Long-standing supporters Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team organised a tree-planting event on Action Mesothelioma Day and £320 was raised for the Fund by families and friends of the Chesterfield-based group, for which we are very grateful.
Family and friends wishing to carry on June’s quest for justice, and to help other sufferers both now and in the future established the June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund in 1997 shortly after June’s death from mesothelioma.

June’s mother, Maie Gelder, also died from mesothelioma in 1982 and it was that double tragedy that led June to seek justice in a test case against the owners of the J W Roberts asbestos factory in Armley, Leeds. They had negligently contaminated their own workforce and the local neighbourhood with deadly asbestos dust. This was described as a true “David and Goliath” battle and against all the odds June won her case and proved that T&N were negligent.

June was 61 years old and her Mum 67 years old when they lost their lives to mesothelioma – exposed as a young innocent family living in the shadow of the factory.

The founders of the June Hancock Fund pledged to continue raising awareness of the disease, helping provide up to date quality information and advice, and to finance independently reviewed specific mesothelioma research projects.

We continue June’s battle in her name. For contact details see back page.

For a full list of our trustees and founders please visit our website www.junehancockfund.org

The June Hancock Fund hosted an exceptionally well-attended Action Mesothelioma Day at the Crowne Plaza in Leeds on Friday 6 July. The sun was shining and we were delighted to welcome friends old and new to what has now become an annual tradition of ‘Meeting the researchers.’

People with mesothelioma, their families, carers and friends met mesothelioma researchers for relaxed and informal round-table discussions of current research developments and had the rare opportunity to question the academics and clinicians at first hand. The Fund feels privileged to have this generous input from our researchers; the overwhelming response from all was that the format continues to be informative and successful.

About the Fund and June

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Donating is easy via Virgin or Just giving

It’s really easy to donate to JHMRF online or via your smartphone. Every penny makes a difference. All our research is funded through donations and legacies. If you are organising a fundraising event, or wish to make a regular or one-off donation it is really easy to do, and secure too.

Virgin Money Giving See www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com and search for our charity or charity number 1121784 and select your donation amount.

Just Giving At justgiving.com search for our charity or charity number 1121784 and select your donation amount.

We will of course accept cheques made payable to the Fund. Send to JHMRF, Riverside East, 2 Millsands, Sheffield S3 8DT
Speakers included Dr Zsuzsanna Tabi, Reader at Cardiff University and long-time supporter and Fund grant-holder, who spoke about the recently completed clinical trials funded in collaboration with Cancer Research Wales. A cancer vaccine (Trovax) was employed to generate or strengthen the body’s immune response to fight the tumour; Immunology is an exciting area of mesothelioma research.

Dr Kate Millward, Research Associate at Cardiff University, talked about the focus between cancers and the immune system and how although the immune system is designed to fight tumours, unfortunately sometimes they fight back by impairing the immune system. Kate’s work focuses on testing treatments which can improve the immune response in mesothelioma patients.

Dr Miranda Ashton, clinical research fellow at the University of Glasgow, is finding out if relatively larger doses of radiotherapy could be more effective than standard doses in controlling pain, and reviewing the side effects of both. This is a first - no research has been carried out on this before in mesothelioma. SYSTEMS-2 is funded by the JHMRF in collaboration with the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre.

The psychological effects of illness was the topic of Prof Allan House, Professor of Liaison Psychology at the University of Leeds. Prof House’s main clinical and research interests are in the overlap between physical and mental health, an area of research of much interest to those present.

The appropriate communication of a mesothelioma diagnosis to patients is being researched by Dr Beth Taylor from the University of Sheffield; “The importance of this cannot be underestimated,” she said. Her ‘top ten tips’ were particularly well received and generated much discussion amongst patients and their families.

Dr Sarah Haywood Small, from Sheffield Hallam University, and her PhD student Oana Voloaca spoke about the new mesothelioma research group led by Dr Small and its funding, by the June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund’s doctoral fellowship scheme. Both discussed the urgent need to develop new bioanalytical methods of mesothelioma diagnosis and detection because of how difficult it is to visualise and quantify the asbestos fibres in tissues.

Professor Adrian Dobbs, Professor of Organic and Medical Chemistry at the University of Greenwich, is using chemical tools to identify new therapeutic treatments for mesothelioma patients. Adrian is a regular attendee at the AMD Leeds event, and has supervised two of our PhD students. He spoke about the challenge of developing effective drugs that don’t cause unwanted side effects and are targeted on specific sites of the body.

There were plenty of questions for researchers and trustees. The feeling in the room was one of hope and potential for improved treatments and outcomes in the future.

There was an impromptu raffle at the end of the day which was really enjoyable, and a very tasty lunch. Fund chair Kimberley Stubbs said: “I was so thrilled to hear the positive feedback from patients and families as they left, especially to know that they left feeling better informed, listened to, and with hope for the future.”

Next year’s AMD event is on FRIDAY 5th JULY 2019

www.junehancockfund.org
Science workshop a first

Nine universities were represented by 15 researchers at our first science workshop in Leeds in 2017. With high quality mesothelioma research our priority, the objective of the workshop was to explore and prioritise the outstanding research questions in mesothelioma. Chaired by Dr Richard Stephens (formerly of the Medical Research Council) and Fund trustee Dr Kate Hill, the workshop’s aim was to provide an opportunity for researchers and research teams to share their ideas and outline their proposals, including opportunities for debate and further discussion once the emergent research topics had been identified.

Two large mesothelioma awards had been announced in 2016; £5m of government funding to Imperial College, London for genetic studies (led by Professor Sir Anthony Newton-Taylor and Professor Bill Cookson), and £5m from the Victor Dahdaleh Foundation to the British Lung Foundation for Phase II and III clinical trials in Leicester (led by Professor Dean Fennell), and to support Mesobank and other groundbreaking research studies in Papworth (led by Dr. Robert Rintoul). However, even with this boost to funding, it was clear that there were still gaps in mesothelioma research that remained unfilled by these allocations.

Building mesothelioma research capacity by providing a forum for debate and sharing ideas amongst institutions, as well as developing a mesothelioma research network, would hopefully identify a collaborative research project that could become a research proposal. And so the JHMRF scientific workshop idea was formed, and culminated in a very successful and innovative event.

The quality of the work presented was excellent. Patient representatives were also present – this was very important to us. The willingness to share ideas was really encouraging, and culminated in a great diversity of work being presented. Because of that, no single specific collaborative project emerged, although it was wholeheartedly agreed that an early diagnosis was an important goal.

Researcher presentations at the workshop included:-
- A project to detect molecules within mesothelioma cells that will help predict which patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma will benefit from radiotherapy and to further our understanding of why this cancer is resistant to radiotherapy. (Miranda Ashton, Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre)
- A project continuing the exploitation of natural products, looking at the chemical synthesis of four natural products all of which demonstrate good activity against mesothelioma in-vitro. (Adrian Dobbs, University of Greenwich)
- A project looking at identifying new bio-markers for new drug development in mesothelioma. (Alistair Greystoke, Sir Bobby Robson Unit, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle)
- Setting up of a mesothelioma research team at Sheffield Hallam University and looking at protein levels in samples to determine the level of asbestos exposure required for mesothelioma to develop. (Sarah Hayward-Small, Sheffield Hallam University)
- Improving mouse models of mesothelioma – much is known about the early events and end-stage disease, but little is known about what happens in between. (Daniel Murphy, CRUK Beatson Institute, University of Glasgow)
- Project looking at metabolism, and hypoxia (cell death) and how it is expressed in mesothelioma. Looking at new prognostic markers and potential new treatments. (Luciano Mutti, University of Salford)
- New acquaintances and links between the researchers were created, which is a very positive step. The JHMRF are now offering a £25,000 pump-priming grant in order to maintain the momentum in this area.

New grants available

Applications are invited for sums of up £25,000 to help build collaborative research teams and support data gathering. Proposals for ‘pump priming’ activities leading to a competitive grant application to a research council or other funder are particularly encouraged.

The awards may be used, amongst other things, for consumables, equipment, technical support and translational research. The awards may not be used to support the applicant’s personal salary.

Applications for a maximum of £25,000 for projects up to two years are invited under one of the following themes:
- The Rachel Dodds’ Award for peritoneal mesothelioma research
- Pleural mesothelioma research
- Developing patient and public involvement in mesothelioma research

For more information, email research@junehancockfund.org or telephone 0113 343 0864. The closing date for applications is 12:00 noon on Friday 9 November 2018.
21 years ago.....

An anniversary message from our Chair and daughter of June Hancock, Kimberley Stubbs.

The June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund celebrated its 21st anniversary in August 2018. In that time I am so proud to say that we have raised over £1.7 million, enabling us to keep funding high quality research into mesothelioma, a cancer whose only known cause is exposure to asbestos. Twenty one years on and our battle continues – the battle to improve outcomes for patients, the battle to fund the building blocks for research that will go on to have real results in finding a cure for mesothelioma, and the battle to ensure that mesothelioma receives a greater share of centrally-funded cancer research spending in the UK.

I am proud to have worked alongside co-trustees Russell Hancock (my brother, June’s son), Adrian Budgen, Dr Kate Hill, Vanessa Bridge and Dan Small who all work with true dedication and commitment for the JHMRF, of their own volition and in their own time. I am, and will forever be, in their gratitude. It is a privilege to call you my friends and family.

We set up the Fund after mesothelioma claimed the life of our Mum, June Hancock, as it had cruelly taken her mother Maie Gelder, too, some 15 years earlier. There is not a day goes by that I don’t think of her, love her and miss her. She has three grandchildren, Emily, Andrew and Jonathon, whom she never met. They will never have her in their lives, nor experience the love and gentleness that she was full of. Like many families, so much has been taken away, so cruelly.

We will keep on trying to make a positive and real difference for mesothelioma patients now and in the future, and it is only because of the fantastic support we receive from our fundraisers and the incredible dedication of the trustees that we are able to do this.

From the bottom of my heart I thank you all. X
RIP Mum and Nana

Fund backs young medic’s summer research

Cardiff fourth year medical student Naomi Wardrop received £5280 to work with Fund researcher Dr Zsuzsanna Tabi on the drug azacitidine, which acts upon on the immune behaviour of mesothelioma cancer cells and has potential as a therapy for the disease.

She said: “It was the perfect opportunity to explore my curiosity and gain some valuable experience in the laboratory. I was lucky enough to be assigned a research project both challenging and extremely engaging. My time in the laboratory has provided unique learning opportunities I will carry throughout my medical career, and I’d like to thank the Fund for supporting me.”

Fund trustee Dr Kate Hill said: “Dr Tabi’s research will look at three drugs - already available as individual treatments but not tested together - in combination. The hypothesis is that this combination treatment will not only slow down tumour progression but also make the cancer cells more vulnerable to immune cell attack and boost the activity of anti-cancer immune cells.”

Huge thanks to GMAVSG

We are privileged to be supported in our mesothelioma research funding by many wonderful individuals, organisations and asbestos victims support groups and are immensely grateful to each. They include the Greater Manchester Asbestos Victims Support Group (GMAVSG), who have donated over £16,000 in the last two years. Treasurer Caroline Bedale said: “We hope that the donations we received and are passing on to you will help you with the research you fund on mesothelioma.”

Fund chair Kimberley Stubbs said: “Through adversity and the absolute determination of those who have lost loved ones to this terrible disease, we have gained a true bond in making a positive difference to mesothelioma sufferers both now and in the future. We couldn’t continue to fund research without donations such as these.”

For more information on GMAVSG see www.asbestos-victims-support.org or call 0161 6367555.
HASAG honoured with special fellowship

One of our most consistent and loyal support groups, the Hampshire-based HASAG, has been recognized for its contributions of just over £143,000 over ten years with a 'special recognition fellowship.'

Sheffield-based PhD student Oana Voloaca has been awarded the fellowship, which will support her three-year doctoral research into detecting and diagnosing asbestos mineral fibres within mesothelioma cells. The Fund is matching HASAG’s support, pound-for-pound.

Fund chair Kimberley Stubbs said: “We are delighted that HASAG has accepted this very special award in their name and honour, recognising both the wonderful work they do for mesothelioma sufferers and their families, their phenomenal fund-raising achievements and their support for our mesothelioma research efforts over many years.”

HASAG was founded in 2006 by Lynne Squibb, following the death of her father David Salisbury. The group meets regularly and holds a large public event every year on AMD. HASAG began donating to the JHMRF in 2008, and has supported us throughout the last decade.

Lynne has been pivotal in raising the profile of asbestos-related diseases and works closely with specialist lung cancer nurses to ensure patients and their families are seen as quickly as possible after diagnosis. HASAG has been instrumental in fundraising for support for all asbestos disease sufferers and research into asbestos-related illnesses and also funds a specialist nursing post.
Oana Voloaca was the successful candidate, and will be supported for three years through her PhD. Here she explains more about the doctoral study she is planning to undertake.

Ms Voloaca’s doctoral study is formally called “The identification of mineral fibres and biomarkers in malignant mesothelioma.” She said: “I will be using the latest analytical techniques to visualise mineral fibres within mesothelioma cells. I am also combining this information on fibre detection with the exact characteristics of each cell to further our understanding of mesothelioma.

“This project is close to my heart because of its potential impact on thousands of lives, and because I have the chance to work with renowned scientists from the University of Hawaii and Loughborough University, asbestos experts from Santia Asbestos Management and the NHS Sheffield Teaching Hospital pathologists.

“This research is directly supported by HASAG and the JHMRF. I am grateful to everyone who has donated and made this research possible, I believe that together - we can start to make a difference.”

Oana Voloaca’s early results have been presented at international conferences and meetings in Sheffield, Cambridge and Florence. For more information, see our website.

Dr Sarah Haywood-Small is a senior lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University. As a cancer researcher with 20 years of experience, she uses this knowledge to underpin teaching in nursing, midwifery and other allied health courses. In 2017, she set up a new mesothelioma research group, which now stands as five hard-working students, from PhD to undergraduate level. Oana (as pictured and also in attendance) is just about to successfully complete her first year as a PhD student, her research is kindly supported by the JHMRF.

Mesothelioma is directly linked to asbestos mineral fibre exposure, although one in five people still have no known link to these established fibres. One reason for this is that fibres can be difficult to visualise and quantify in biological tissues. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop new bioanalytical methods of detection and diagnosis. We are also interested in the suggestion that other, less well studied mineral fibres might be associated with mesothelioma. In the last 12 months, we have used patented mass spectrometry technology (ICP-MS) to successfully identify and quantify individual mineral fibres at the cellular level. We are now combining this data with other experiments, which focus on the physical characteristics of the cells and how they behave after fibre exposure, to create a full picture of our mesothelioma cells in our laboratory.

Such techniques would ultimately involve future integration into the clinical workflow; diagnosis, prognosis and treatment monitoring of mesothelioma, as well as contributing to knowledge about how mesothelioma develops.

Go Jessica!

Recently we heard from Jessica Williams whose grandmother passed away from mesothelioma in 2012. Jessica raised funds for the JHMRF by participating in the ‘Cotswold Way Challenge’ last July.

“I became aware of the need for research and palliative care funding for mesothelioma when my grandmother became ill. Having recently found out about the June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund, I was hoping to use this opportunity to fundraise for you,” she said.

Good luck Jessica! And thank you for raising money for mesothelioma research – we look forward to hearing how you got on.
In memory of Gary Russell

Gary Russell was a loved father, brother, son and friend who lost his battle with mesothelioma in 2017. Gary was eventually diagnosed with the disease in the autumn of 2016 after being exposed to asbestos as an apprentice joiner in his teenage years.

Gary would have been 61 years old on 28 May 2018 and in his memory and to raise money to support the June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund, his son Nick and two friends, Mark and Liam, completed the Yorkshire Wolds Way national trail in 3 days over the late May bank holiday weekend.

The walk started early on the Saturday morning at the Humber Bridge in bright sunshine, finishing on Monday evening at Filey Brigg after 79 miles and 32 hours of walking.

In total £1,635 was raised with many friends and family joining the walk along the way to support the cause and celebrate Gary’s life. A special mention also to long time friend Dave Mortimer, who personally helped to raise almost £300 from many of Gary’s friends based across the UK.

Thank you to everybody for their sponsorship and support and helping to make the charity walk a special weekend.

FUNDRAISING

Contact us

Write to us or send donations to:
The June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund
Riverside East, 2 Millsands, Sheffield S3 8DT

Via our website:
www.junehancockfund.org

By telephone:
0114 274 4420

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to “The June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund”.

If you are a UK taxpayer living in this country please include a Gift Aid Form so that the Fund can reclaim the tax. (Gift Aid forms available on request).

Donating online

It’s easier than ever to register your fundraising event online, or to make a donation to someone you know who is registered and raising money for the Fund. Here’s how:

- Just Giving – simply log on to www.justgiving.com
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) – simply log on to www.cafonline.org

Donations can be made securely online, which makes this a great way of collecting sponsorship money for your fundraising events.

Help us by:
- Adopting the Fund as your “Charity of the Year” if you are a business or corporate donor
- Making a Gift Aid or tax efficient donation
- Setting up a monthly direct debit or standing order donation
- Organising your own fundraising event
- Registering your fundraising event on Just Giving www.justgiving.com or CAF www.cafonline.org
- Making an endowment or leaving the Fund a legacy

Sponsorship forms can now be downloaded from www.junehancockfund.org

The Fund welcomes all donations large and small to support its work in memory of June Hancock.

Donating by text

Donate by text for free. Simply text JHMR00 and the amount you wish to donate (You can donate either £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 or £10) to 70070. Your text will look something like JHMR00 £5.