

# NEWSLETTER

- MelaNoMore - Join the Conversation?
- January - Happier January
- Future Webinars
- AGM 2024
- Melanoma Patient Conference - Final Call for Bookings
- AI detects Skin cancers
- Buddies report
- And more.....



## JANUARY



## Join the Conversation?



As 2023 has drawn to a close, your MelaNo-More Committee has been thinking about the past year's successes and how to push forward to greater success in 2024.



Here, we would like to talk about the Buddies Scheme. Many of our members have taken part, typically at the point of joining our group, where all new members are invited to take part, with the main objective of helping those starting out on their Melanoma journey to navigate all those initial bumps in the road. Where do I park? What does this jargon mean? Who is Dr Ajaz? etc...

As you may know this scheme is very ably administered by our very own Chris Caswell, who puts a herculean effort into ensuring all "friends" (who may be new and starting treatment) are matched with their "buddies" (who are further down the melanoma path), often taking the lead on many conversations himself, and providing that calm assurance that comes with speaking to someone who has been on the journey themselves.

This has been hugely successful, with over **860** contacts made since the Buddy scheme started just over three years ago, and we continue to invite all new members to join the scheme, should they so wish.

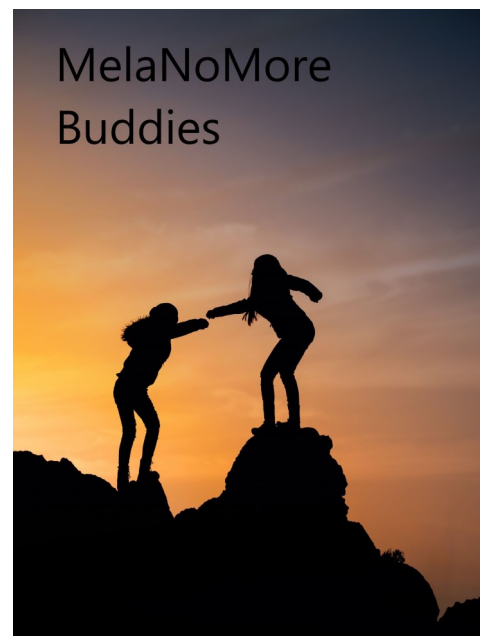
Now, those of us who have been ringing round the membership to invite you all to our very successful events last year very much enjoyed chatting to everyone, and it was clear that making contact in this way was not just about the Events. As we know, it is good to talk.

We have realised that some of you might like to take advantage of the scheme, even though you may have been a member for some time and are at a more advanced stage in the journey. We always intended to be there for our membership on a one-to-one basis to talk things through whenever there is a need.



Chris assures us (he points it out at every Committee meeting) that there is plenty of room for upscaling the scheme – we have the capacity. Not everyone of course will wish to join, so it would not be appropriate for the team to regularly re-invite you to take part. If you would like a regular chat, why not take the initiative and email Chris at [chris@melanomore.net](mailto:chris@melanomore.net) to join/rejoin?

Happy conversations will follow.



# Happier January

Let's start the new year happier.

Happier January 2024

SUNDAY



MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1 Find three things to look forward to this year

2 Make time today to do something kind for yourself

3 Do a kind act for someone else to help brighten their day

4 Write a list of things you feel grateful for and why

5 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths

6 Take five minutes to sit still and just breathe

7 Learn something new and share it with others

8 Say positive things to the people you meet today

9 Get moving. Do something active (ideally outdoors)

10 Thank someone you're grateful to and tell them why

11 Switch off all your tech at least an hour before bedtime

12 Connect with someone near you - share a smile or chat

13 Take a different route today and see what you notice

14 Eat healthy food which really nourishes you today

15 Get outside and notice five things that are beautiful

16 Contribute positively to your local community

17 Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes

18 Get back in contact with an old friend

19 Focus on what's good, even if today feels tough

20 Go to bed in good time and allow yourself to recharge

21 Try out something new to get out of your comfort zone

22 Plan something fun and invite others to join you

23 Put away digital devices and focus on being in the moment

24 Take a small step towards an important goal

25 Decide to lift people up rather than put them down

26 Choose one of your strengths and find a way to use it today

27 Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the upside

28 Ask other people about things they've enjoyed recently

29 Say hello to a neighbour and get to know them better

30 See how many people you can smile at today

31 Write down your hopes or plans for the future



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together



To view copy & paste the link below to your browser

<https://youtu.be/bjLi6pVDosI>



**We have secured commitments to present to the group in the coming year from:**

**Mr Farrokh Pakzad - Consultant Surgeon, Breast & Skin Cancer**

**Ms Liz Clayton - Consultant Oncoplastic Breast & Skin Cancer**

**Joanna Ogrodniczuk - Surgical Skin Cancer CNS**

**Delia Sworm - Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner -Skin cancers (Oncology)**

**We will advise you as soon as we have agreed dates and topics**

**Watch This Space!**

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## ADVANCE WARNING

### St Luke's Cancer Centre Melanoma Support Group

Website: [www.melanomore.net](http://www.melanomore.net) E-mail: [group@melanomore.net](mailto:group@melanomore.net)

## MELANOMORE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

**Tuesday 12th March 2024 starting at 6 pm via Zoom**

We shall be sending out the papers and a zoom invite for the AGM meeting by the 27th February. This will allow you to vote by email if you are unable to attend the meeting.

All applications to join the committee are most welcomed. The positions of Treasurer & Committee Member (Neil), Committee Member (Pam) and Committee Member (Chris) have now completed their three year tenures and all will be applying for reselection. Additionally, three further Committee Members vacancies are required to be filled and this is your chance to be formally voted onto the Committee. For all those who are interested please contact us at the address below by 20th February.

**[group@melanomore.net](mailto:group@melanomore.net)**

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## News From The World of Melanoma



**Thursday 29 February & Friday 1 March**  
**Voco St Johns Hotel, Solihull,**  
**Birmingham, B91 1AT**



After dinner Guest Speaker



Connect and network with other melanoma patients



Providing patients with information on the latest drug treatments, developments and clinical trials that are available to them



Interactive discussions on pressing issues faced by patients & medical professionals



Living life beyond melanoma treatment - non-medical support & psycho-social services

**£30 for 1 delegate place / £50 for delegate & guest**  
**Dinner on Thursday night, B&B and catering throughout**  
**the conference on Friday is included.**

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**MELANOMA**  
**FOCUS**

*'Patients should be visible. We need to be heard & for this to happen we must be seen.'*



**Imogen Cheese**  
founder of the  
Melanoma Patient  
Conference

**REGISTER TODAY!**

To find out more scan the QR code or visit:  
<https://melanomafocus.org/support/meetings-and-events/melanoma-patient-conference/>



**FINAL CALL FOR BOOKINGS**

## *News From The World of Melanoma*

### Nova Scotia

## Artificial intelligence could help people in Nova Scotia detect skin cancers earlier, study says

Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of melanoma in Canada



A new peer-reviewed Dalhousie University study found that artificial intelligence (AI) could help detect skin cancers before they become serious, aiding the fight against the disease in Nova Scotia — which has one of the highest rates of deadly skin cancer in Canada.

Researchers recruited people over the age of 18 who were concerned about lesions, like moles, on their skin. For participants meeting certain criteria, images of the lesions were taken and uploaded to an AI system called FotoFinder, which is made by Germany-based FotoFinder Systems Inc.

The AI algorithm then provided an analysis of whether a lesion was cancerous and required removal. Four dermatologists — physicians who specialize in treating skin, nail and hair diseases — also independently evaluated the images and provided their own analysis without knowing the AI result. Lesions identified as harmful by either the AI or the dermatologists were removed.

The study found "the ability for the FotoFinder [AI] to be able to ... detect skin cancers like melanoma was comparable and adequate to that of experienced dermatologists," said Madeleine Crawford, the paper's lead author and a third-year Dalhousie medical student.

*Cont'd*

## *News From The World of Melanoma*



**An image from FotoFinder's mole analysis system. (Andrew Lam/CBC)**

According to the study, a lack of access to primary health care practitioners and specialists means many Nova Scotians face barriers to detecting melanoma in its early stages. AI could improve that.

"We want to make sure that patients have proper access to this care and that we don't miss melanomas ... because it's very curable if caught early," said Rachel Dorey, also a third-year Dalhousie medical student and co-author of the paper.

The AI system — which uses a specialized camera that can see deeper skin structures not visible to the eye — and dermatologists evaluated nearly 400 lesions from 318 patients who self-referred themselves to be part of the study. In total the study found 17 cancers, 11 of which were melanoma.

Melanoma is considered the deadliest form of skin cancer because it can spread to other parts of the body if left untreated.

While there were some instances of cancer the AI missed, Crawford said this is expected for any screening tool. "Of the six melanomas that the artificial intelligence had missed, all of the dermatologists who were in the study also missed three to five of those," she said.

*Cont'd*



## *News From The World of Melanoma*



**The FotoFinder system uses a specialized camera to take images of skin lesions. (Andrew Lam/CBC)**

There are limitations with the FotoFinder system. For example, Crawford said it currently cannot accurately assess lesions on hairy parts of the body, or for people with darker skin tones. CBC News asked FotoFinder Systems Inc. for comment on why this is, but did not receive a response in time for publication.

"We hope that this technology will continue to improve and be able to scan those darker skin tones as well because we are very diverse here in Nova Scotia," Dorey said.

While the AI system was only used as part of the study, researchers envision that it could be distributed to hospitals or cancer care centres where people could make appointments and have lesions scanned by a health care practitioner trained with the tool.

"The entire appointment would only take a few minutes and you would be able to screen numerous people during the day," Crawford said. The screening could decrease the health care costs that come with diagnosing melanomas too late.

Dorey said the hundreds of people who volunteered for the study show that "people really are concerned about their skin and want access to be able to know ... they don't need to be concerned."



## MelaNoMore's Buddies and Friends



Join the conversation – we are looking for both “friends” and “buddies” to match together

“It is so good just to talk – we discuss all sorts of different subjects and have formed a real friendship”

**MelaNoMore Buddies**  
Let's talk

Whether you have just received your diagnosis, are undertaking treatments, still on the road to recovery, or a family member trying to make sense of it all, you may be feeling anxious, fearful, apprehensive. MelaNoMore is here to help. We cannot give medical advice, but we can give a listening ear and the chance to chat with someone who understands what you're going through.

A 2020 study of 100,000 Brits found that confiding in others appears to reduce the risk of depression by 21%

For further information: visit [www.melanomore.net/buddies/](http://www.melanomore.net/buddies/) or email: [melanomore.buddy@gmail.com](mailto:melanomore.buddy@gmail.com)

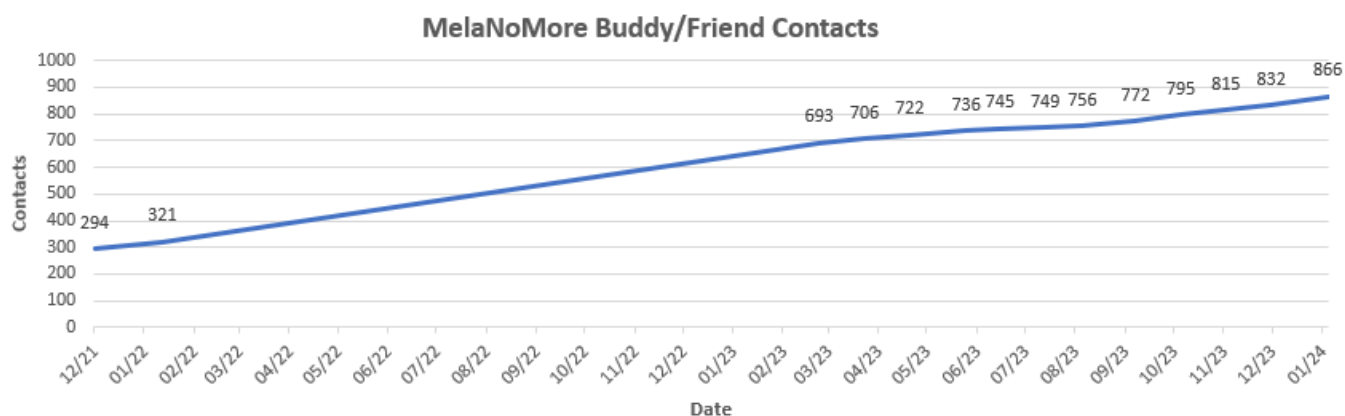
**Chris Caswell, Lead – MelaNoMore Buddies**

The MelaNoMore Buddies system continues to offer support via the Buddy / Friend one to one pairing. A Buddy, who perhaps has had more experience of the melanoma path and process, is paired with a Friend, who is possibly newer and in need of support and a listening ear.

This pairing offers support to share information, to discuss worries and concerns on a one to one basis, without the constraints of appointment time slots. This support pairing is away from the standard clinical appointments, on a more frequent basis, probably weekly or more.

Contacts are mostly by longer phone calls and interspersed with shorter ad hoc text or WhatsApp messages.

In over three years Buddies have been in contact with 29 Friends to give support, shared 834 phone calls, texts, WhatsApps or emails. There have also been a total of 32 face to face meetings, including MelaNoMore group gatherings at the Loseley Park in April '22, the Summer BBQ in August '22, the Christmas celebration at the Hogs Back Hotel in December '22, the Summer BBQ in August '23 and the Christmas gathering in December '23. This gives a total of 866 support contacts since inception in October '20.



If you wish to join this support group, as either a Buddy or a Friend, please send an email to [group@melanomore.net](mailto:group@melanomore.net)

**This page is for your contributions to the Newsletter. There are no limits on content.**

Now that 2023 is officially closed, we thought it would be good to test your knowledge of some 2023 events as below (answers overleaf).

1. Celebrations tubs saw a big change earlier this year with limited batches of the chocolates sold without one flavour - but what was it?
2. Sweden won their sixth Eurovision Song Contest in 2023, but in which year did the country gain its first victory?
3. What month was Twitter rebranded to X?
4. On what date was the Coronation of King Charles?
5. Which British city hosted Eurovision this year?
6. Who is the author of the book "Endgame" that was released this year?
7. Which member of the British Royal Family welcomed a new baby this year?
8. Irish singer Sinead O'Connor died aged 56, but who wrote her massive hit single Nothing Compares 2 U?
9. Who was crowned the Queen or King of the Jungle in I'm A Celebrity this year?
10. Which popular British retailer went into administration this year but has since made a comeback?
11. What was the highest-grossing film of 2023?
12. Which famous pop band announced a return tour for 2024?
13. Which daytime TV programme saw two of its main presenters step down this year?
14. Who was the famous doctor that made a return in 2023?
15. Who won the 2023 Wimbledon Men's Singles title?
16. Can you express the year 2023 in Roman numerals?
17. What was branded Oxford Dictionary's Word of the Year 2023 & where did it come from?
18. Which television presenter made their debut on the British Bake Off this year?
19. What happened this season for the first time in Premier League football history?
20. Name the England cricketer who announced his retirement from the sport this year
21. American pop singer Britney Spears released her memoir this year - what is it called?
22. Which two Premier League football teams scored the same number of goals this season?
23. What became the fastest-growing app in history by gaining over 100 million users in less than one week in 2023?
24. What month did Boris Johnson resign as an MP?
25. Which singer will bring their 'Eras Tour' to the UK in 2024?
26. Who did England play in the FIFA Women's World Cup final?
27. What was the title of Prince Harry's memoir?
28. Who won the Great British Bake Off 2023?
29. Who was the music legend that headlined Glastonbury?
30. Which film won the Best Picture Award at the 2023 Oscars?

We hope you enjoy this Newsletter. Please let us know or if you have, any suggestions for improvement or any articles you wish to publish. You can contact us on:

[group@melanomore.net](mailto:group@melanomore.net)

This page is for your contributions to the Newsletter. There are no limits on content.

## Answers

1. Bounty bars
2. 1974
3. July
4. Saturday, May 6 2023
5. Liverpool
6. Omid Scobie
7. Princess Eugenie
8. Prince
9. Sam Thompson
10. Wilko
11. Barbie
12. Girls Aloud
13. This Morning
14. David Tennant, Doctor Who
15. Carlos Alcaraz
16. MMXIII
17. 'Rizz', a shortened version of the word 'charisma' coined by Gen-Z
18. Alison Hammond
19. The 10 teams in the top half had a positive goal difference and the 10 in the bottom half had a negative goal difference
20. Stuart Broad
21. The Woman in Me
22. Aston Villa and Leicester
23. Threads
24. June
25. Taylor Swift
26. Spain
27. Spare
28. Matty Edgell
29. Elton John
30. Everything Everywhere All at Once

We hope you enjoy this Newsletter. Please let us know or if you have, any suggestions for improvement or any articles you wish to publish. You can contact us on:

[group@melanomore.net](mailto:group@melanomore.net)



## MelaNoMore Vacancies

We continue to have vacancies on the Committee and are also in need of volunteers to assist the Committee with tasks or roles - such as:

- \*Website designer
- \*Deputy Newsletter Editor
- \*Membership Secretary
- \*Linked Site leads
- \*Committee members

If you are interested in helping out with any of these roles or wish to join the Committee, then drop a line to

**[group@melanomore.net](mailto:group@melanomore.net)**

Include your phone number and we will ring you back to discuss with you.

