

CSF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S WINTER PONDERINGS

Submitted by Pat Lockett, National President

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I wonder what winter looks like in your little corner of France? Here, in the south west, I can sum it up in one word leaves! I spent a glorious afternoon clearing the garden, only to wake to wind and rain and yes, more leaves! A perfect morning to make a coffee and begin my December report for Touchlines.

THE NATIONAL CONSEIL MEETS IN MONTPELLIER

Last month, Jen Glayzer (President, CSF Languedoc) and Graham Luck (National Representative, CSF Languedoc) hosted a meeting of the National Conseil in Montpellier and we were very well looked after! In addition to the usual business of officers' reports, we took time to share updates from across all CSF Associations - a chance to find out what was going well and understand the current challenges.



Château d'Eau du Peyrou, Montpellier

Many Associations were able to celebrate the restarting of activities and events so important to the lives of those touched by cancer. Not unsurprisingly though, some common themes were revealed - many due to the impact of the pandemic on our personal lives. This is resulting in reduced attendance at events, difficulties in filling key bureau positions and the challenge of raising awareness, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

As a result, we have agreed some exciting developments! Frank Parkinson (CSF Webmaster) is working to ensure those who visit the CSF Website can easily access the information they need. Dave Wilson (CSF Public Relations) will lead a new publicity campaign to raise awareness of CSF and to recruit new volunteers.

THE REVISED INITIAL TRAINING COURSE

Ensuring volunteers are well trained and supported has long been at the heart of CSF. Carol Quinlan (CSF Training Liaison) reported on the success of the recent delivery of the revised training materials. The course was delivered by Rob Houghton (Trainer, CSF Sud de France) and Heather Moorhead (Trainer, CSF Lot), supported by Carol and two experienced Active Listener Trainers as observers,

PRESIDENT'S WINTER PONDERINGS cont...

Lynsey Burden (CSF Charente-Maritime) and Pat Compton (CSF Dordogne Nord Plus).

The trainees came from CSF Charente-Maritime and CSF Nord Associations. They gained not only skills to enable them to take on the role of Active Listener but also made invaluable contributions in fine tuning the course materials. Thank you to all of them and to CSF Charente-Maritime for hosting and for the exceptional support provided.

2022 CONFERENCES

Trainers' Conference:- Carol Quinlan is in the process of planning the first Trainers' Conference for two years. It will be held in early March - date and venue will be with trainers as soon as possible.

Active Listeners Regional Conferences:- We have long wanted to offer the opportunity to bring together Active Listeners from across France to network and share their experiences. Carol will be proposing dates and venues in the new year. The development money raised this year will allow National to subsidise these events.

ACTIVITY FOR LIFE 2021 AND 2022

This was reported in full in the last edition and full coverage of the event can be found on our Facebook page. Thanks to the hard work of CSF Gascony, the event raised a wonderful total of €9151! This will ensure we have the funds to support CSF Associations in their work.

DRUM ROLL we have a location for the Activity for Life 2022! Anna Shackelford (President, CSF Lot) has announced that a small team of keen cyclists are in the process of route planning. More information coming soon.



Activity for Life 2021 group photo

A date for your diary. The Annual General Meeting of the National Association will take place at 14h00 on Wednesday 16th March 2022. The venue is yet to be finalised.



The beautiful Pont Valentre, Cahors
in the Vallée du Lot

Finally, my thanks to you all for your support this year. Best Wishes for a Happy New Year which I hope will bring Health and Happiness for 2022. Pat



LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS ROUND-UP

CHARENTE-MARITIME - Submitted by Sue Smith, President via Facebook

Thank you to everyone who attended the Cancer Support France Charente-Maritime coffee morning! It was a very successful event and we are delighted to announce that this event raised €580. We send our thanks to everyone involved from helpers and donors to attendees. Thanks must also be given to the *Twin Lakes Campsite* team for all the work they did to help make this event such a success.

Some of the delicious food available and being enjoyed by our many guests



CHARENTE PLUS - Submitted by Mo Woolner, PR

A big thank you to the *Café Clemence Bar Restaurant and Take-away*, Chabanais. A donation of €54 was given to CSF whilst holding their monthly quiz night with Quiz Master, Sarah Hellis. A great night topped off with yummy Fish and Chips!



DORDOGNE NORD PLUS - Submitted via Facebook

A massive thank you to *Château De Gateaux English Tea Room & Restaurant* and their customers who participated in the *Octobre Rose* event on 18th October and donated €308 to the North Dordogne Fund-raising Group (NDFRG) who support local cancer charity projects and Cancer Support France Dordogne Nord Plus.

Thank you to Nik Bishop Shaw, for nominating us for this donation. Thank you too to Rebecca Merry for her donation of €125 raised from the sale of her painting at this event.

Thank you so much to Jacqueline Angela Purlan for her support and the venue for this great event and to all those who donated prizes and funds on the day.



Château De Gateaux English Tea Room

LOT - Submitted by Anna Shackleford, President

Here in the Lot, we had an action-packed Autumn but sadly, our planned Christmas drop-in had to be cancelled due to the Omicron wave – folk were understandably jittery with planned family reunions for the festivities on the horizon. We also postponed our Women's Cancer discussion group due to lack of takers, but we will reschedule for the first half of 2022, COVID conditions permitting.

Our newly-launched drop-ins were well supported in October and November; the last Wednesday of each month saw a lively group of creative people participating in art-based activities led by the admirable Liz Hallsmoore and as well as tea, coffee and biscuits on offer, we also sold paperback books. In November, we joined forces with a local group supporting the dog refuge in Cahors and held a pre-loved clothes sale. The *salle* was a hubbub of bustle as people browsed, enjoyed the homemade cakes and the artists tranquilly carried on doing their thing in their corner! The December drop-in was to have been a festive end to the year with a planned wreath-making session, homemade crafts on sale for last-minute gifts all washed down with minced pies and mulled wine – next year, we hope!

Other Autumn highlights were the Activity for Life which our President, Anna Shackleford, attended along with her husband and dog. And of course, our own Pat Lockett was there with her National President hat on, so the Lot was well-represented. And – STOP PRESS – Lot will be hosting the 2022 Activity for Life although we realise we have big shoes to fill with Gascony having set the bar high. So start planning that trip to the gorgeous Lot Valley and the opportunity to enjoy the famous Cahors wines!

And finally, our visit to see the lovely restored frescoes in *l'église Saint-Hilaire* at Salvezou took place in brilliant October sunshine, all rounded off with tea and cakes and chat *al fresco* (see what we did there?).

LOT - continued...

We really look forward to more events next year; it was so good for members and friends of Lot to come together again in something like normal circumstances.



Left: Francis Kelly telling us about the frescoes in the church; Centre: The stunning church and the remains of the Château; Right: Enjoying refreshments in the October sunshine



Our inaugural Drop-in in October featuring the newly-formed Art Group (left); Centre and right : the pre-loved clothing and booksale

LOT-et-GARONNE - Submitted via Facebook

Well, who would have thought that drinking tea, eating cake and answering a few quiz questions could generate so much money? Our Quiz and Cake afternoon in Grayssas, attended by 58 people Sunday afternoon, 28th November generated a whopping €980!

Huge thanks as always to Cindy and Steve Sheppard for their generosity and help and to all those who made cakes, helped set up and clear away. These events could not function without you all. And of course, to all those who came along for a fun afternoon and who gave so generously.

If anyone in other areas of the department would like to run a similar event and raise much needed funds for CSF, we can provide you with lots of questions and help with setting it up.

SAVE THE DATE...



PROVENCE GARD - Submitted by Martin Benjamin, Vice-President via Facebook

November Auction and music with Tim Broadbent. The event in *Saint-Siffret* was a huge success with auction lots being sold by auctioneer Jim Pearce and intervals with musician and raconteur, Tim Broadbent. Money raised from the auction lots and donations were thankfully received and will be used to fund our expenses as we support our cancer clients.

Our next CSF Provence Gard event will be a Quiz on January 16th at the *Foyer Communal* in Montaren-et-Saint-Médiers. The Quizmaster will be the infamous Peter Curtis.



Photo montage of the November auction

SUD DE FRANCE - Submitted by Penny Parkinson, Secretary

It is with immense sadness that I am writing to tell you that our President, Brian Thomas, passed away peacefully on 29th September 2021, aged 74. Brian held the demanding role of Treasurer for five years before taking on the President mantle in January 2021. His dedication and support of CSF extended on a national level, where he willingly gave his time to assist new Associations. His sense of humour and boyish enthusiasm were infectious.

Sadly he did not have the time to lead Sud as he wanted, first hampered by the COVID restrictions and then with a recurrence of cancer. Despite that, he continued to work untiringly for Sud. In June, we had a memorable conseil meeting by Zoom with Brian joining from his hospital bed! He would never let a small matter of ill health keep him away. He was then back at the helm until his health began to fail in the last few weeks.

On behalf of all those who worked with Brian, I would add that he was a wonderful colleague. He was fully committed to the work of CSF - supportive, empathetic, sensitive, and a great people person. He had an amazing energy and tackled everything full on, however difficult that was. He was a teller of bad jokes which had everyone groaning and everything he did, however serious, was lightened by his positive view of the world.



Thank you, Brian, you are missed.

SUD DE FRANCE - continued...

Sud de France has regained some normality as 2021 draws to a close. All our monthly events have continued, well supported, into December – that is 7 coffee meetings and 3 book events across the whole of the Sud area – everyone suitably jabbed or tested, of course. The new Ariège booksale venue has attracted large crowds and it seems to us that most people are now keen to socialise again.

In October, our Pyrénées-Orientales members were at last able to enjoy a thought-provoking talk by a Perpignan Doctor who specialises in Palliative Care. Additionally, we have been invited to attend various events, with our Tarn members having their annual Christmas stall promoting CSF cards and goods. A Sud presence was also possible at 2 other small events across our area. Although these were all limited in size due to the other 'C' word, it was good to be able to talk to people about CSF again. One unexpected benefit of COVID has been generous donations of handmade goods which kept their makers occupied during the long periods at home. We were thus fortunate at all these events to be able to sell some beautiful creations by talented donors.

We have continued to build our relationship with *La Ligue contre le cancer* in all parts of our area. Our Aude members were able to join *La Ligue Octobre Rose* walk and also helped man their stall whilst promoting CSF. See photos. We are now busily planning for 2022 in the hope that the New Year will bring a rather more predictable normal... although as I was writing this piece, Christmas plans were being thwarted by Omicron.



Supporting the annual *Octobre Rose* walk with *La Ligue contre le cancer*

On November 2nd, an information event was held in Argens-Minervois for Members and Non-Members to learn more about the work of the Association. We covered our history, core works and CSF Sud's fund-raising activities.

On October 21st A wonderful 10kms, half day, walk from Serres, in *les Terres Rouges*. Beautiful weather, and great company, with over €100 raised for CSF. Thanks to Helen & Mike Bingham for the route, and the stories!
Phil Mercer via Facebook



BREAST CANCER TREATMENT TRODELVY IS NOW AVAILABLE IN FRANCE -

By Nicolette Bundy, The Connexion 27.12.2021

The therapy doubles life expectancy for patients of an aggressive form of breast cancer. It has been authorised for emergency use in France as of yesterday (01.11.2021), offering hope for hundreds of patients.

Trodelvy, a treatment for an aggressive form of breast cancer, is now available in France to patients who urgently need it.

The treatment uses a new kind of therapy called an ADC (antibody-drug conjugate) which promises a longer lifespan for patients who have triple-negative metastatic breast cancer and for whom other treatments have failed.

'Triple-negative' refers to the fact that the breast cancer cells do not have the normal estrogen, progesterone or human epidermal growth factor hormone receptors, which means that normal medicines targeting those receptors are ineffective.

It relates to around 15% of breast cancers and is highly aggressive with a greater risk of metastasis than other forms.

While triple-negative metastatic breast cancer is considered incurable – its' five-year survival rate is just 11.3%, according to official *Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS)* figures – an international study coordinated by the *Curie Institute* showed that patients given sacituzumab govitecan (brand name Trodelvy) had an average overall survival rate of 12.1 months compared to 6.7 months if they were given only traditional chemotherapy.

This is significant to these patients, 40% of whom are younger than 40. Roughly 9,000 new cases of triple-negative cancer are diagnosed each year, and treatments are *"rare and often not very effective,"* according to the *HAS*.

ADCs work by attaching an anti-cancer chemotherapy drug to an antibody, which then targets a specific antigen only found on the target cells.

Claude Coutier of #Mobilisationtriplettes, an association for patients, told France Info that Trodelvy offers *"enormous hope"*. He said: *"Doubling life expectancy means having more time for other innovative treatments to arrive, in the hope of someday having a cure. This is priceless."*

#MobilisationTriplettes counts 600 members whose oncologists will now be able to prescribe the treatment via an early-use procedure.

Gilead Sciences (a multinational with its headquarters in the US), the treatment's maker, has previously cited supply and funding problems alongside the authorities' lagging authorisations to account for its delay in providing Trodelvy in Europe to those accorded earlier, limited access to the treatment.

Thanks to new facilities in Italy, *Gilead* has promised to be able to provide suitable quantities of the product in keeping with new authorisations at country and European levels as they come into effect.

Sourced by Margaret York, Editor

FATTY ACID FOUND IN PALM OIL LINKED TO SPREAD OF CANCER -

Source: Hannah Devlin, Science Correspondant, The Guardian - published 11th November 2021

Study on mice found palmitic acid promoted metastasis in mouth and skin cancers.

Scientists have shown how a fatty acid found in palm oil can encourage the spread of cancer, in work that could pave the way for new treatments.

The study on mice found that palmitic acid promoted metastasis in mouth and skin cancers. In future, this process could be targeted with drugs or carefully designed eating plans but the team behind the work cautioned against patients putting themselves on diets in the absence of clinical trials.

“There is something very special about palmitic acid that makes it an extremely potent promoter of metastasis,” said Prof Salvador Aznar-Benitah, of the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB), Barcelona. *“I think it is too early to determine which type of diet could be consumed by patients with metastatic cancer that would slow down the metastatic process.”*

The study adds to emerging evidence that diet can be used to enhance existing cancer treatments because certain nutrients are disproportionately relied on by tumour cells, or are required at critical stages such as metastasis.

The study built on previous work by the same team showing that within a tumour, just a small subset of cells have the capacity to spread by travelling out of the tumour, reaching other organs and colonising them. These specialised cancer cells appeared to rely particularly heavily on fatty acids and the latest work narrowed this down to palmitic acid, which is found in palm oil – but also in a wide variety of foods such as butter and olive oil.

The study, published in *Nature*, found that when palmitic acid was supplemented into the diet of mice, mouth and skin cancers were more likely to spread. Other fatty acids called oleic acid and linoleic acid – omega-9 and omega-6 fats found in foods such as olive oil and flaxseeds – did not show the same effect. Neither of the fatty acids tested increased the risk of developing cancer in the first place.

The study suggested that exposure to palmitic acid caused changes to the function of genes in cancer cells that allowed them to sense fatty acids and consume them more efficiently. The presence of palmitic acid also appeared to send cancer cells into a ‘regenerative state’, allowing them to form signalling networks beyond the tumour, which is known to be a crucial step towards spreading.

Metastasis of cancer remains the main cause of death in cancer patients and the vast majority of people with metastatic cancer can only be treated but not cured.

By understanding what cancer cells need to make this leap, the scientists also identified ways to block the process and are planning a clinical trial of proteins that interfere with the tumour response to palmitic acid.

“That is a much more realistic approach in terms of a real therapy, that doesn’t depend on whether a patient likes Nutella or pizza,” said Aznar-Benitah. *“Playing with diets is so complicated.”*

Prof Greg Hannon, director of the *Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute*, said: *“This is a rigorous and comprehensive study that suggests that exposure to a major constituent of palm oil durably changes the behaviour of cancer cells, making them more prone to progress from local to potentially lethal metastatic disease. Given the prevalence of palm oil as an ingredient in processed foods, this study provides strong motivation for further study on how dietary choices influence the risk of tumour progression.”*

Helen Rippon, chief executive at *Worldwide Cancer Research*, said: *“This discovery is a huge breakthrough in our understanding of how diet and cancer are linked and, perhaps more importantly, how we can use this knowledge to start new cures for cancer. Metastasis is estimated to be responsible for 90% of all cancer deaths – that’s around 9 million deaths a year globally. Learning more about what makes cancer spread and, importantly, how to stop it is the way forward to reduce these numbers.”*

Sourced by Margaret York, Editor

WORDS FOR TENDER CONVERSATIONS -

A book review submitted by Robin Houghton, CSF Sud de France

Doctor Kathryn Mannix has spent most of her professional life as a leading figure in the development of palliative care in the UK. Her two books to date, **‘With the End in Mind’** and **‘Listen’**, have added another chapter to a life’s work, grounded in humanity, compassion and a calm regard for the needs of others.

In **‘With the End in Mind’ (William Collins, Feb 2019)** she seeks to normalise death as something that, until quite recently, was seen as an ordinary life event. The book attempts to give us again, a language we can use when dealing with end-of-life issues. Yes, it’s a book about death but it is far from miserable; the writing is suffused with a quiet, confident joy which appears to find its source in a profound appreciation and love of life.

‘Listen: How to Find the Words for Tender Conversations’ (William Collins, June 2021) continues the theme of the first book of opening up difficult topics and encouraging honest communication between people. It helps to turn the principles of active listening into a very beautiful process, likened to a dance in which the setting is the same at the end as it was before the dance but the worldview of the dancers is forever changed by the encounter.

Both books rely on a narrative style which draws the reader into very private, intimate moments in the lives of Doctor Mannix’s patients. Every principle she discusses is illustrated with a story; she’s a great storyteller. The chapters guide us on journeys leading to the ‘tender conversations’ with people who have cancer and those who are touched by cancer, which lie at the heart of her work. I found myself moved and inspired by stories told with great sensitivity, insight and a lightness of touch.

The two books cover much of the ground as CSF’s Initial Training Course, as well as topics presented in on-going training; things like being present, creating a non-judgemental space, helping clients feel heard and understood, how to open and close conversations, sitting with silence and end-of-life issues, etc. The books address all of the issues above with care, consideration at length and, as always, beautifully illustrated with stories. In a chapter titled ‘Lessons in Listening’ she says the following: -

“Whenever they take place, deeply tender conversations are transformational. Listener and listened to are enriched by the experience.”

Listening should always be the foundation of our relationships, with family, friends and colleagues. It is central to what we do in CSF, listening as we walk with clients towards recovery, or listening to the fears and hopes of those whose lives are approaching their final days. There is an autobiographical side to both books which I found especially encouraging; Kathryn Mannix will often begin by relating how badly she got things wrong, before learning how to do it right. We don’t always get it right but as we strive to learn how to listen, these books encourage us to try again and again and again, to be better active listeners, and most of all, to be better people.



We remember our
Founding President,
Linda Shepherd
1953-2017

Also [Here](#) to Help...

Cancer Support France are proud to be in partnership, affiliated to or supported by the following associations and groups: -

In partnership with:

En partenariat avec:



www.prostatecanceruk.org



www.be.macmillan.org.uk



Beating blood cancer since 1960

www.bloodwise.org.uk



www.breastcancersupport.org.uk



www.thebraintumourcharity.org



www.cancerresearchuk.org



www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk



www.targetovariancancer.org.uk



www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk

If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact your regional CSF branch. All telephone numbers and email addresses can be found on the back page of TOUCHLINES. *Ed.*

USEFUL INFORMATION

Association Siège Social

**Espace Clément-Marot
Cancer Support France, Box 25
Place Bessières, 46000 Cahors**

National HELPLINE

Telephone: 0800 240 200 (FREE from a landline)

(Your call is taken on an answerphone and is free from a landline - there is a short message in English - we will reply to you as soon as possible and normally within 24 hours)

Useful Contacts

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forum.cancersupportfrance.org

CSF FORUM - Visit the CSF website and take a look at the FORUM, packed full of information and interesting conversations - maybe even meet new friends...

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Touchlines

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