

Barry's story: a fight against terminal cancer

At this time of year Sheila and I normally send out a Christmas letter, but as many of you have asked for a copy of my regime, either for yourself, a family member or a friend, we have enclosed this copy of my progress report. It is also a big "thank you" to our family and friends – that means you – for all your support, encouragement and contributions to what I have achieved. I do hope that what I have to say proves helpful.

Introduction and conventional treatment

Following the diagnosis of my terminal cancer on 2 January this year (2004), I received advice from family and friends throughout the UK and in other parts of the world. This information, which now fills four two and a half-inch ring binders, is invaluable in my own fight against cholangiocarcinoma – a rare cancer of the bile duct, in addition to the secondaries, which were found on the liver and stomach.

Due to these secondaries, an operation to remove the main growth was not possible and I was offered, and accepted, chemotherapy. Since the middle of February, after an initial burst of six "chemo" treatments over six consecutive Thursdays, I received my chemo - Gemcitabine - every Thursday over three consecutive Thursdays, with the fourth Thursday being a chemo holiday. On the third day after chemo (Saturday) I got tired and after the third chemo treatment I had to be particularly careful for the following seven-ten days on not mixing with too many people and avoiding salads (can't be washed adequately). The reason for this is that my neutrophil factor (immune system) can go below one. But, I could live with all this – so I thought!

On 1 March I returned to work, until my retirement on 8 July – my 65th birthday. Many people questioned my reasons for returning to work, but I am determined to lead as normal a life as is possible. Life expectancy from diagnosis is difficult to forecast, but without any treatment the average is only three months, with the longest recorded survivor being just short of five years. (Originally I had mistakenly assumed that the average survival time was between eighteen to twenty-four months.) It goes without saying that I intend to set a new record, with the ultimate aim of proving the "impossible" – that cholangiocarcinoma is not terminal! To have any hope of achieving this, everything is critically important, from total faith in Christ and the power of prayer, conventional medicine and alternative Homeopathic remedies. I can't promise anything, but I can say that my oncologist, Dr David Spooner, and Liver Surgeon, Mr Darius Mirza, are pleased with my current state of health.

With a neutrophil factor frequently below one, on a number of occasions my immune system almost ceased to exist. This has resulted in six fevers since the end of March and the consequential emergency admission to hospital – two serious (one nearly fatal). The last occasion was on Friday 8 October when I was admitted to hospital at approximately 01:15. On the Saturday I was operated on and then again the following Saturday, 16 October, being discharged late on Monday 18 October. During this last operation it was discovered that the cancer had spread into some of the small biliary ducts in the main lobe of the liver. I also learnt that I had already lived longer than my consultants had originally envisaged, back in January. I'm doing something right, but what?

Before being discharged on 18 October 2004, Darius Mirza discussed the possibility of me participating in the phase 4 trial of Porfimer Sodium. This is a “photosensitiser” drug and is used in conjunction with a laser light, which on contact with the cancer cells kills them (photodynamic therapy – PDT). Through Darius Mirza’s encouragement and support, I was interviewed in London on Tuesday 9 November by Dr Stephen Pereira and accepted as one of eighteen people throughout Europe for this final trial. Brilliant! Needless to say, Sheila and I shed a few tears. This trial is taking place at The Middlesex Hospital in London, and I was admitted on Sunday 21 November. From 22 October I have made a special effort to build up my immune system and a general state of good health (refer to Julie Payne on page 3). As my immune system has been very low, to avoid further fevers, I remain on a low daily dose of the antibiotics Ciprofloxacin or Augmentin, alternating every twenty-eight days. In the mean time there is no chemo.

Essential reading

Out of the many books that I have purchased and read there are now five that stand head and shoulders above the others. These are:

- Lance Armstrong – **“It’s Not About the Bike – My Journey Back to Life”**
In October 1996 Lance was diagnosed with Testicular cancer, which had spread to the lungs and brain. He later learned that he only had a three percent chance of survival. He made it, went on to win the Tour de France, and in July this year won it again for the sixth time – an all time World record. “Pure inspiration – the stuff of legends.”
- Brandon Bays – **“The Journey”**, Element.
In 1992 Brandon Bays was diagnosed with a football-sized tumour and found herself catapulted into a remarkable, soul searching and ultimately freeing healing journey. Only six and a half weeks later, she was pronounced textbook perfect – no drugs, no surgery, no tumour. The book is an interesting read and she also undertakes workshops, which I am told are very “powerful”. Brandon may be contacted on infoeurope@thejourney.com. It is my intention to pursue her workshop(s) as soon as I have completed my role in the phase 4 trial of Porfimer Sodium
- Phillip Day – **“Cancer – Why We’re Still Dying to Know the Truth”**, Credence Publications.
The war on cancer was won fifty years ago, so why are we still fighting it? This stunning book exposes the medical, political and economic pressures and scandals surrounding cancer. Read the opinions of medical experts and how cancer can be successfully treated now. Buy a copy, read every word! It’s an eye opener, giving us all a lot to think about. The metabolic therapy and vitamin B17 foods should not be dismissed! Julie Payne is looking into this for me
- Professor Jane Plant – **“Your Life In Your Hands”**
Jane is an eminent scientist, and contracted Breast cancer in 1987. She had five recurrences of the disease, which by 1993 had spread to the lymph system. Jane’s cancer continued to spread and she was given three months to live, six if she was lucky! Jane went on to cure herself along with 65 other people who adopted her programme – a 100% success rate – can’t be bad!
- Professor Jane Plant and Gill Tidey – **“The Plant Programme”**
Daily and weekly menu plans for those with active cancer and for those on a prevention or maintenance diet

Cancer-beating homeopathic and natural remedies

In addition to my chemo I have a daily regime, which includes homeopathic remedies. These are:

- total exclusion of all dairy products from my diet – **without exception**. Refer to “Your Life In Your Hands” & “The Plant Programme”
- total exclusion of any produce with “E” numbers – as near as possible **without exception**. (It’s difficult to know what you eat, when eating out!)
- purchase of organic produce, whenever possible – if one shop hasn’t got what you want, try another shop and/or go back another day. Don’t make do
- adoption of Jane Plant’s active cancer diet. (Purchase a really top quality juicer, with a **fine metal gauze**. The one manufactured by Breville is the only one that I found suitable – costs just under £100. Don’t throw away the waste pulp; it can make the base for healthy rissoles!)
- three to four mugs of organic green tea (four mugs = one litre) four to six large glasses of **glass-bottled** still water
- one glass of water containing an effervescent vitamin C tablet – helps the immune system and greatly improves the absorption of iron. This is important, as half the body’s iron store is used to make haemoglobin. As a point of interest you should always eat foods rich in iron at the same time as taking food and/or drink rich in vitamin C. Conversely, you should avoid eating foods rich in calcium at the same time as iron-rich foods, as foods high in calcium reduce the absorption of iron
- one **pomegranate capsule** – brilliant
- two mugs of **lapacho tea**. Since the beginning of February I have had three periods of 28 days at a litre/day. I am currently taking one 3 fl oz cup of **essiac tea** each day

Other aspects of my regime to beat cancer are:

- I have the occasional holistic massage, which has included reflexology. This is best undertaken at the end of my chemo holiday, just prior to the start of my next cycle of treatment. (Body & Soul, Holistic Treatments by Gayle Bevan, 66 Market Street, Hednesford, Staffs)
- I also visit Dr. S. Hussain (PhD Homeopathy), a physician of holistic eastern medicines. Dr Hussain is a dear friend and a few years ago we were honoured guests at his daughter’s wedding. Although in his seventies, he still sees a few patients in his home. In my case he advises on the most appropriate food, gives “electric” acupuncture and natural medicine
- On 22 October I visited Julie Payne, a homeopathic practitioner. I was impressed with her knowledge and immediately went on a diet to cleanse my liver and fortify my immune system. The objective is to do everything possible to enable the body’s own natural defences to work with maximum efficiency – the opposite of chemotherapy, which destroys good and bad cells indiscriminately
- Aromatherapy oils can help support the immune system. The most useful oils are:
 - lavender - increases white blood cell count and is an effective antibiotic
 - lemon - stimulates white blood cells and is a powerful bactericide
 - thyme – stimulates the production of white blood cells
 - grapeseed – base oil. For an “at-home” massage oil mix two drops of lavender oil, two drops of lemon oil and one drop of thyme oil with 10ml of grapeseed oil. In aromatherapy vaporisers use only the five drops of the primary oils. Available from Holland & Barratt is “Aromatherapy - A Guide for Home Use”, by Christine Westwood - £1.99
- Faith Healing. This was an interesting experience involving “mind over matter” – visualising the nature and position of the cancer and mentally going inside your own body and shrinking the tumour(s). You repeat this exercise over a number of days – perhaps two or three weeks. It is known to work. (Cynthia Stanton: cynthia@stressaddress.com). A book is available from the Bristol Cancer Centre, “I Beat My Cancer – Let Me Show You How”, by Colin Ryder Richardson (previously published under the title “Mind Over Cancer”). Here, the author

remains in remission after contracting cancer over twenty years ago. It describes how he used his mind to build defences and then to attack the cancer (£9.99)

- Attend a “hands-on healing” service at a local church. Even if you have not been there before, you will be made very welcome
- The same week I left hospital, at the end of January, I returned to the Gym. This was to the disapproval of almost everyone. However, I was sensible (at least, that is what I think!) and wore a heart monitor that took control of the machines. Combining the Gym with chemo limited my visits to two per week, Monday and Wednesday. This had to stop when I returned to work. I did an experiment on one occasion and went on a Friday, with my body full of steroids – big mistake – never again
- While on holiday in early June in South Devon I visited a Chinese Doctor in Sidmouth. Although a qualified general practitioner, she practices in this country as a doctor of traditional Chinese medicine. To improve my health she prescribed a ten day course of “Dang Gui Wan” (ten tablets taken three times per day - thirty/day) and “ginseng polygona root extract” (this is an oral liquid in a glass file and I drank one glass file in the morning and one in the evening - twenty over the ten day period). Towards the end of the ten-day period I felt as if I had an added spring to my step. Perhaps I need to make a repeat visit! (Di Juan Lui, Caxton House, East Street, Sidmouth, Devon)
- The Bristol Cancer Centre, Grove House, Cornwallis Grove, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4PG - 0117 980 9500, www.bristolcancerhelp.org - a source of a lot of very useful information
- A number of homeopathic remedies are available from Botanic Health, 24a Union Street, Hereford HR1 2BT, email botanichealth@aol.com
- Certain combinations of food can go a long way to beat cancer. The key is to combine selenium and sulforaphane, which together can be up to thirteen times more effective than when the ingredients are eaten on their own. Selenium is found in nuts, poultry, fish, eggs, sunflower seeds and mushrooms. Sulforaphane is in green, leafy vegetables. A few suggestions:
 - Salmon in a watercress sauce
 - Poached egg with spinach
 - Chicken and Rocketare ideal anti-cancer combinations. Watercress has been shown to have powerful anti-cancer properties. Over fifty scientific studies have shown that it doesn't just prevent cancer, but has the ability to kill cancer cells. It also inhibits the effects of cancer inducing substances and stimulates cell defence systems against carcinogens
- Tumeric – “A teaspoon a day keeps cancer at bay.” Professor Kamala Krishnaswamy, Director of the Hyderabad National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), stated that Tumeric has strong anti-cancer properties. The active ingredient is curcumin, which, following a decade of studies at the NIN and elsewhere in the world, has been shown to be a powerful anti-oxidant, preventing cell damage that can lead to cancer. Curcumin protects the body from developing cancers and, in some cases, it has worked ‘miracles’ in reversing cancer. Its anti-inflammatory properties are also a natural treatment for arthritis
- On Wednesday 17 November Sheila and I were welcomed as new members of PanLive, the support group for liver, biliary and pancreatic cancer patients and their partners. We were both made very welcome and also had a very enjoyable time at their Christmas bash on Tuesday 14 December, where the consultants and nurses were also present

I am unable to promise a cure, but I sincerely believe that the above regime is an important addition to conventional medicine and my determination to prolong as far as is possible a reasonable healthy lifestyle and beat cancer. I certainly have no intention of giving any ground to it – no easy ride for “the big C” here!

Final comments and thanks

I am frequently asked the question, “Barry, of all the things that you take, how do you know which is doing you any good?” My reply is simply, “I have no idea and I don’t give a damn.” As long as there is no significant deterioration in my health, then my regime, as a whole, is doing me good. I can’t ask for better than that – except of course, for a cure – and who knows what is happening inside my body? It is also important to remember that while I was on chemotherapy I had my blood analysed every week (except on my chemo holidays). The haematology and biochemistry reports cover twenty-three elements and on most occasions the nurses say, “Your results are good today” (except, of course, for my neutrophil factor).

While attending the Oncology Department, I usually arrived a cross between a tornado and a clap of thunder! The quiet and peaceful rooms, which we are allocated, were quiet no more! It is a shame that so many people are embarrassed or to frightened to talk about their illness, as we can learn so much from each other. This led to a growing band of “talkers”; Angela, Bill and myself – with Janet, a Wednesday girl, changing when she could to a Thursday. We became known as “The Thursday Club”. How very nice – thanks.

While my sincere thanks go out to everyone I must say a very special thanks to the nurses at The Priory Hospital, Birmingham. They are a wonderful, happy and dedicated bunch, going out of their way to put you at ease and make you feel at home. It is a pleasure and privilege to be nursed by them; they are able to make chemo a joy – quite an achievement. I am also very fortunate to have been treated by three consultants who are all at the top of their profession; Darius Mirza, David Spooner and Stephen Pereira. My sincere thanks go out to them and their colleagues for their dedication and hard work.

Finally, and most important of all, to my wife, Sheila, who has supported and encouraged me throughout to fight “the big C” every inch of the way. Despite many traumatic times she has never faltered. Her smile and positive approach is a cure in itself. Thanks Sheila.

With chemo currently on hold, I am hoping that the combination of strengthening my immune system, the probable adoption of a B17 regime under the guidance of Julie Payne, participation in the phase 4 trial and attendance at a Brandon Bays “Journey Workshop” will, together, significantly extend my life expectancy. Watch this space!

Again, my sincere thanks to you all for your support, love and prayers, all of which are a great motivator for me to succeed. Without your guidance this report could not have been written and I would not be alive to tell the tale. I hope that the following prayer, which I wrote about thirty years ago, will be of as much help to you as it is to me:

“The strength of Jesus is with me,
He opens my eyes that I might see.
With his hand on my shoulder, he guides my way,
And leads me not into temptation, nor allows me to stray.
Amen.”

Be positive and happy, love one another and do your level best to appreciate and enjoy life.

Have faith, miracles do happen.

God Bless,

Barry