



BERKS, BUCKS & OXON
Newsletter
CHAIRMAN LETTER



Hello Everyone, my name is Phil Horsley and elected as Chairman at our last Annual General Meeting. Firstly, I would like to thank Bruce McKenzie-Boyle for all of his hard work and dedication during his period in the chairman of the BB&O. Secondly, all the committee members who's continuing help is vital to the BB&O, and lastly to You, the member for continued and valued support of this needy charity.

A bit of history about me, I was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis on the 7th April 2000, I remember the date well as I had to put my dog down that day as well, you can imagine how I felt? The diagnosis came after many years of discomfort and not knowing what was wrong, being told it was IBS and piles, etc, etc.

I was on medication to control the UC and carried on with my job really using it as a crutch until the 22nd October 2002 when after losing 6 stone in weight over 4 months I ended up spending 4 weeks in hospital after a severe flare up. This of course led to surgery and here I am with an Ileostomy and Mucus Fistula.

Even though this was a traumatic time and life threatening, I can only compliment the surgeon and thank God for my Stoma, for without doubt if I did not have the operation I wouldn't be here today? I am back at work and as busy as ever even receiving a promotion. I still have to decide what to do next, have a pouch or stick with the Ileostomy, but the great thing is life is going on much the same as before!

This is why I joined the *ia* and eventually agreed the chair, it is so important for me to put something back and give that support to others facing and living with Stoma's, appliances, skin issues, diets and so on.

As a committee, we are here to co-ordinate the BB&O for its members by supporting, offering advice, arranging medical information, talks, social events and spreading the information to relevant people and locations. However, we can only offer the right events, support and information with participation and feedback from you the member, so please contact us with your views and ideas.

We still have some vacant positions on the committee such as Secretary and Events Co-ordinator, the time commitment is not huge and of course if we have a full committee the phrase 'Many hands make light work' comes true. Next year we are planning open days for information, speakers and hopefully some joint events with NACC (National Association of Crohn's & Colitis) so please do take the time to come along.

I'll leave you with this thought, 4 people an hour, every hour in the UK are diagnosed with Colon cancer, there are numerous more being diagnosed with Crohn's or UC, as an organisation we are needed and it is important we offer support to everyone, past and present. Your support really can help.

Finally, may I wish you and your families, a great year of health and happiness and I really look forward to supporting the *ia* and meeting you all in the future?

Yours truly,

Philip R. Horsley
Chair

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