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‘I’ve got you a doctor’s appointment’, my wife said at length, somewhat exasperated. I’d had a cough for many months now, nothing serious, nothing heavy, just an occasional tickle. But that was how I found myself listening to the doctor some weeks later saying he’d run some tests and the cough was nothing to worry about, though he was deliberating over other test results he’d run at the same time. ‘The PSA is OK,’ he said, ‘but it conflicts slightly with your enlarged prostate’.

‘What’s PSA?’ I thought; while the doctor mused, almost to himself, ‘maybe we should refer you to a specialist, maybe not?’

As a consequence, my next step, with the knowledge that my Prostate Specific Antigen result was slightly raised for my age, was a visit to the urologist. ‘Definitely not right,’ he said as he eased his finger out, ‘I’m sending you for a biopsy where we can check things out and be more certain.’

A couple of months later, with the new knowledge of a Gleason 4/4 score, I was slowly recovering when the surgeon approached me, smiling and with the news that all had gone well: the prostate had been successfully and robotically removed and they had saved some of the nerves and sphincter. Also, the biopsy result re-graded me to a Gleason 9.

I was discharged a few days later, but was back in the same ward a week after while they took a little more time over the drain, which was refusing to stop draining. That delay had a knock on effect on the date the catheter was removed and so it was that I found myself, on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, waiting to be picked up from MK hospital, having demonstrated that the water works were still working (and indeed working overtime, as I waited for that lift home). Happy Christmas everyone!

The next couple of super sensitive PSA tests showed nothing – deep joy!

But then, a couple of months later and a PSA result appeared, almost zero, but not zero.

‘This can happen, let’s check again in three months’, said the oncologist.

Three months later it was there again, but higher.

Three months later it was there again, but higher still.

And so, six months on, I was agreeing with the oncologist that a 35 day treatment of radiotherapy may help. Each day, the same routine: up early, the micro enema (self-administered – didn’t we mention it earlier?) the trip up the M1 to Northampton and back home for coffee before returning to work.

Two years on and earlier this week saw another of the routine oncologist visits. ‘I think’, he said, ‘with the current PSA increase, we’ll be looking to start hormone therapy before too long’. With a slight cough I glanced at my wife. We’d been expecting this for a while.