date, an income of £19,476; most of which had been raised during the 2019 Festival. £12,000 of that income had been passed to the nominated charity, Action for Children, and there were numerous items of expenditure (bars, concerts, BBQs, etc) to service the Festival. The Association had had generous support from local traders, Plasdŵr and Redrow towards the Festival Programme and Website and there had been a donation from the R&MCC towards the Concert in the Parc.

In summary, the Association had generated a year to date surplus of £2477 of which £2142 had been spent on capital items including a new BBQ, trestle tables and gazebos. Consequentially, there was currently a small year to date deficit of £85 and the bank balance stood at £6695. This was a very satisfactory position.

There were no questions.

Christmas Tree lighting ceremony on 6th December

The Secretary said that most aspects were now in place for the forthcoming event. Tenovus had arranged for Welsh Actress Leona Vaughan to switch on the lights in Station Road following the lighting of the three community trees. Pupils from Radyr Comprehensive School and the two Primary Schools would be singing carols at all three sites. Full details and timings were contained in a flyer being delivered to all dwellings in R&M. He mentioned that, weather permitting, the Station Road event would include a ‘photo booth’, bouncy castle and a snow machine for Santa. There were no questions.

May Festival

The Chairman reported that most aspects of next year’s Festival were now in place and a Festival Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 20th November. 32 events were currently planned with the Concert in the Parc being on Friday, 8th May. This would feature a group called Kitty’s Music, who will perform 1940’s songs, and a roving saxophone group. Lisa Fearn, who runs the Pumpkin Patch Kitchen and Garden near Carmarthen, has been booked for the cookery event on 6th May. It was hoped that one of the lunchtime concerts would feature the pianist who won the Beethoven 250 competition at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Tenovus would be

putting on a fashion show and there would be events put on by the Radyr Music Society and at the Golf Club. Two plays by Fluellen were being considered. There were no questions.

Community Website

Ian Thomas reminded everyone that the Community website, www.radyr.org.uk, was now fully under the control of the Association. He emphasised that the challenge now was for the site to be more vital and reflect all aspects of the R&M Community. It wanted it to be an archive of what has happened and to be 'the place to go' to find out what is about to happen. To that extent he wanted organisations and individuals to email the Webteam (*Secretary's note: web-team@radyr.org.uk*) with details of events that have happened, and to go on the diary, and photos to go with them.

General R&M Matters

Congratulations were passed to Cllr Helen Lloyd Jones on completing a recent New York marathon for Charity.

OCR Piano. A new piano has been provided for the Garth Room, replacing the old one which was 20 years old. It was noted that the old piano, which is still in reasonable order, is now available if someone would like to have it. Contact the Secretary (on rma@radyr.org.uk) for details if interested.

Plasdŵr. The continued problems were noted. A posting on the Association's Facebook and Twitter feeds had been viewed over 8K times. Cllr McKerlich noted that very recent problems had occurred because the operative monitoring and managing the traffic flow had been withdrawn, without notice, by the contactors for 'health and safety reasons'. Changes had now been put in place which appeared to have eased the situation on Heol Isaf but at the expense of increased queues back toward Rhydlafer. Flooding has also been an issue.

Entertainment

It was noted that the Association's next Film Club screening would be *Tolkien (PG)* on Thursday, 28th November in the Old Church Rooms starting at 7:30pm. The new seat covers would be available for use (for the first 30 customers!). The Radyr Drama Society would also be performing the play *The Exorcism* (a great pre-Christmas ghost story) at Morganstown Village Hall from 21st-23rd November. Tickets were still available for both events.

Any other business

Nothing raised.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday, 17th February 2020, commencing at 19.30 in the OCR. The speaker will be Chris Dale who will be talking about 'Raiders of the Past'.