



## Newsletter May 2010

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**Next meeting: Thursday 13 May 10.30am**

**The Weston Club,  
1 Liardet St  
Weston**

**speaker: David Young**

David will be showing videos from his travels

### **The April Meeting**

This meeting was a lighter meeting with some business attended to. Keir, Esther's teenage grandson, read us a Gothic horror story that he wrote, called *Clouds*, a story of murders, a vacant old building full of dust and cobwebs, strange events – leading to a gruesome twist at the end. The story entertained us all! Thank you Keir.

Then Esther kept us going with a quiz of everyday knowledge. It's amazing how much everyday knowledge you don't know or get confused about – it's just on the tip of my tongue.

On to business: Esther (busy person, Esther) showed us the 'business' cards she has organised for our group containing our refreshed logo and contact numbers. We now have something small we can carry around and hand out to people who want more information about the group. There's room on the back to put our name and phone number if we need. Chris spoke about the latest on the woodsmoke issue. The Government is now going to review the situation, reporting back in September. We discussed our response to this.

Robyn reminded us that the Government's immobilisation scheme for people on pensions with old cars is still available. Phone Canberra Connect on 132281.

We received some money from an asbestos support group that was closing down and we thank them very much. It will increase our ability to promote awareness of lung issues and of the Lung Life Support Group in the community. It was an enjoyable and fruitful meeting.

### **The Y Gym classes**

From the beginning of May, the times for the Lungs for Life class at Chifley on Mon and Wed changed from **10.30am to 11.30am** to **10.00am to 11.00am**. A new timetable will be made up soon and will be available in the gym. The website will also change soon to reflect this change.



For more information, see [www.lungfoundation.com.au](http://www.lungfoundation.com.au)

More information on European *Year of the Lung* activities, see: <http://www.ersnet.org/yearofthelung>  
More information on worldwide *Year of the Lung* activities, see: [www.2010yearofthelung.org](http://www.2010yearofthelung.org)

## Companion Card

The companion card, launched late last year, enables people with disability who need attendant carer support to attend sporting and cultural events and many other activities without incurring the cost of an extra ticket for their carer.

More than 2700 businesses have provided support to the scheme in Australia. In the ACT, this includes Action buses; sports organisations; cultural places and events; tourist places, picture theatres, and clubs. The website contains a list of organisations which will accept the companion card.

To get a companion card, you need to show that:

- you are a lawful Australian resident living in ACT;
- you have a permanent disability;
- and, because of the impact of the disability, are unable to participate at most community venues or activities without attendant care support;
- and you need, or are likely to need, lifelong attendant care support.

If you want to apply for a companion card or want more information:

[www.companioncard.gov.au](http://www.companioncard.gov.au)

[www.dhcs.act.gov.au/companion\\_card](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/companion_card) (there's an underline between companion and card)

phone Department of DHCS 6207 1086

email: [companioncard@act.gov.au](mailto:companioncard@act.gov.au)

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## Flu Vaccination

About 3500 Australians die of flu each year. About 18 000 hospitalisations occur. (CT 22 April 2010) We know that people with chronic illness are susceptible. It's time to get the annual flu injection, both as a protection for yourself and for the community to help prevent to spread of the disease. If you are over 65 or have a chronic illness, it's free.

## **Judith Durham and me and bronchiectasis**

by Chris Moyle

*Chris discovered that Judith Durham, lead singer of **The Seekers**, has had bronchiectasis most of her life – the same as Chris – but there are other similarities as Chris discovered when she read Judith Durham's biography, **Colours of my life: the Judith Durham story** by Graham Simpson.*

Judith had measles when she was four. She said on the recent ABC program, **Talking Heads**, 'a side effect of measles, back in those days, before antibiotics or anything, was often bronchiectasis, and I got this remaining cough after my measles. They said they may have to take part of a lung away but I've been very fortunate. A lot of people live to a ripe old age with bronchiectasis. I try to eat a certain way. Diet helps a fair bit and I cough during applause.'

Judith was born in 1943, so she's a few years older than me. In bronchiectasis, the inflammation produced as a response to persistent infection causes the release of chemicals such as proteases. The proteases digest the lining of the airways, causing damage. The damaged airways become weakened and will widen and become bronchiectatic. There are a very large number of causes of a defective immune response in the lungs, not only measles. In many people it is not possible to find a cause for the development of their bronchiectasis.

My bronchiectasis was apparently diagnosed in childhood by a fluoroscope. My illness was never discussed and I was only told that I was very sick at the age of 18 months when I contracted Pink Disease. The Pink Disease, from mercury in teething powders, which turned the extremities pink, resulted in bronchiectasis. I only learnt about this much later in life in Canberra, from Dr Nogrady, who'd studied Pink Disease.

The main symptom of bronchiectasis is a chronic cough, which produces sputum or phlegm, along with chronic fatigue, shortness of breath and chest pain. Many people have problems with inflammation in their nose and sinuses, leading to localised pain and discharge. About a quarter of patients will cough up blood at some stage, which is due to inflammation of the lung airways.

These days diagnosis is usually made by the use of computed tomography (CT/CAT) scanning of your lungs. The CT scan takes many cross-sectional pictures of the chest, and abnormally widened bronchi means bronchiectasis. Poor Judith endured an outdated bronchiogram diagnosis with tubes inserted down into her lungs.

So Judith and I are a similar age and we're both stuck with the same chronic lung disease, but I thought that the similarities would end there, as I'm certainly no singer. Then I read her biography and was interested to find she and I are alike – in health and interests - definitely not singing.

After she met and married her husband, pianist Ron Edgeworth they travelled to a spiritual retreat in India. She also talks about her belief in Karma which helps her come to terms with all the things that happen to her. I haven't been to see a guru in India, but I joined a meditation group and once spent a whole weekend meditating with gurus in Canberra. I can understand where she's coming from.

Next I was amazed to read that Judith and Ron visited Hopewood Health Centre at Wallacia in NSW and

undertook a week or two of fasting. I've been there myself a number of times, once for six weeks, where I spent a number of days on water only. Judith is a vegetarian (I'm not) and the fasting replaced her need for medicines and antibiotics and nerve tablets. It still didn't get rid of her cough. I haven't been that lucky. I do need my medicines. But there are varying degrees of bronchiectasis.

Judith has a raw food diet (she certainly is thinner now) and discussed a visit to another health establishment in Boston where she learnt the importance of enemas with fasting, so toxins won't be reabsorbed. I have also once or twice given myself an enema at home (it takes it out of you, in more ways than one) and have tried eating raw food but raw food doesn't entirely agree with my digestive system.

I've also done a lot of juicing and fasting at home, but it saps your energy and if there was a sudden emergency I wouldn't have the strength to deal with it. So I do admire her resolve in sticking to a raw food diet, and she does have people to prepare it for her. Also it helps cut down her mucous production. It's horses for courses.

I'm doing well {fingers crossed} on a rotation diet with the 5 servings of vegetables and 2 serves of fruit a day. I also buy organic food where possible. My digestion has improved since I discovered by blood test that I had 70 food intolerances, and avoided those foods, then re-introduced them on a rotational basis.

A GP once told me, "Having bronchiectasis means you never reach your full potential." That may be true for me, but Judith Durham has made a very good job of reaching her full potential. I envy her stamina.

After leaving The Seekers Judith travelled widely with her husband, performing in jazz clubs across America. Her husband, Ron, died of Motor Neurone disease in 1994 and Judith is now actively involved in raising funds to research this devastating disease.

Judith is still composing her own songs and performing. She said that her cough had never been easy to juggle with a singing career but that she had a degree of control she valued enormously. She also said, 'I used to worry a lot about everything. Now I've relinquished all responsibility for anything and it's much better. As they say, let go and let God. And it's surprising. Life is a constant surprise

## **Reminder to Carers (from ALF website) Are there any simple guidelines you should**

**follow?** *The Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services has produced a Carer Support Kit, which contains a Successful Carers Checklist:*

- Plan for success
- Ask for help when you need it
- Take time for yourself
- Exercise, eat well and rest
- Relax regularly
- Keep up social contacts
- Attend a Carers group when you feel you need support
- Use available services
- Acknowledge and deal with your feelings

## Dates for your diary

**Monday 31 May** World No Tobacco Day

**Friday 27 August** National Tree Planting Day to commemorate those who have passed away from lung cancer (of which there are more than 7000 a year (also Daffodil Day)

**Thursday 14 October** World Spirometry Day – part of **2010 Year of the Lung** activities - involving public lung testing in hospitals and clinics around the world

**18-24 October** Carers Week

## Snippets:

### Vitamin D

A study over 6 years in Japan found that sufficiency in vitamin D is associated with low incidence of limb and vertebral fractures in community dwelling Japanese women. (Dept of Community and Preventative Medicine, Niigata University of Medical and Dental Sciences, Japan) from [www.vitasearch.com](http://www.vitasearch.com)

### Vitamin D

Research in Finland suggests that a daily supplement of vitamin D and calcium may benefit the bones of post menopausal women who have adequate dietary intake. The research was undertaken over three years with women aged 65-71 in a randomised population trial. (Bone and Cartilage Research Unit, University of Kuopio, Finland) from: [www.vitasearch.com](http://www.vitasearch.com)

### Smoking and depression

Adults who are depressed are more likely to smoke and to smoke more heavily than adults who are not depressed. This was most marked among men aged between 40 and 54; and women aged between 20 and 39. Nearly 3 in ten adults with depression smoked more than a pack a day. (from Canberra Times 17 April 2010)

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