

**“Don’t worry David! The Professor at the  
Harvard School of Medicine is covering his arse...”**

***Ron tells the story of his ten clinical trials***



I am a patient and volunteer at the **William Harvey Clinical Research Centre** and a member of **TrialsConnect**, **Patient Powerhouse** and the **Public and Patient Advisory Group**. That sounds a bit of a mouthful but it is not onerous and personally rewarding. Despite being – shall we say – ‘mature’, I have rediscovered old talents and even learnt new ones. I tell my wife that, like a fine vintage, I keep improving with age. I’m not sure she believes me...

I have been a Postman, a Solicitors Outdoor Clerk, a Barristers Clerk and then was a Solicitors Managing Clerk in a prestigious firm – one of the largest London Agency practices – for about 25 years. This meant carrying out High Court work for Solicitors, Councils and Prosecuting Solicitors from all over the Country.

So I have taken cases to the High Court, Divisional Court, Court of Appeal, House of Lords and even once helped on a case in the Privy Council but despite all that, I would now say that my main claim to fame arose when I volunteered to join a clinical study called CANTOS at the **William Harvey Clinical Research Centre**.

How? Well it came about because during the course of my study, Dr David Collier, the clinical director, invited me to read a letter concerning the CANTOS study procedures that he had received from Professor Ridker, Professor of Medicine, Harvard School of Medicine. There is no need to go into the detail of that letter but my comment to David after reading it was, “Don’t worry David, that’s the Professor of Medicine at Harvard School of Medicine, covering his arse.”

I thought no more of it until sometime later David mentioned that he had been to a meeting of international researchers and Professor Ridker was there. Taking his courage into his hands David told him of our conversation and my comment. After a distinguished colleague of Paul Ridker had felt the need to explain that the American word for ‘arse’ is ‘ass’ (which he did apparently know), he considered his response for a few moments and then confirmed that, actually, this was spot on. It’s a source of some amusement that little old me, just a patient, knew what was really going on when the eminent Professor of such a prestigious establishment as the Harvard School of Medicine had written that letter. Professor Ridker must have a very good sense of humour. Respect...

I have a lot to be grateful for to St Barts as well. Not only did Professor Mark Caulfield help me control my high blood pressure when I attended his blood pressure clinic there, they also saved

my wife from the worry and pain of cancer and possibly saved her life as a result of her taking part in a clinical trial. They also gave the very best care to my eldest son who had cancer. Sadly, he passed away. But he could not have received better treatment or care from the staff.

Anyway, joining my study at the William Harvey has to be one of the best things I have done for many years. I was to join at a time when I had been medically retired from work and was really hating vegetating at home and over the years I volunteered in more ways. I became involved in helping in a whole range of varied activities. I would recommend this to anyone who isn't working or has retired. It does wonders for your self-confidence and feeling of well-being. Helping for half a day a week on reception – meeting and greeting fellow patients and helping to put them at ease with a friendly word – is particularly satisfying.

I am, and always have been, a strong believer in the value of research and over the years I have taken part in ten Clinical Trials or Studies. I should perhaps say in a plea of mitigation that none of these have been at my own instigation. I was asked by various doctors at hospital during visits, or contacted by telephone by doctors or nice and very persuasive study nurses. I always said, "Yes". I only ask you not to infer from this that I am in need of psychiatric help, I am not a complete crackpot. I'm not I tell you!

Until I started my study at William Harvey, I hadn't known that you could look for, and ask to join, a clinical trial and it was only through talking to David and his brilliant staff that I came to realise otherwise. I have no hesitation in recommending people to ask their GP if there are any clinical trials that might help if the standard treatment for their condition is not working. The internet is also a very good way to investigate (as always, beware sites that are trying to sell you something).

If you are worried about Clinical Trials and Studies consider: I have done ten of them and although some have had no discernible effect on me, others have been very beneficial. It is anyway a good feeling to know that by taking part you may help many hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. Some of them may even be your friends and relatives way into the future.

My studies:

- *G.T.N. Dermal Patch Study, London Chest Hospital;*
- *Effect of cold in Angina - Dr Bradley Marchant;*
- *Angiopeptin Study at London Chest Hospital (Injection given before having angioplasty);*
- *WISP study at Doctor's surgery for St. Barts. Treatment B. Study Nurse Hazel;*
- *Pain Study at St. Barts. for 10 days;*
- *East London COPD Study at London Chest Hospital, 1st Study with Dr Powrie and Carolyn (studying Tiotropium);*
- *Study with Dr. W Perera;*
- *ELECT Study with Dr Tom Wilkinson;*
- *Study at Royal Free Hospital;*

And finally, *CANTOS study, William Harvey Clinical Research Centre. **The best trial experience ever.***

