



# The Pickering Newsletter

Spring 2010

**N**ow that the Christmas and New Year festivities are well and truly behind us, and the cold snowy days of winter are here, it doesn't mean that things are quiet at the Centre. Quite the reverse in fact. With demand increasing on a weekly basis, The Management Team and Trustees are working towards opening the Centre for Visitors on Mondays, thereby giving cover for a full four days each week.

## Centre unable to Open its Doors Due to Heavy Snowfall

**F**or the first time in its history, the Centre was unable to open its doors due to the extreme weather conditions that prevailed early in January. With the snow inches deep throughout the County and hazardous road conditions widespread, no one was able to make it in to the Centre for a couple of days.

However, armed with her characteristic determination Polly battled her way into town on the local bus and made it to the Centre to ensure that it was open to welcome anyone brave enough to venture out and to man the phones.

## Spire Private Hospital Team Ran for Pickering Centre

**W**ith many thanks to staff from the Spire Hospital at Fordcombe, Tunbridge Wells who took part in the Tunbridge Wells Half Marathon on 28th February 2010 on behalf of the Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre. Details of monies raised have yet to be confirmed.

## Barrel Race Raises £5K for Centre

**L**ast year's Barrel Race which took place on Saturday, 14th November, 2009 at Bewel Water was the biggest one yet with fourteen teams taking part who, together, raised a fabulous £5,000 for which we are extremely grateful. They ran on the most horrendous day over a very treacherous, muddy,



slippery and wet terrain. They all came back looking like slimy, muddy balls but with big smiles on their faces and were met by the Mayor and Mayoress of Tunbridge Wells



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## Brewers Fayre Local Hero Award Presented to Polly and the Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre

**A**t a special award ceremony held in London in January, Polly was presented with an award and a cheque for £5,000 by Brewers Fayre in connection with their National 2009 Local Hero Award Project.

The judges were so touched by the words spoken about Polly and the Centre in the nominations for the Award that they decided to give half of the total £10,000 prize fund to her.

The Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre  
27 Monson Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN1 1LS  
Tel: 01892 511880  
[www.pickeringcancercentre.org.uk](http://www.pickeringcancercentre.org.uk)  
Charity No. 1112623  
Open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm  
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

# Polly's Page



**H**i Everyone. Here we go again with Newsletter No.2. The Pickering Centre is going from strength to strength which is good as it shows that the networking is having effect and people are becoming more aware of our existence and we have grown in number since our last newsletter. The fund raising continues to go very well and we have made a lot more friends, one being the owner of the Brew House Hotel, in Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, Mr Kevin Spencer. Mark and Peter from Lifestyle Europe Ltd have been spreading the word about us big time too amongst their local business associates (i.e. gym partners) two of whom, thanks to Kevin Spencer, are on a sponsored slim which could net us £2,000 if they succeed in losing a stone each in one month. All of this came about because Mr Christopher Scragg, owner of the Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells put the Pickering Centre's name forward to be a chosen charity to talk at the Royal Tunbridge Wells Business Lunch on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010. So a very big THANK YOU from me and all at the Centre to those wonderful guys and good luck to the slimming boys!

Love,

*Polly. xxx*

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## Volunteering

by Gaynor Ratcliffe



**I**t was with some trepidation that I rang the bell at 27, Monson Road last July. I had decided that it was time to do some voluntary work and after a short visit to the Volunteer Centre, they provided me with several possible opportunities. I opted for the Pickering Centre which struck a chord with me and seemed very relevant because I had been touched by cancer myself. I didn't know what to expect although I had been told it was a lively place! The atmosphere hit me immediately – I could feel the warmth and positive air about the place as soon as I walked through the front door – everyone was very welcoming and I immediately felt at home.

Each time I go to the centre is different. I have really enjoyed getting to know the regular 'droppers in' but equally like the opportunity to welcome first time visitors. I have been happy to attend (i.e. Polly told me to!) several fund-raising functions which have been great fun and incredibly rewarding – The Blues Brothers and the Xmas carnival spring to mind, especially the carnival as I was so cold wearing just an elf outfit... but we were clearly the best float making our

way up Tonbridge High Street so it was worth it! If anyone is thinking of taking up volunteering but is hesitant like me, then I can truly say that you should forget your worries and give it a go. The informal setting at the centre and the wonderful people (visitors and helpers) make for really enjoyable days that are filled with fun and laughter!!

I feel privileged to be part of the Pickering Team led by Polly, Ann, Elizabeth and all the other volunteers and therapists. I would urge you to tell anyone you know who is currently touched by cancer about the Pickering Centre – I know it will give them the help and support that they need.

Love

*Gaynor*

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## Crowborough Bonfire & Carnival Society Choose Pickering

**A**t the AGM of the above Organisation held in December 2009, The Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre was one of the lucky local charities selected to receive a share of the 2010 carnival day street collections.

Volunteers are wanted to help with the collection on Saturday 11th September so if anyone is interested in volunteering to help please get in touch with the centre and give us your name and contact details - the more the merrier!

## Therapists' News

From Elizabeth Gower

Our numbers have very recently been depleted by one from 27 to 26 for the birth of twin sons to Kate. Also one therapist has just started a sabbatical, whilst another has returned from her break. We have a possible four new therapists in the pipeline – a counsellor, beautician, reflexologist and massage therapist – which is very encouraging, so watch this space for further news!



## Giving Therapy at the Centre

By Joan Simons

I first became involved with the Pickering Centre in April 2008 when a friend told me that they were looking for more complementary therapists to offer their time and skills on a voluntary basis to help cancer patients, their carers and their families.



I didn't have to think twice before contacting Elizabeth Gower to see if I might be acceptable because in 2007 my husband had been diagnosed with, and successfully treated for, cancer in both lungs. So I had first hand experience of the emotional roller-coaster that such a diagnosis triggers both on a personal level and for the family as a whole and I felt 'qualified' to understand at a deep level what others might be going through in the same situation. Fortunately for us my husband's condition was diagnosed at an extremely early stage and, thankfully, the outcome so far has been good.

After undergoing the necessary interview and screening processes I was warmly invited to join the other therapists working at the Centre in my capacity as a Reiki Practitioner and started to work there on alternate Friday afternoons.

For me it is a privilege to be trusted to give help, comfort and support to people at a time when their need is at its greatest and in that process I have made many special friends along the way – something for which I am very grateful.

## Volunteer Update

From Ann Carley

Spring has nearly sprung and so as we go into a new year, once again a very big thank you to you all for your support.



The Centre has been extremely busy and this has kept us on our toes. Our 5th Birthday Party was a great success. The Catering Team did us proud. Many of our guests thought we had hired outside caterers. (They don't know us very well do they?!)

We have had a fairly full calendar of outside events and many of you have supported these, giving up your time at evenings and weekends.

This is our way of letting the "outside world" know about our work and so thank you but also our thanks to your families for letting us borrow you on these occasions.

There are several events in the Spring which will be fun and will require your usual stamina and enthusiasm. Please let the Fundraising Team know if you are able to help.

We have recently recruited a new volunteer - welcome Sarah. There are a further three volunteers in the pipeline and so hopefully our fourth day of opening is looking promising.

We will be holding a Mad May Munch Lunch on Sunday 9th May. This is by way of a thank you to our Therapists and Volunteers. As you know our January get together had to be cancelled due to snow. We should be alright on this date although I have it on good authority (Google) that it did snow on the 3rd May 1770. Hopefully it will be ok on the 9th and to borrow one of Polly's sayings "we don't do negative".

I am looking forward to catching up with everyone.



**Relaxing  
in the  
Garden in  
the  
Summer**

## Me Pickering Poem by Mike Rusbridge

Supporter and Mayor of Tunbridge Wells  
2008 - 2009

OK so life has dealt a nasty blow  
But here's something you ought to know  
There's Comfort and Solace to be Sought  
There's great Folks who'll give you their Support  
They'll Teach you that your Race is not Yet Run  
They'll Take You, Give Your Life Some Fun  
They'll be There, When you Feel a Bit Adrift  
With Smiles and Hugs to Give Your Spirit a Lift  
They'll Show that the Future's not to Dread  
The Only Way to Look is..... Straight Ahead  
They'll Chat, if that's your choice to Do  
Or Sit Quietly with you, It's up to You  
They'll Make Sure You Never Feel Alone  
Give You an Ear Into Which to Moan  
And Though Your Life with Problems May be  
Fraught

At Pickering You'll ALWAYS Find Support  
So if You're Feeling Down, Need to be Jolly  
Visit Pickering, See Jacki, Ann or Polly  
Last But Not Least, on this occasion PLEASE  
PLEASE Give Up Your Lolly  
To Be Put to Good Use, By Ann, Elizabeth, Jacki,  
Eric, Alan, Bob, So Many More... OH and did I  
mention .. Polly?!

Written and read by Mike when he and his  
lady were guests of honour at the 2009  
Pickering Ball hosted at the Spa Hotel

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## Lifestyle Ford of Tunbridge Wells Donates £5K to the Centre

**M**arc Matthew, Chairman and Peter Isted,  
Managing Director of Lifestyle Europe  
Ltd, the Ford Dealership based in Mount  
Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells were invited to  
Pickering's 5th Birthday celebration held at the  
Centre in November 2009. Their PA, Jacky  
Yardley is a Volunteer at the Centre in her spare  
time and they were curious to find out more about  
it for themselves.

When they arrived they knew very little of what  
the Centre is about and after having been  
introduced to Polly, Ann, Jacki Fogg and others,  
they were given a tour of the building and the  
background on why and how it operates. They  
were so impressed by what they had seen and  
heard that they went away that day with a plan.

A few days later Polly received a telephone call  
from them inviting her to get together a table of  
10 of the Volunteers and Therapists to join them  
as guests at their Company's Christmas Party at  
the East Grinstead Sports Club - the theme for  
the evening being "Christmas in Hollywood".  
Following the cocktail reception and the festive  
dinner, numerous presentations were made to  
members of staff throughout the Group for  
personal achievements at work during the year  
and then, right at the very end, and to everyone's  
surprise, Polly was invited to join them on the  
dance floor to accept a cheque for £5,000 from  
Lifestyle Europe Ltd to go towards the running  
costs of the Centre; she was also asked to explain  
to everyone present who she was and what the  
Pickering Centre is. As can be imagined, it was a  
very emotional moment.



A huge thank you to Marc and Peter for their  
kindness, their hospitality and their immensely  
generous support.



**Lifestyle Europe Ltd**

## Mayor selects Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre and the Local Branch of the MS Society as his adopted charities for his year in office 2009 - 2010.

With many thanks to his Worshipful the Mayor, Len Price and Vicky, the Mayoress for all the

wonderful support they have given us alongside MS who have now become very dear friends.

### Kent -v- Essex County Cricket Match June 2009 at the Neville Ground.



### Civic Ball - October 2009



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### Charity Quiz Night - January 2010

by Philip Hammond

With the team name Polly's Pickering Pop-ins, the official Pickering Centre entry to the 2010 Mayor's Quiz streaked home to an impressive and respectable 28<sup>th</sup> place on the evening of Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January. The hand picked squad of eight featured Claire (Captain), Amy the Antipodean (Sports Ringer), Allan, Vince, Indeg, Indeg's friend, Lorraine and Philip.

The venue was the Assembly Hall in Tunbridge Wells, and a record breaking 54 teams of 8 took part. "It was a close run thing", a team member was heard to comment, "and if only one of the answers had been "Malcolm Muggeridge" it would have been even closer."

The Ploughman's Supper kept body and soul together during the half time interval, and the raffles, auctions and game of "Last Man Standing Bingo" provided light relief from the rigours of the fiendish and mind-sappingly difficult quiz questions.

The event raised a total of £3,000 which was shared between both charities and the team vowed to return for the 2011 Quiz to defend their Nickel place\* and maybe move further up the Periodic Table.

\*Nickel – Atomic Number 28, melting point 1278 Kelvin, discovered by Swedish Chemist Axel Cronstedt in 1751.

## Christmas Lunch at the Barn

The annual Centre Christmas Lunch took place at the Barn in Tunbridge Wells on 11th December with Volunteers, Visitors and Therapists all having the chance to relax and celebrate Christmas together at the Barn in Tunbridge Wells. We had a wonderful time with much merriment and laughter and a delicious meal. A big thank you to Philippe, the Manager, and his staff for helping us to have a wonderful time and a big thank you yet again to Neil and Graham from Smiffys for donating the balloons which helped to make the room look even more festive. A great time was had by all.



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## Kevin to Climb Kilimanjaro for his family and the Pickering Centre



My name is Kevin Corbett and I have lived in Tunbridge Wells for the last 8 years, with my lovely wife Bonnie and our two amazing sons, Archie (8) and Brodie (6). Bonnie has worked in the local community on several projects, including as a designer on the Lantern Parades and the Camden Road Musical, The Vanishing Elephant. It was during these projects that she first met the people

## KCC Donates £2,000 to Centre



Kent County Councillor John Davies (pictured right) nominated Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre to receive Kent County Council Grant from the Budgets for Individual Councillors (the Member Community Grant 2009/10 Financial Year). A huge thank you to Councillor Davies for his continuing support.

at the Pickering Centre, and was inspired by their positive attitude and warm welcomes.

The Pickering Centre is a wonderful place where those suffering from Cancer (or indeed their loved ones) can spend some time with people who have gone / are going through the same journey, receive some free therapy and counselling or whatever they need, sometimes just a cuppa and a friendly face. It relies entirely on charitable donations and is staffed by volunteers.

My own dear Mum is currently on a journey of her own and I am taking on this challenge for her, and in loving memory of my father-in-law, Bryan, who we sadly lost to this horrible disease two years ago.

On the 17th September I will travel to Tanzania to begin my journey to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, the tallest free-standing mountain in the world and the highest peak in all of Africa at 5935m. The trek itself will take me eight days to complete, six up and two down and will begin in temperatures of approximately 30° centigrade, which will drop to approximately minus 30° centigrade at the summit.

## If you would like to sponsor Kevin...

There is a link via the Pickering website [www.pickeringcancercentre.org.uk](http://www.pickeringcancercentre.org.uk) or you can go direct to his Just Giving page which is [www.justgiving.com/kilimanjarokev](http://www.justgiving.com/kilimanjarokev). If you do not have online access you can make your contribution through the Centre in Monson Road.

# **Some of Our Sponsors and Supporters in 2009**

**The Right Worshipful The Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Tunbridge Wells**  
**Mr Greg Clark, MP**  
**Axa/PPP Healthcare**  
**Chilstone Garden Ornaments**  
**David Salomons Centre**  
**Eileen Knott, Florists**  
**Fenwicks, Tunbridge Wells**  
**Hair & Beauty at Hoopers**  
**Kent County Council**  
**TWODS**  
**LAMPS Amateur Dramatics**  
**Lifestyle Europe Ltd**  
**Marks & Spencers plc, Tunbridge Wells**  
**Monson News Paper Shop, Tunbridge Wells**  
**Town & Country Charity Foundation**  
**TRC Town & Country**  
**Mr Scraggs, The Spa Hotel, Tunbridge Wells**  
**T R Jackson, Building Contractor**  
**Sainsburys plc, Tunbridge Wells**  
**Shades Events**  
**Signal UK Ltd**  
**Smiffys**  
**St Mary's Church, Sevenoaks**  
**Swift Alarms**  
**TNT International**  
**The Big Green Snack Wagon, Longfield Road**  
**The Brew House Hotel, Tunbridge Wells**  
**The Framing Shop, Monson Road**  
**The Shell Garage, St Johns**  
**Beechwood School**  
**Tonbridge School**  
**Rosehill School**  
**St James's School**  
**University of Greenwich at Tonbridge**  
**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**  
**Tunbridge Wells Round Table**  
**Ward Mackenzie, Tunbridge Wells**  
**White Stuff**

A very big thank you to these people for their wonderful support given to us in sponsorships and networking on our behalf which is as valuable to us as the donations that we receive to run the Centre. If we have missed anyone we are deeply sorry as we like to support our sponsors as and when we can.

## Programme of Social Events Forthcoming in 2010

Fri	19th March	Charity Irish Night at the Spa Hotel in aid of the Pickering Cancer Drop in Center. Entertainment by Shade Events plus Irish dancers. Tickets £25 each which includes a set Bangers & Mash supper and pudding. 7.00 for 7.30 until midnight. (Fancy dress optional). Tickets from Polly at the centre.
Sat	20th March.	The Pantiles Players are holding a Charity Old Tyme Musical at the David Salomons Centre for Pickering and Hospice in the Weald at 7.00 for 7.30 Tickets £21.50 each which includes 2 course dinner of Sausages & Mash with Onion Gravy (Vegetarian Sausages available) Desert: Chocolate Brownies or Fresh Fruit Salad Tea/Coffee & Mints. Tickets: Cheques made payable to The Pantiles Players & sent with a letter of confirmation of performance, number of seats, choice of menu & a stamped & addressed envelope to The Pantiles Players, 52 Dynevor Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9HP
Sun	21st March	
Sun	30th May	Open Garden at Shipbourne, details to be finalised.
Sun	13th June	Tonbridge Carnival
Sat	24th July	Rusthall Fete
Date to be confirmed		Blues Brothers Evening at the High Rocks

Please see our website for the latest updates on forthcoming events  
[www.pickeringcancercentre.org.uk](http://www.pickeringcancercentre.org.uk)