**CURING TYPE 1 DIABETES**

**BIT MORE COMPLEX THAN ROCKET SCIENCE !**

I learnt that I had diabetes in **1959** as a somewhat unwelcome 16th birthday present which was only six months after leaving Tyneside for Sheffield. At that time I remember thinking **‘’they’ll soon have this fixed, they’re talking about landing men on the moon!’’**

**Moving on to the 1970’s** after **Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin** had made their ‘giant leap for mankind’ and **landed on the moon,** I remember attending a meeting of the British Diabetic Association at Leeds town hall when **Professor Butterfield**, (one of the leading specialists at that time), stated that **curing diabetes would be like finding a needle hidden somewhere around Leeds!**

So I reluctantly concluded that landing men on the moon was relatively simple mechanical engineering, compared with unravelling the complex science of the human body, which, although it may have been relatively easy for God (having managed to do it in a day along with a few other jobs!) probably took evolution millions maybe billions of years of trial and error development, it was therefore going to be quite a job not only understanding the detailed complex workings but fixing it now it’s gone wrong!

You learn, therefore, to continue making the most of your condition, which was helped considerably by having parents (neither of whom had diabetes) - Mam organising and weighing the meals, dad reading from cover to cover ‘The Diabetic Life’ – the ‘bible’ for diabetics and medical staff written by Dr R D Lawrence, who, as a medical student developed diabetes and (in 1923) was one of the first people in this country to be saved from (what was then a generally long and painful death as the body destroyed itself) by the new miracle wonder drug **insulin**.

My parents also became involved with the Sheffield branch of the **British Diabetic Association** (now **Diabetes UK**) organising and attending meetings, helping and visiting patients and raising funds for **diabetic research**.

It was in recognition of this that, after both my parents had passed over and I came to sell the family home in Sheffield (for nearly a hundred times what had been paid for it in 1959!), I returned to my beloved Tyneside.

I had already heard of the great work on curing diabetes that was being carried out at Newcastle University, so there was no doubt where a substantial amount of that money should go. I approached Professor Shaw (the team leader at Newcastle) as to how the money might best be used to cure type 1 diabetes. After considering all the options the **Islet Isolation and Innovation Unit** was established in memory of my mother and father, **Edith and Arthur Wilson.** I am sure they would both be most satisfied as I have been impressed and delighted with the attitude and results of the research team here.

**54 years of diabetes** hasn’t been bad (with no diabetic physical complications) but it hasn’t been easy - **lack of hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose level) awareness being the major problem** - with one almost fatal consequence for someone I loved dearly – my mother).

When you hear Prof Shaw mentioning the increasing numbers of patients cured of their diabetes after pancreas or islet cell implants – **no longer having to remember 24/7 ‘I am diabetic’**; no longer having to **manage** their **lifestyle to fit in with their condition**; no longer having to take insulin injections with the possibility of being **low (hypoglycaemic)** resulting in **medical** and **mental difficulties – with possible serious legal implications**; no longer having to judge food intake with the possibility of being **high (hyperglycaemic)** with **potential adverse medical complications** it is most encouraging that the gift is bearing fruit. Prof Shaw mentions the real prospect of a future cure without complications being almost within reach so there is no doubt that **the needle that appeared so difficult to find in Leeds in the 70’s has been found. We are definitely getting there and (with little help from our friends) we will.**

**Any assistance that you can give to help make a cure for many more possible will be greatly appreciated, and we thank you in anticipation.**

**Contributions please to** [**https://www.justgiving.com/NUCdiabetes**](https://www.justgiving.com/NUCdiabetes)**fund**

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