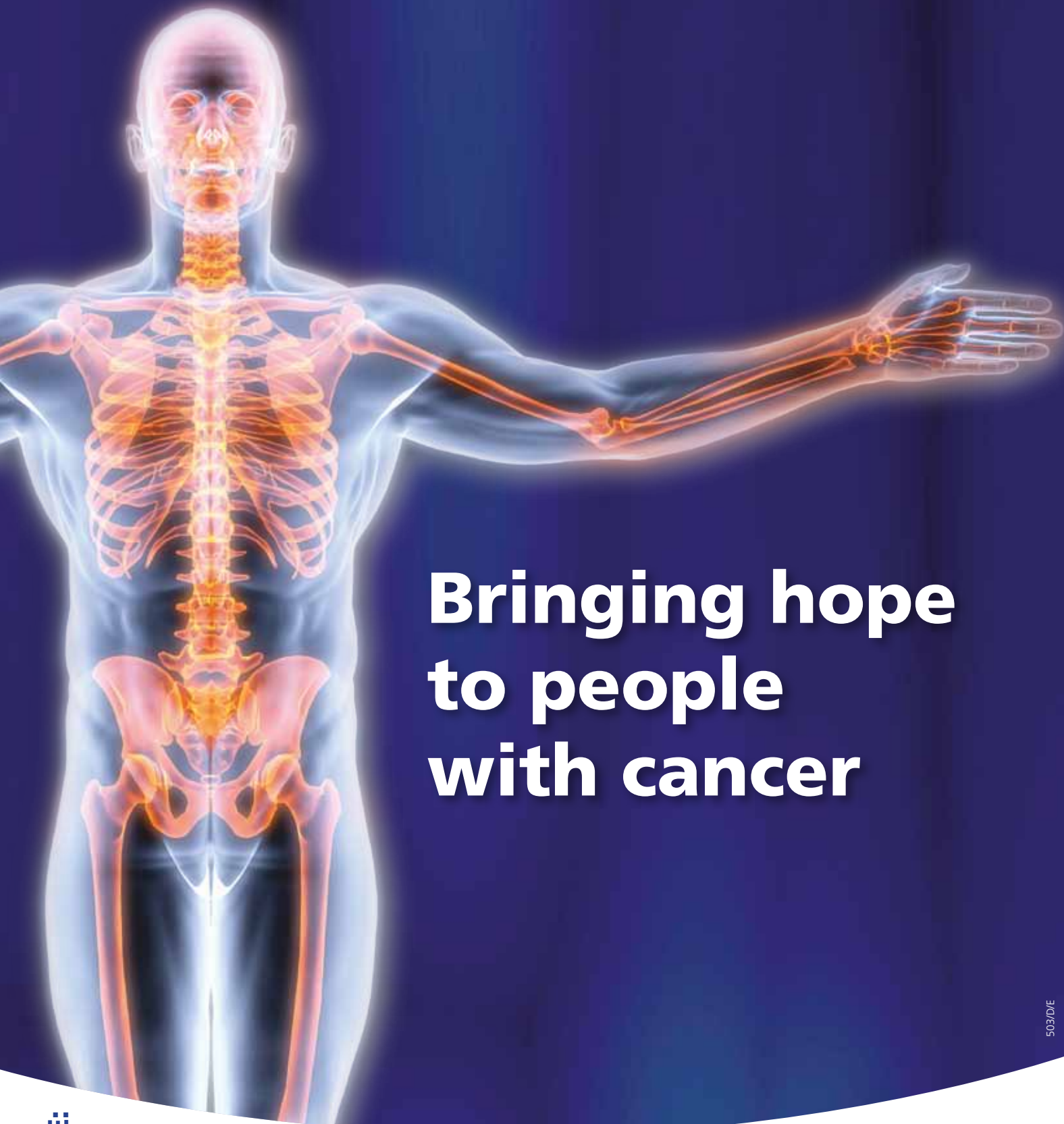


AICR Making Progress

INCLUDES: news of the AICR cancer research you are helping us to fund!

SPRING 2011



Bringing hope to people with cancer

INSIDE:

2&3 New breast cancer clue

4&5 SAC funding update

6&7 AICR's NEW website

Welcome to Making Progress

One of the great pleasures of my job as Chief Executive of AICR is having the opportunity to meet some of the generous people who choose to support us. Perhaps not surprisingly, the lives of many have been touched by cancer. One such person is Rosemary Spalding who shares her story and passion for supporting cancer research in this issue of *Making Progress*.

I'm sure you also have your own personal reasons for wanting to support AICR. The good news is that together we are making progress in the fight against cancer and bringing real hope of better diagnosis, better treatment and more lives saved in the future.

Thanks to you, AICR is funding 210 cancer research projects in 22 countries across the world. Each one is helping us understand more about cancer and could find potential new ways to fight the disease. You can read more about the world-class scientific minds and vital research you are helping to fund over the following pages.

I really hope reading *Making Progress* gives you a sense of the important role you are playing in funding cancer research. I also hope you are moved to continue giving us your support.

Thank you so much for being a part of the fight against cancer.



Norman Barrett
Chief Executive, AICR
(Association for International Cancer Research)



Probing the basic cause of cancer

Ultimately, damage to our genes is the cause of all cancers and our cells have many mechanisms designed to prevent or correct any such damage. However, when one of these mechanisms goes wrong, it can set a cell off down a path that eventually leads to it becoming cancerous.

At the University of Oxford, AICR is funding the research of Professor Ian Hickson, who is following up a new discovery linking genetic damage with the way that cells multiply.

FACT FILE

There are more than 200 different types of cancer, each with different causes, symptoms and treatments.

This area of research – into the mechanism which guards against genetic damage – holds one of our best hopes of one day being able to prevent cancer. Since genetic

damage is the basic cause of all cancers, anything that can be done to reduce it will also reduce the rate at which people get cancer.

One way of achieving this would be to increase the effectiveness of the systems that naturally prevent or repair genetic damage in our cells. Before that can be done, we have to understand how they work, which is why the type of research being done in Professor Hickson's laboratory is so important.

Funds awarded for this project:

£188,669
Intensive 3-year study



Professor Ian Hickson is investigating the genetic damage that can cause cancer.

How brain cancer avoids our natural defences

Research funded by AICR at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, has revealed why most brain cancers are not attacked and killed by our immune system. Several years ago we awarded a research grant to Dr Paul Walker to study the immune reaction to early gliomas – the most common type of brain cancer.

Our immune system is able to recognise foreign molecules – including toxins and molecules on viruses – and attack them. Since most cancer cells have different molecules on their surfaces, the immune system should recognise these as foreign and attack them as well. This has been found to happen with some cancers, but not in the case of gliomas.

FACT FILE

Less than 1% of all money spent on cancer research in the UK is spent on brain cancer.

By studying mice that developed gliomas, Dr Walker was able to analyse the very early stages of the tumour and how the immune system reacted to it.

"We analysed the numbers and types of white blood cells in the brain tumours," explained Dr Walker, "and found there was a very big difference between the early stages of these

cancers and later stages. The white blood cells are the cells of the immune system. Some types of white blood cells do the recognising, others do the attacking and others control whether or not the immune system is active. In the early brain tumours we found a very high level of a type of white blood cell

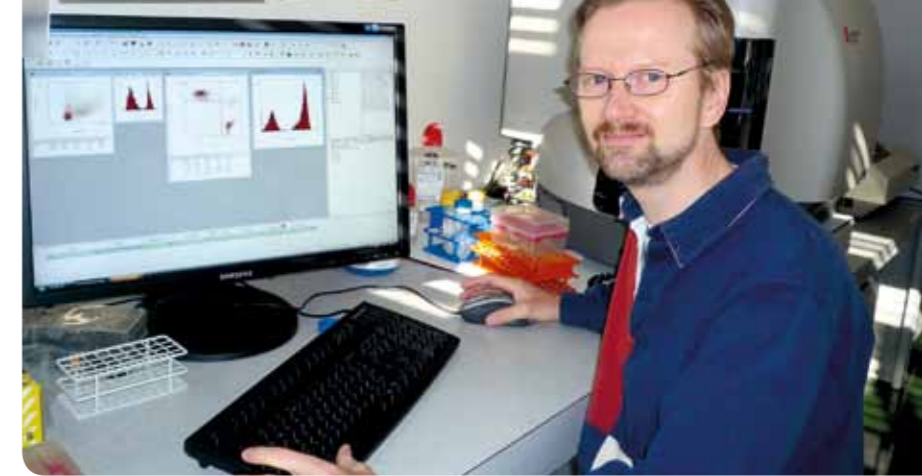
Dr Paul Walker hopes to understand how brain cancer avoids our immune system.

that suppressed the immune system, preventing it from attacking the cancer cells when they were small and easiest to destroy."

Possibly the most interesting part of their research was when they discovered that the immune system was not totally incapable of attacking glioma cells. By vaccinating the mice against glioma cells, they could stimulate the white blood cells to recognise and fight these cancer cells. This holds out the hope that, in future, it may be possible to treat or prevent brain tumours in people by some form of vaccination.

Funds awarded for this project:

£169,862
Intensive 3-year study



New clue to the mechanism of breast cancer

We have made huge advances in the treatment of breast cancer, yet it is still the second most common cause of cancer deaths in women. We need better ways to treat it, particularly in advanced cases which are resistant to available treatments.

To discover more about breast cancer and potentially identify new ways to treat it, AICR is funding the research of Dr Joy Burchell at Guy's Hospital in London. Dr Burchell has been pioneering the investigation of

FACT FILE

In the early 1970s, only half of all women diagnosed with cancer survived for five years. Now, over three quarters survive for five years and most live much longer.

a protein called JARID1B which is suspected of playing an important role in breast cancer.

Dr Burchell's research has also revealed that JARID1B might be involved in the

way some breast cancers become resistant to Tamoxifen, one of the main treatments used to prevent breast cancer recurring. Understanding more about JARID1B could lead to new treatments or ways to prevent the problem of drug resistance in advanced breast cancer.

Funds awarded for this project:

£220,418
Intensive 3-year study



Dr Joy Burchell (right) and her colleague Joyce Taylor-Papadimitriou are studying JARID1B.



Giving hope to cancer patients

AICR supporter and leukaemia patient, Rosemary Spalding.

Rosemary Spalding has chronic myeloid leukaemia. After reading an interview with the professor behind the development of Imatinib – the drug she takes to treat her condition – Rosemary was inspired to share her story and her determination to support cancer research with *Making Progress* readers:

Can you tell me a little about your condition?

I was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia, which is a type of blood cancer, in May 2008. It's described as 'chronic' because it develops very slowly

over years or sometimes even decades.

Are you being treated for your condition?

Yes, I take a drug called Imatinib once a day and go for a check up every three months. The Imatinib controls my leukaemia by blocking the signals in the leukaemia cells that makes them grow and divide. This causes the cells to die.

I'm doing really well, all thanks to this drug. I'm able to lead a normal life and even went on a trip to Cuba. So many people think that leukaemia means curtains – it doesn't!

Why do you support AICR's cancer research?

Scientific Advisory Committee meeting 25 new projects were funded, some close to home in England and Scotland and others further afield in research facilities in countries such as Spain, Italy and Canada.

AICR's international remit gives us the

I read an interview in a newsletter with an eminent professor who was involved in the development of the drug Imatinib. It really brought home to me that it takes years or even decades of research to develop a life-saving drug like this.

I know how fortunate I am to have Imatinib available for my condition. Other people living with cancer are only going to have similar or even better treatments available to them in the future, if we start the research now. *That's why I support AICR. Every new project they fund strengthens the hope of finding something that could one day save lives.*

freedom to fund the best research proposals we receive from as many as 15,000 worldwide research facilities. Not only does AICR support a wide range of cancer research studies, but the scientists share ideas and views on cancer with their colleagues around the world.



Latest SAC: 25 cancer research projects were approved for AICR funding

At the last Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting in October, 25 new cancer research projects were approved for funding. Your donations have been crucial in making these grants available to prominent and promising scientists. Who knows what discoveries they will make that

could one day help more people survive cancer?

Several of the new projects look into the fundamentals of cancer such as how cancer cells spread and multiply. Many other projects such as Professor Jenkin's (see below) are focused on

trying to understand specific types such as stomach, breast and prostate cancer.

These new projects we fund and the current projects – over 200 of them – offer hope to cancer patients like Rosemary Spalding. Two AICR-funded projects of particular interest to her are those headed by Dr Mark Cragg and Professor Eric So who have both made significant discoveries about leukaemia.

With your continuing support, there will be another opportunity to fund even more promising research at the next SAC meeting in April.

Here to help you

Ask Dr Matfield
AICR Scientific Co-ordinator



Q: Why do all cancer drugs have such terrible side effects? Surely it should be possible to develop drugs that help patients without harming them?

Mr J Gander, Sussex

A: Traditional cancer drugs attack cells that are multiplying. This is a hallmark of cancer, but cell multiplication is also necessary to keep our bodies healthy so these treatments inevitably affect normal cells too, causing side effects.

Research has discovered much more about how cancers work and identified those mechanisms which are specific to cancer cells. Attacking these specific parts of the cancer mechanism can lead to drugs that kill cancer cells without the sort of side effects found with traditional cancer drugs.

Q: Many of the cancer remedies available these days appear to work by boosting the immune system. Is AICR funding research into this area?

Mrs H Ball, Surrey

A: We are currently funding 13 projects in this area. However, the idea that one can just 'boost' the immune system and this will help you 'resist' cancer is a vast over-simplification. The immune system is very, very specific, so this research is aimed at understanding how we can persuade the immune system to only attack cancer cells.

Q: Can cancer arise from injuries such as cuts or broken bones?

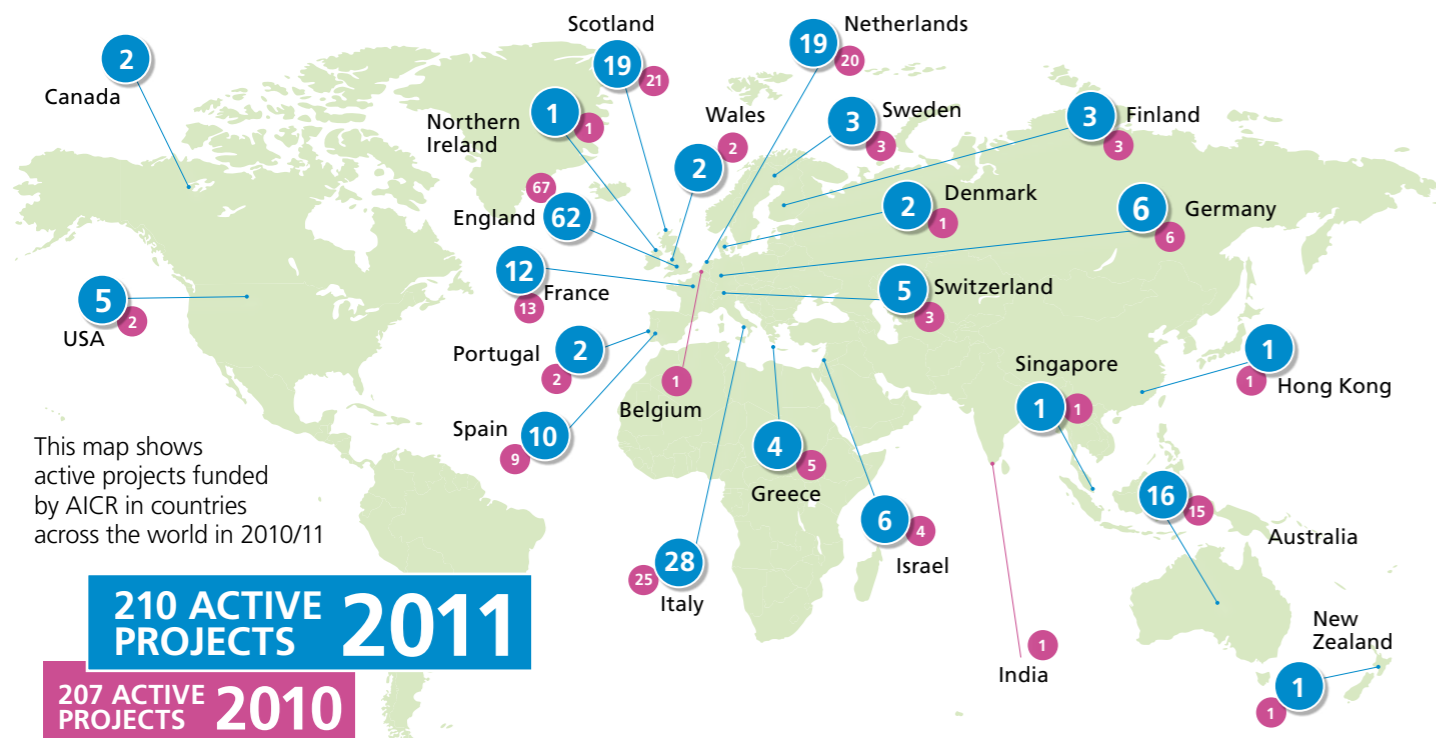
Mr K Robertson, London

A: The belief that injuries can cause cancers was previously common. However, research during the 1950s showed no significant increase in the number of tumours at the sites of injuries when compared with uninjured parts of the body. It seems likely the belief arose because, when people are injured, they go to the doctor and doctors are more likely to spot the symptoms of a tumour at the same time.

Dr Matfield replies to every question received and publishes a selection. Write to him at AICR or e-mail mark.matfield@aicr.org.uk

Scientists from around the world join forces with AICR

Thanks to generous supporters like you, AICR now funds 210 cancer research projects in 22 countries. At October's



In England ...

Professor Eric So has made important discoveries regarding leukaemic stem cells. His findings are a critical step forward in the search for more effective treatments for aggressive forms of leukaemia.



In England ...

Dr Mark Cragg has discovered how the antibody treatment Rituximab works to kill leukaemia cells. He says: "our findings are significant ... and may enable us to design treatments for other cancers."



In Australia ...

Professor Brendan Jenkins is researching the mechanisms behind prolonged inflammation of the lining of the stomach and its links with stomach cancer.



In the Netherlands ...

Dr Jeanette Leusen is using her AICR grant to develop new antibodies, part of the immune system, to treat cancers like skin cancer.

Our success starts with you

Why search ... when you can find answers at www.prostateanswers.org.uk

The new AICR prostate answers website is a resource hosted by our Scientific Co-ordinator Dr Mark Matfield.

The aim of the site is to answer your questions about any aspect of prostate cancer or prostate cancer research. As Dr Matfield explains, "I've enjoyed the great privilege of being AICR's Scientific Co-ordinator and newsletter editor for many years. For a while now I've wanted to share my knowledge and experience with as many families affected by prostate cancer as I can. That's why I am so excited about the new site."

Answers from a trusted source

On AICR's new site Dr Matfield shares over a decade's worth of knowledge and experience of prostate cancer, clearly explaining issues and answering common questions people have about the condition. A unique feature of the site is that you can also e-mail a direct

A very special donation!

Congratulations to Val and Dave Parsons who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in August and



question to Dr Matfield that he will answer in confidence via e-mail.

Hear from world-class scientists

You can also watch interviews and progress reports from AICR-funded scientists. These will give you a fascinating insight into the research you support.

Visit prostateanswers.org.uk today

Why not go online and experience the website for yourself? Visit www.prostateanswers.org.uk

raised £190. They selflessly requested that their family and friends make a donation to AICR rather than buy gifts.

The toughest footrace on Earth

James Ferguson, AICR supporter, participated in the gruelling Marathon Des Sables known as the toughest footrace on Earth. Over 6 days he successfully completed the 155 mile 'ultra marathon' through the Sahara Desert. James finished the race coming 379th out of 1,013 starters.

James very kindly chose to raise money for AICR and a total of £2,063 was raised. James wanted to support AICR's cancer research because, very sadly, his father died from cancer. Thank you James – your sponsorship money will go a long way in our fight against cancer.



Take the plunge for AICR!

Every year, lots of supporters choose to take part in a parachute jump to raise money for our vital cancer research!

One supporter who did just that was Louise Kerry, from Leicestershire. "I was planning a jump when I found out I had cervical cancer – at just 29. After I recovered, I wanted to do the jump even more! I took to the skies on the 31st July. It was one of the most amazing things I have ever done in my life and feel so proud that I did it for AICR."

Maria and Abdullah made the jumps of their lives.

Another supporter, Maria Pomakides also took the plunge! The jump was in memory of her friend Joanne. Maria raised an incredible £1,050! And congratulations to Abdullah who recently completed a Static Line Parachute Jump to raise funds for AICR. Abdullah, from Birmingham, raised £120!



Think skydiving is for you? E-mail events@aicr.org.uk or call Suzanne on 01334 477910 for an information pack.

Good luck in London

Good luck to all those running in the London Marathon this April for AICR. At the time of going to press, more than 40 dedicated runners had signed up to run in the iconic 26.2 mile race – raising money for our vital cancer research every step of the way! To find out more information, or to sponsor Team AICR, visit our website, www.aicr.org.uk



STOP PRESS

AICR has guaranteed places in the Bupa London 10k on 30th May and the Great Edinburgh Run which takes place in October. These exciting routes pass some of the UK's most iconic landmarks.

To take part in either of these events, contact Geraldine or Suzanne on 01334 477910 or e-mail events@aicr.org.uk

In gratitude



Geraldine Long, Donor Development Manager

Many people who support a charity throughout their lifetime choose to make the 'ultimate' gift – a bequest in their will. Miss Shield, who passed away in February 2010, is one of those very generous supporters.

Miss Shield had cancer in her family – her sister-in-law and niece both had breast cancer – so it was a cause she cared deeply about. That is why she generously donated £200 in her will to AICR.

In recent months, AICR has received legacies of various amounts, small and large, from the supporters named below. We are extremely grateful to Miss Shield and the following people for their unwavering support.

Mr S J Barnes, Mr W G Brewer, Miss M Briggs, Mr C H F Clark, Mr S V Funnell, Ms L B Graziani, Mrs E M Halligan, Miss M Little, Miss B H Loder, Mrs W Z March, Mrs E M Moody, Miss L M Payne, Miss M T Richardson, Mrs A M Reynes, Mrs A M Sear, Mrs M Stone, Mr P S Wadsworth, Mr C E P Watson, Mr D R White, Mr J M Winton, Ms K P Young.

Legacies are vital to our work. When the time comes to make or change your will, please remember AICR.

Get interactive with AICR

You can now interact with AICR online in a variety of exciting ways.

Social networking allows you to connect with other supporters and keep up to date with what's happening at AICR. Simply visit Bebo, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or Flickr to post your messages, photos and videos.



Go to www.aicr.org.uk/interactwithaicr.stm for hyperlinks to all these websites.

We already have hundreds of people in the online world of Second Life who are actively promoting our cause. On Facebook we have our own page with lots of great features. AICR Channel on YouTube helps us to interact with our existing supporters and volunteers – and enables us to attract new supporters too.



Say hello to the passionate people at AICR

Our staff are people with a passion for what they do. Let me introduce you to the small dedicated team who work in the Donor Development Office at Madras House – AICR headquarters.

Clockwise: Paula, Katy, Emma and Jane are committed to providing the best donor experience for our supporters and happy to help callers and visitors in any way they can.

For more AICR fundraising tips and ideas, please contact Geraldine Long on 01334 477910 or e-mail fundraising@aicr.org.uk

