

# MY VIEWPOINT



## **The Trinity Holistic Centre**

Personal stories about prostate cancer  
captured through photography



## The Trinity Holistic Centre

supporting patients, carers  
and staff, mind, body and spirit

**IN JANUARY 2015**, the Trinity Holistic Centre launched a pilot photography project for men diagnosed with prostate cancer.

The small-group programme - funded by Prostate Cancer UK – was delivered by local photographer John Kerr and qualified counsellor Margaret Booth.



Its aim was to provide greater emotional support to men living with – and beyond – a prostate cancer diagnosis and to give them the opportunity to learn and develop a new skill.

It's been a shared journey of re-discovery for the four who completed the eight workshops and their very personal viewpoints of this illness and the impact it can have on family and friends have been captured through some striking and poignant images.

We thank them all for sharing their work with us and hope it will help to tackle the taboo that surrounds this part of men's health and that more men will recognise the early signs and seek help.



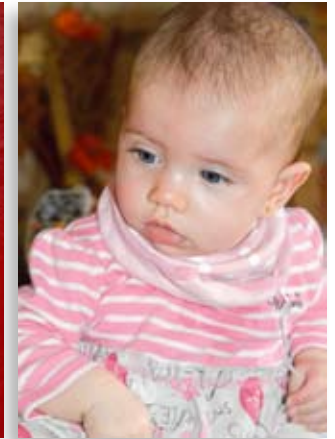
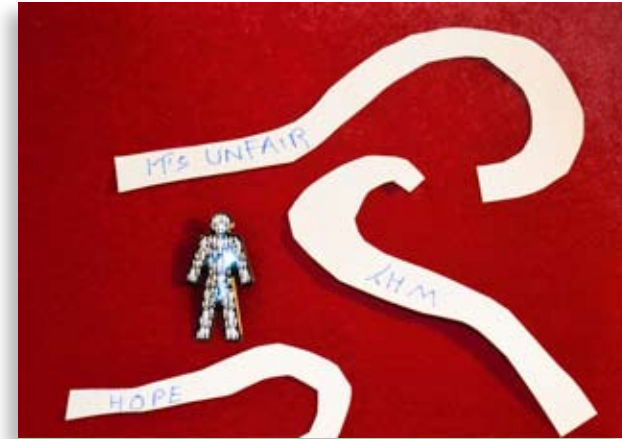
## Brian Addison

### Mask:

I felt that I had to put on a false or brave face to lessen the pain my family felt.

### Lonely:

Even though I was surrounded by family and friends, I was still alone.



### Sense:

Trying to make sense of why it was me.

### Future:

This child is my grand-daughter who I want to see grow up.

### Outlook:

My outlook to the cancer was grey. I had to put up a smoke screen for others.







### Thingvellir:

This is Thingvellir in Iceland's 'Golden Circle'. It was here in 930AD that Europe's first parliaments were held. The site for this is across the bridge at the bottom right of the picture. This stark but beautiful location also offers a rare chance to see the Mid-Atlantic Ridge where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates are tearing the earth apart at the rate of 2.5 centimetres per year. This results in the ridge you can see (North American plate on the left and Eurasian plate on the right).

This photograph was taken in a snowstorm and a strong and icy wind. The result reminded me of some aspects of my journey along the prostate cancer route. It represents two opposite emotions; turmoil and destruction (the tectonic ridge) and new beginnings (the 930 AD parliament). The small splash of lime green in what appears to be a black and white image is a reminder to always try to move forward and bring some colour back into your life, just as the people at the bottom of the photo are just about to move across the bridge away from the turmoil and towards new beginnings.



### Ranga Aurora:

At 3am our hotel receptionist rang our bedroom – "Mr Armstrong – we have an Aurora" was all that was said. Stumbling into the hotel car park we were greeted by the stunning sight of vivid slashes of green Northern Lights stretching across the entire sky. Awake now, we realised that it was icy cold (-9°C) and there were gale force winds.

Thank you Trinity Holistic Centre photographic course for reawakening my interest in photography, allowing me to capture this moment in my life!

After my prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment had sunk in I was determined to try to achieve some goals in life – actually witnessing what you see in this photograph was one of my goals. Another was to take up a hobby, get absorbed in it and to generally move on in life.







## Jennifer - Paddy's Hole:

This picture was taken during a photographic course field trip to Paddy's Hole on the South Gare. A beautiful bright winter's sun captures the many colours around the scene.

All but one boat is pointing into the rising tide. Poor Jennifer, now at the end of her travels – what stories could she tell? We all have a story, particularly if the sadness of cancer enters your life. It's important to remember that you are not alone. People do care and help can be found. You may need to seek it – **don't** let it hold you back from seeking support.



## Tangles:

This photograph could represent the tangled emotions we suffer when given a diagnosis of cancer. At first it seems to be impossible to see how to straighten out the mess we have just been handed.

However, look to the top left of the photograph – here we can see some level (though bumpy) land. You just need to find a way through these tangled emotions and head for that. You are going to need some help – friends and family will provide that. Reach out to others who have been this way – join a support group, but above all else keep moving forward.



**John Dilworth**

## Get Well Soon:

There's a lot of symbolism in this image. The hearts pegging the string of cards channel the love and affection I received from family, friends and workmates.

I've focused on the information, help and support that was available when first diagnosed with prostate cancer. I was then treated in the NHS with dignity, great skill and caring. I think the NHS is astonishing and I get to make my point about how I feel about that.



## Paddy's Hole:

More memories from my past setting out from here to fish off the coast at Skinningrove. This scene reminded me that after the emotional tide goes out – taking with it the shock of being diagnosed with prostate cancer and the trauma of surgery – there comes a period of tranquility and reflection that have been important to my recovery and shaping my future hopes.





## Men United:

Beating prostate cancer is personal and individual but depends on many teams working together. Our photo workshop group, for example, is a team effort as is the work of GPs, surgeons, nurses, other hospital staff and aftercare. Coping with the disease might be a struggle but not one that has to be faced alone.



## It's Good To Talk:

What do men talk about? It's not all rubbish ... It surprised me when I shared my experience with male friends and acquaintances just how many know someone or had been diagnosed themselves with prostate cancer. Talk to your mate, talk to someone, anywhere, at any time. It might save your life – or someone else's!



## The Works:

This shot is taken from South Gare – where I went fishing many times when I was younger. Looking towards the works I recalled that I was born on the other side of what was then Dorman Long. I started my working life as an apprentice in local industry so this image reflects much about my formative years.





### Wind Farm:

The lone boat dwarfed by giant turbines. The powerful symmetry of the three structures only emphasises how formidable an obstacle they must appear close up. Prostate cancer has been hugely imposing on my life but I have found, and my hope for others is, that it is quite possible to steer a way through.



### Winding Road:

This photo is heavily clichéd but true for me, nevertheless. Being diagnosed with prostate cancer is a dark, cold moment. There are twists and turns on the road ahead and it isn't clear what might lie over the horizon. I have someone special putting their loving arm around me and, of course, what happened to me has become part of her journey too.



### Sharp Scratch:

'Sharp scratch' said the nurse as she inserted the syringe into my arm to take the blood sample. Two days later my doctor rang to say the results were back and my PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) was 101. The 'normal' PSA reading for a man of my age is 3.9.

### An Inside View:

I've had five of these scans since I was first diagnosed in April 2007. So I thought it would make a change for me to take a photo of the scanner instead of it taking one of me.







### Lion and Deer:

The lion lurking in the background waiting to strike is very much like how I see prostate cancer. Both are ruthless killers who show no discrimination or pity to their prey.



### Waves:

Waves resemble the different prostate cancer treatments I've had. They start off strong and powerful and then eventually fade to nothing, leaving way for the next one.



### Mail Misery:

How many cuts will they make next?

How much more information can they request?

New assessments ahead, said to make things better?

Will destroy a person's soul, with negative results in a letter ...



*"I got my spark back - viewing my journey on film helped me."*

*"The project has brought me in touch with my thoughts and feelings and I think that is what I was reaching for in the wake of my diagnosis and treatment."*

*"Having cancer and wanting to learn or improve your photography seemed a strange idea to base an eight-week course on. Surprisingly it has really worked, because everyone who enters the course knows that everyone else will have at least two things in common - cancer and an interest in photography."*



*"Several of us are intending to keep in touch after the course to meet up for photographic meets. This is just one of the many bonuses that has come out of being on this course."*

*"I now look at things very differently now and want to explore and capture what I see."*

*"I would like to thank the holistic centre and the excellent photographic tutor, John Kerr, for the opportunity to get back into this worthwhile hobby and to assist me in getting some fun and a sense of achievement from my photographs. This has been long missing."*





**The Trinity  
Holistic Centre**  
supporting patients, carers  
and staff, mind, body and spirit

*"The subject matter of this workshop is incredibly emotive and we were not really sure what response we would get from participants. We needn't have worried as the group quickly became its own support network whilst producing some thought provoking and technically excellent photographs and narrative."*

John Kerr - photographer and course tutor



Project funded by:

**PROSTATE  
CANCER UK**





The Trinity Holistic Centre supports patients and families affected by cancer across Teesside, Darlington and North Yorkshire.

We do this through a range of projects and services designed to provide emotional and practical support at diagnosis and through treatment as well as helping people live with and beyond their cancer diagnosis.

We can only run innovative, engaging projects like My Viewpoint with charitable donations and community support.

If you or your organisation would like to make a donation or find out more about us please contact:

The Trinity Holistic Centre  
The James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough TS4 3BW  
Telephone 01642 854839  
Email [trinity.holisticcentre@stees.nhs.uk](mailto:trinity.holisticcentre@stees.nhs.uk)