



Newsletter

Supporting ostomists with Colostomy, Ileostomy, Urostomy & Mitro-

Issue 62 - Summer 2026



HMRC No: XT28425

Wessex Stoma Support Group 20th Birthday Celebration



In April, we were thrilled to celebrate our 20th anniversary. The Group gathered at the Bob Blandford Memorial Hall in Wilton and welcomed guest speakers, entertainment, and some lovely food too.

It was wonderful to come together to reminisce about the past 20 years and to see just how far the Group has come.

A full report - along with more photos - can be found inside, together with our usual mix of interesting articles.

Thank you for supporting us over the past 20 years - and here's to 20 more!

Contact

For further information about the Group – or anything featured in your newsletter - please contact the Secretary, Sally, on the details below.

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Website: www.wessex-stoma.co.uk



Don't forget to follow us on Facebook & X (formerly Twitter)



Editor's note: Please remember, everything contained in this newsletter is suggestions/opinions only - always consult your GP or stoma nurse before changing your routines or if you need any medical advice.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

With summer upon us, let us hope that it will be a good one, and we can all get out and enjoy ourselves though if the sun stays out, please make sure you use plenty of suncream.

I hope all who attended the 20th birthday celebration enjoyed the afternoon. It was good to have the guests we had to celebrate with us. Let's now look forward to the future, and hope we can continue the flourish as we have over the last 20 years, and keep giving the support that is so badly needed.

This is my last Chairman's message as Brian will be taking the reins as Chairman at the AGM. I hope you will all support and the committee as you have myself. I am not going away so will still be at meetings and giving support where it is needed. I have enjoyed my time as Chairman and have attempted to build the group to be able to give all the support that is needed and build the finances so the future is secured. We have a group to be proud of, and it is respected nationally. And I am sure it will continue to flourish.

The Summer Social is on the horizon and there are further details in this newsletter. This is always a good occasion so please support it.

One of our sources of income is the Salisbury Lottery and I urge you to join it as it does give a steady income just look up www.salisburycommunitylottery.co.uk/support/wessex-stoma-support-group

I shall be keeping my roles within Colostomy UK so will still have a role to keep the group informed of all that is happening with Colostomy UK and campaigns such as Stoma friendly toilets and other support for ostomates. Also, I am still involved with Mitrofanoff Support.

Thank you for all the support you have given me over the years

Ken Edwards

Secretary's spot

Hey there, hi there, ho there all. Hope everyone is doing okay and enjoying the lovely sunshine that we are having at the moment. It is gorgeous when walking our two dogs through the woods and seeing the beautiful Bluebells and spring blossom which is sadly coming to an end now. The birdsong has been heavenly to listen to.

I have been informed by the Mottisfont gardeners that the roses look like they are going to be early again this year and have already been making an appearance in the walled garden and the rest possibly before the end of May. The Peonies are just about to pop too, should be a beautiful display and make an excellent day out.

Our next meeting is in June on the 13th and we have Jim Reid back with his very popular informative talks about Salisbury, the second being "and then the railway came" and it is going to be his birthday, so we must sing Happy Birthday to him, and I will bake him a cake.

Hope to see you soon

Sally

Membership

Membership is still £5 and is due in June at the AGM unless you have recently paid.

Please put your membership in an envelope with your name on, as this makes it much easier for us to keep track of.

Thank you - Pam



Coming Up...

WESSEX STOMA SUPPORT GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 13TH JUNE 2026

AGENDA

Welcome and Apologies

Minutes of Last AGM held 7th June 2026

Chairman's Statement

Annual Report and Accounts

Election of Officers

Election of Committee

Any other business

Copies of the Annual Report and Accounts will be available at the meeting. For anyone who cannot attend the meeting and would like a copy please contact Ken on 01722 335352. Thank you.

Summer Social

There will be good food and good company to be enjoyed

SATURDAY 18TH JULY

The Earl of Normanton, Boscombe, SP4 0GA

3.00pm to 6.00pm

Subsidised Price £5



Please contact Karen Berryman to reserve your place on **01980 590599** or speak with Karen at a meeting.



Primrose Group



For carers and the bereaved

Lots of you have said you miss the meet up at Roberts Farm Shop. Now that I have had my knee done and it settles, I will arrange and tea later in the year.

Invitations will be sent out.



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Helping you feel confident in social or intimate situations: a discreet option for occasional use.



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Larger bag designs reduce the need for frequent emptying, supporting better comfort, rest and confidence, day and night.



LARGE 13-75MM WAFER

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If the stoma sits in a dip, is flush with the skin, or slightly retracted, our convex wafer supports the stoma to extend into the bag, improving flow and reducing leakage*.



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In the Garden with Jane



So here we are and spring has truly sprung, in a very warm way so far. The bulbs have been outstanding; bluebell woods look glorious. The rains have gone for now at least and we are once again begging for a downpour, never satisfied! Perfection would be raining all night and sun all day, of course it would! It does however seem this is the way the seasons will go from now on though, wet winters and dry scorching summers.

My water butts are virtually empty, and I've had to resort to the hosepipe for the greenhouse and new planting. I am very careful though as a water meter can easily run away with things. This year I have embraced the spring clean with vigour. But I do have to admit it is mostly outside. My indoor spring clean basically involved getting the chimney swept and sorting the dreaded cupboard under the stairs. I combined this with the dreaded second shed being cleared out and then decided I'd probably peaked and not to overdo it! But...outside I was on it totally. Already my veg plots are prepared and being sown or planted, garden is weeded, pricked out the greenhouse seedlings all potted up and growing on. I even emptied my hot composter bin. Last year I didn't really get it totally right, but this one, oh my goodness. Amazing compost full of worms and at one point it got up to over 140 degrees and was actually smoking (steaming) out the top! Luckily there's a valve to open to bring the heat back to the correct temp. But the compost is perfect for my big tubs for tomatoes, courgettes and crystal apple cucumbers.

Although this is exciting in itself (and I hear you saying this woman needs to get out more) even more so I have acquired a second-hand lawn mower! I've been using my neighbour's mower up to now, cutting hers and then dragging it round the field to get to my garden. I've been thinking for a while it would be better to have my own and cut grass at different times when it suits more. I told a friend who said his friend had the very thing. He was selling it because it was too hard to start. Off we went and I listened politely to all the "mansplaining" as if I'd never seen a mower before, then the not to feel bad if I couldn't start it as it takes him 3 goes. Pushed the handle up, pulled the cord and fired up first time! His wife was delighted and 2 men stood slightly astonished and defeated. Never make assumptions, it was a smiley moment. And I am beyond proud of my purchase. Yes, I probably do need to get out more. My veg plots are looking good right now, carrots, beetroot, parsnips and chard already peeking up through, which is a bonus on the struggles of last year. The greenhouse is bursting with life and beans, courgettes, tomatoes and cucumbers ready to go out. Flowers all potted up and some already planted out. It's that wonderful moment when everything is full of promise and before any disappointments have time to set in. Enjoy it whilst it lasts. My garden is now five years old, which is the accepted time for it to be matured. It gives me so much pleasure (and wonder) to see things come up and grow. The perennials are a good size and the shrubs well established. But there is always a space to be found for just one more plant, and I can always find one more plant!

Sadly, my little dog went for his final sleep in February, and I have planted a Rowan tree on his grave. The Rowan is a magical tree of life and protection and already is in flower. A family I've worked for many years and knew Elmo all his life gave me some snowdrops from their garden to underplant it. When I'm working out there, I feel he's still trotting about with me. I have also gone full on in the patio garden. The cats managed to pretty much wreck it so I've tidied it up and starting planting roses instead amongst the established surviving shrubs and plants. But it is their space so I'm making it with them in mind, my garden is the big one beyond it. I volunteer at a small independent cat shelter where I'm a foster mum for cats and kittens. It transpires that 5 of us are keen gardeners so we have made our own little splinter group. I'm about to host our first get together to chat and swap plants etc. We laugh because we're unique as opposed to other garden clubs as our conversations are more like "how do I stop the cat pooping in my tubs and destroying pot plants?" I hope you have a lovely summer, enjoy the flowers and sip a cool drink on the patio. My friend sent me a picture of what she calls my perfect tee shirt....it says, "I haven't lost my mind, half of it wandered off and the other half went to look for it"

Enjoy

COLOSTOMY UK

Edward Mountain secures Stoma Friendly legacy on Stoma Friendly Accessible Toilets.

Progress in the campaign for Stoma friendly Accessible toilets. Edward Mountain MSP recently highlighted how simple changes can make a big difference, and NHS Highland, the Scottish Parliament, and Morrisons have already taken action. Tesco, Morrisons and Asda have also agreed to review their policy.

ColostomyUK have teamed up with Arsenal to make Emirates Stadium more stoma friendly. This will improve awareness with fans living with a stoma and help improve confidence with supporters on match days

www.colostomyuk.org

Message from Michael Slater

Honorary Secretary

I would like to record my sincere thanks to Ken for all the work he has done over the years for the Wessex Stoma Support Group and for ostomists across the country.

From its humble beginnings, Ken has helped grow the WSSG while continuing to focus on our core principles of supporting ostomists and their families. He has also brought a greater focus to campaigning on behalf of ostomists everywhere, working with national organisations such as Colostomy UK to make life easier for ostomists, from promoting dignity at airports to improving accessible toilets and campaigning against discrimination.

It has been a privilege to work alongside Ken during his time as Chairman, and I know the Group will greatly miss his contribution to the Committee.

We look forward to continuing the Group under Brian's leadership, alongside our brilliant committee, and hope for many more years of supporting ostomists.

On behalf of us all, thank you, Ken.

Michael



Caring for a loved one with Dementia and a Stoma

Caring for a loved one with dementia can feel tough enough, and if the person has a stoma, you may be facing additional challenges, but please know that you are not alone there are ways of making life a little bit easier for both of you.

When memory affects stoma care

Patients who have lived with a stoma for years may have managed their care independently without any issues when dementia comes into the picture, remembering how or when to empty or change their bag can become tricky in some cases. The person with dementia may become anxious or confused about the stoma itself which can lead to hygiene concerns or distress.

Here are some practical tips that may help

Create routines A regular pattern can help reduce confusion and encourage feelings of safety and confidence.

Clear reminders Large-print laminated step-by-step instructions can be posted in the bathroom to guide the person through emptying or changing the bag. Just standing with them to give verbal advice can help.

Keep it simple People with dementia often find the simplest tasks like doing up the buttons or tying a shoelace difficult and frustrating. Break down tasks into small manageable steps and supervise where needed allowing plenty of time and staying calm.

Clothing If clothing becomes a barrier, opt for easy to remove garments or if the person is touching their stoma to much try net pants under regular underwear to gently discourage fiddling.

Make the bathroom safer and more stoma friendly Small changes can make a difference

- ◇ Remove unnecessary items and ensure essentials like toilet paper and wipes are within easy reach
- ◇ Remove any mats as these can create a trip hazard
- ◇ Provide a bath or shower seat if the person has mobility or balance problems
- ◇ Leave the bathroom light on at night to help the person find their way
- ◇ Try removing the toilet lid to avoid the chance of forgetting to lift it
- ◇ Ensure the floor and walls are easy to clean in case of accidents
- ◇ Be aware that changes in sight and visual spatial problems can occur in dementia. Sometimes a white toilet seat on a light-coloured floor can be hard to differentiate often a black or wooden seat is more easily recognised

Don't forget about you When you are caring for someone you love it's all too easy to put yourself last. But making time to rest and recharge is just as important. Whether it is a weekend away, a walk in nature, or a few minutes by yourself with a cuppa, you'll be better able to care for your loved one when you are looking after your wellbeing as well. Rest doesn't mean you're giving up, it means you're replenishing yourself so you can keep going with energy and compassion.

When dementia and stoma care overlap, teamwork is key. Try to involve both the stoma nurses and dementia specialists to get the best advice and co-ordinated support. You don't have to figure it all out alone and the right support can make each day a little easier.

Welfare

I have had my new knee last week so both are now done and I must now get fit and active. Jo Bestoni has had her Op and is recovering. If any of you are also recovering from ops we wish you the very best.

Please do let us know when you are in hospital or not well so we can offer support.

Thank you for all your care, love, and all the cards I have received.

I hope to spend some of my time recovering using the phone and catching up with you for courtesy calls to see how you are.

With summer coming in and the better weather it time for us all to enjoy getting out but remember the sunscreen!

Pam Edwards 01722 335351

History of intestinal stomas

Stomas have been around for longer than you may think... in Kos in 350BC Praxagoras wrote about creating a stoma! Bowel injuries were untreatable for centuries, but it was found that patients who had a stoma erupt spontaneously sometimes survived.



Galen was chief surgeon for the school of Roman gladiators, experience with injuries to the torso/abdomen.



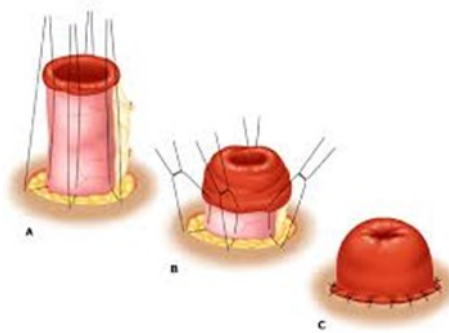
Challenges for military surgeons increased with use of artillery from 14th century, survival was often due to human endurance rather than surgical skill. George Deppe, wounded at Ramillies in 1706, lived for 14 years with what appears to be a severely prolapsed double-barrelled colostomy.



Several stomas are written about in the 18th century. In 1750 73-year-old Margaret White had 55cm of dead bowel removed and was left with a piece of bowel hanging out of her tummy. She survived for many years, probably managing the stoma with rags and towels. In 1776 Pillore created first successful colostomy on Mrs Morel for cancer. A sponge held in place with a band or belt was used to collect faeces. She died 18 days later of mercury poisoning or obstruction from mercury she had been given to try and relieve constipation. In 1793 Duret performed colostomy on baby born without anus who lived for 43 years with a stoma. In 1815 George Freer was the first British surgeon to perform a colostomy on an infant with imperforate anus and in 1817 on a 47 year old farmer with rectal obstruction. Both died within weeks.

Urostomy: The first report of a urinary stoma using bowel was in 1851 by Simon. This was done on a child with a congenital abnormality who later died. In 1911 Robert Coffey demonstrated a technique of attaching the ureters to the rectum. This wasn't widely adopted as urine flowing back into the body caused "acid poisoning". Instead, the use of a piece of bowel to divert urine was more widely adopted. In 1911 Robert Coffey diverted urine by implanting the ureters into the large bowel. In 1950 Eugene Bricker created the ileal conduit.

Ileostomy : In 1879 Baum made first recorded ileostomy – this patient died 9 weeks later. In 1894 Lauenstein created first protruding ileostomy, 15cm long so faeces could drain into bowl without destroying skin. Ileostomies had to be regularly stretched to prevent narrowing and closure. In 1952 Bryan Nicholas Brooke developed everted spout technique.



How to manage a stoma was left to the ingenuity of the individual. Mrs White in 1820 felt that a belt with a bucket on it was not as efficient as a cushion with a belt for the “reception of faeces”. An assortment of glass, metal and porcelain bowls were used, and also rubber bags. The development of plastics just before the Second World War meant appliances could be lighter and throwaway. From the 1960s stoma patients helped develop new products. Coloplast in 1954 developed the first disposable bags with a zinc oxide adhesive. These caused skin damage, but were a huge improvement as they weren’t visible and were airtight. Hollister in 1960 made collecting bags with Karaya gum. In the 1970s 2 piece appliances were developed. In 1970 the Australian Squibb company introduced hydrocolloid base for use by dentists. They found this didn’t cause skin problems, and from the Squibb company Convatec emerged. In 18th century: rags and towels; sponge held in place with band or belt.



How far we have come and how fortunate we are to live in a time with safer operating techniques and such a large a range of reliable, discreet and easy to use products!

20TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

In April we celebrated our 20th Birthday. From small beginnings with the two Michaels - Beck and Slater - and a membership of 6, Wessex Stoma Support group was born, and we still have Michael Slater, and his family. Emma was the then minutes secretary and Jean still serving teas. We have now grown to a membership of over 100 - a terrific achievement.



We were grateful to have Libby Herbert CEO of Colostomy UK, and Maxyne to celebrate with us. John Glen MP also paid us a visit and has always supported us.



We had a very interesting talk by Stoma Nurse Suzie Dukes on the History of Stoma operations and pouches from the earliest days.

We are very grateful for the support we have got from the Stoma Nurses over the years, and it was great to have Tanya and Tracy with us on the day as well.

Ken spoke about the way the group has grown over the years and still representing those with all stomas.



Our main meeting has grown with speakers, suppliers and activities such as Chair Yoga, Decopatch, Boccia, Singalongs, entertainment, games, and quizzes.

We also have our Tesco tea and chat afternoons with craft activities and an opportunity to talk, our Primrose group for carers and bereaved members featuring delicious cream teas, our Summer BBQs and socials, Christmas Dinners and trips to the coast or Isle of Wight and, of course, our Pantomime trips.

We have also had stands at open days in Salisbury, Bath and Dorchester, and awareness days outside Tesco.

Jenny from Medicareplus gave us on talk on Skin care and Rebecca from Salts came and supported us



We finished the afternoon off with music and entertainment by Gary Nunn and Chris.

And some good food provided The Earl of Normanton rounded off an enjoyable day.

We are grateful for all the support from many companies over these 20 years including Pelican, Respond, Fittleworth, Salts, Medicareplus, SportX, Hollister, Coloplast, Dansac, Rapidcare, and Rhodes pharma

Thank you to all our members, past and present for making the Wessex Stoma Support Group such a success



CALENDAR FOR 2026

Full Meetings

Bob Blandford Scout Hall

Wilton SP2 OAL

2:00pm to 4:00pm

Saturday 13th June

Annual General Meeting

Talk Streets of Salisbury continued

Saturday 12th September

Saturday 14th November

Tesco Tea and Chat Afternoons

for ostomates, carers and friends

Tesco Community Space, Southampton Road, Salisbury SP1 2NY

Saturday 8th August

Saturday 10th October

Summer Social Saturday July 18th

Earl of Normanton Inn, Boscombe SP4 0GA 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Christmas Dinner Friday 4th December

The White Hart Hotel, Salisbury 12:00 for 12:30pm