

This is a case study recounted by Roger Paterson (Secretary of the Welsh SAS) on his condition before diagnosis and the difference in him since being on CPAP: - It is stressed that this is in his own words and is held in copyright by both himself and by the web designer – It is must be stressed that this may not be how it is for everyone, as everyone is different! (thank you);

" I do not remember when I first started snoring, but I suppose I always have done. Certainly since I have been married I have had several digs in the ribs, been told to turn over or sent downstairs to the sofa. The problem I had was that I did not recognize the side effects of not having proper sleep. It was other people mainly my wife who noticed that I was constantly tired and unable to listen to music, go to the theatre or cinema without being really tired, and on the verge of falling asleep. This was causing problems as I often 'phase out' of conversations and people thought I was just being rude. Matters got so bad that my wife said one day "It's like living with a geriatric patient being here, go to the doctors, I think you have sleep apnoea." Fortunately my GP had heard of Apnoea and of Dr Hack, so I was referred to the sleep centre. Despite being married to a nurse for over thirty years I have a healthy scepticism for all things medical and wasn't for going, however I was 'persuaded' to go.

Some days after the test I received an appointment to visit Dr Hack in clinic. During my life I have attended many clinics and doctors and usually, for anything from a headache to an in growing toe nail the reaction has always been the same, " Well, of course, the problems are caused by your weight", was trolled out like a catachism. I had expected the same reaction from Dr Hack and knew it would mean dieting! Firstly I was very surprised when I was greeted as an intelligent person and not patronised. I was then informed that a diagnosis had been made and that I could be cured in time. I felt wonderful! The information continued to flow, the concept of a machine used to help me breathe introduced and, until near the end of the appointment, my weight was NEVER mentioned. I was told that there were two common reactions to the machine. The first was "It's Awful", the second, "It's awful, but makes me feel better".

Another appointment was made for me to visit Sister Richards and obtain my machine. At first I found it difficult to absorb all of the instructions, machinery parts and data given and felt slightly insecure

about it all. I was informed that there was a National Sleep Apnoea group based in Oxford, but not a local one. I asked Sister Richards if anyone had considered setting up a local group and was informed that several patients had expressed an interest, so I asked if my name could be added to the list.

I worked hard at adapting to my machine, and slowly started to feel better. I was able to stay awake after breakfast, watch the TV, read a paper without going to sleep. I did find that I started dreaming, quite often. The dreams were highly coloured and I sometimes felt that I had been "active" all night! When I mentioned this to Sister Richards, I was told that this was perfectly normal, just my brain "catching up" from the lack of oxygen. After a while these type of dreams started to fade, and presently I can feel as though I dream regularly, but that the dreams are less "active". I started wanting to go out more, despite having chronic arthritis and being in constant pain. With my wife I started taking my own dog, and our daughters dog out most days. We would have to sit down at every bench we came to and the dogs would bring their ball back to the bench - but we were outside.

I received a letter from clinic, soon after, inviting me to a meeting with Frank Govan, the SATA chairmen. It was very nice to meet so many other people with the same problem I had. During the meeting Mr. Govan informed me us of the benefits of having a Welsh Sleep Group to assist patients and three people "volunteered" to start it up. Lyndon Cook, Sandra Newman and myself (Roger Paterson) with Dr Hack and Sister Richards, and others have worked hard to get the group formed. I have been very lucky, I tolerate my mask, my sleep is better and I feel better than I did.

I am able, since January 2003, to take our dogs out everyday, play ball with them and even enjoy sitting on the beach in the rain with two very wet dogs. I have been to the cinema, the theatre and driven to Lancashire without any problems. I hope that together with all the information provided on this website you will feel that if you have any problems with apnoea, that you are not alone. All of us in the group have apnoea and we are all on treatment. We do understand and will help as much as we can.