



# Photographic Exhibitions - St Vincent's Hospital and Botanic Gardens, Sydney

by Gary Steer - award-winning wildlife documentary filmmaker, photographer and currently an out-patient at St Vincent's Hospital Darlinghurst

"My last photographic exhibition was in Oct 2004. The opening night was terrific, but the following day I was diagnosed with myelodysplasia, also called "smouldering leukaemia". In June this year I was given a stem cell transplant. I've been very fortunate that for most of my life I have enjoyed good health. My recent experience has been a revelation to me of what doctors, nurses and other health carers do. The staff caring for me at St Vincent's are truly remarkable. In particular, I recognised the importance of medical research, in my case and for an increasing number of other patients, the importance of stem cell research. I feel a great sense of gratitude to the people at St Vincent's who have helped me. I hope to be able to return something, particularly for stem cell research, by having my work benefit the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation.

Gary Steer is exhibiting his work at St Vincent's Hospital in October-November and in the Sydney Botanic Gardens in November-December this year. Both have as a theme the impressions of light.

The title of his exhibition at St Vincent's is "A Different Light" and is currently being exhibited at the Xavier Building, Level 4 until Thursday 17th November 2005. The theme is "a different way of looking at the natural world". Similar to perceptions that the impressionist painters had of the world, Gary Steer uses his camera like a brush and "paints" a world beyond reality. His subjects from all over Australia vary from landscapes, forest, desert, mountains,

coastal to wildlife and natural objects. Realism becomes less important than simplicity of subject, colour and composition.

Gary will also have an exhibition titled "Summer Light" at the Palm House in the Botanic Gardens. The opening will be held on Friday 25th November from 6-8pm until Sunday 11th December 2005. This will be a portrayal of the unique light of summer on landscapes, natural areas, botanical gardens, plants and wildlife. Subject matter is reality but, with many of the photographs, the rendition is impressionistic. An auction of photographs will be held and proceeds will benefit the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation.

## About the Photographer

Award-winning wildlife documentary filmmaker, Gary Steer, has turned his talents to still photography. However, unlike the reality of documentary films many of his works are impressions of reality.

He blurs the boundaries between painting and photography. He looks at the natural world in a very different light and captures images that are illusions inspired by nature.

Spirit-like trees float in a mist of understorey. A simplified forest of tree trunks looks like organ-pipes in pastels. Foliage appears as brush strokes of oil paints. A landscape after bushfire is a charcoal drawing.

Gary's background is a diverse one of

wildlife and travel-adventure TV documentary filmmaker, photographer and journalist. His film production and photography has taken him all over Australia, and to countries in Africa, North America, Europe and the Middle East.

His eye for a good photo comes from years of filming his own documentaries. Over the last three years he has been doing trips throughout Australia, building up a collection of photographs of landscapes, nature/wildlife.



"Nature is a great work of art. Look at it closely and you can find the most amazing patterns, shapes, colours, moods. My intention in my photography is to portray nature in an unconventional way, searching for the essence of the subject and depicting it in an impressionistic way" - Gary Steer

# The 18th Annual Dave "Coke" Wards Surfing Contest



From left to right - Ian Nivison-Smith, Wayne King and Chris Beeby

Chris Beeby is the principal co-ordinator of the Dave "Coke" Wards Memorial Surfing Contest and can be contacted on 0408 626 259

The Dave "Coke" Wards Memorial Surfboard Riding Competition is in its 16th year with the Paddle Challenge and Open Water Island Swim both held at Forrester's Beach Island on Saturday 22nd October, the Trivia Night was held at Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club that night, and the Memorial Surfing Contest was held at Wamberal Beach on Sunday 30th October 2005.

Since this competition has begun, the "Coke" memorial has raised in excess of \$120,000 all of which has been donated to the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation.

For new readers, Dave Wards was a young man who loved surfboard riding and was involved in competitive surfing from a very early age. He was very supportive of surfers young and old and was a member of a number of board-riding clubs, North Shelly, North Avoca, Avoca, Wamberal and the Christian Surfers. David was diagnosed with Leukaemia and in 1989 he lost his battle with his illness. The surfboard riding competition is held in his memory and the proceeds are given each year to the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation.

# Bone Marrow Transplantation in Australia and New Zealand

by Ian Nivison-Smith, Unit Manager / Statistician, ABMTRR

Bone marrow and peripheral blood stem cell transplants are currently carried out at 44 hospitals in Australia and New Zealand. During 2003, a total of 1,112 transplants were carried out in Australia and 141 in New Zealand.

The Australasian Bone Marrow Transplant Recipient Registry (ABMTRR) collects data on bone marrow and stem cell transplants carried out in Australia and New Zealand. The ABMTRR is one of the most accurate and complete registries of its type in the world. The ABMTRR releases an Annual Data Summary, which informs clinicians and medical management professionals on the latest nationwide trends in transplantation.

The accompanying chart shows numbers of transplants carried out in Australia and New Zealand between 1998 and 2003. During this time there was a steady increase in the number of these procedures

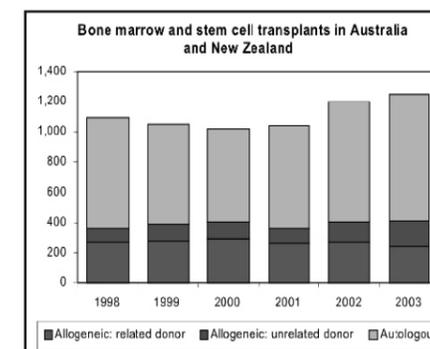
in both countries.

The chart shows transplants grouped into three types:

**Allogeneic transplants with a related donor:** if a patient has a brother or sister (or other relative) who is genetically compatible, this relative can donate their healthy blood stem cells to cure the patient's condition. These transplants are carried out to treat acute and chronic leukaemias, severe aplastic anaemia and other serious blood disorders.

**Allogeneic transplants with an unrelated donor:** if a patient does not have a genetically compatible relative, volunteer registries can be searched to find a matching unrelated donor. There are more than 100 registries worldwide listing millions of potential marrow donors.

**Autologous transplants:** certain diseases can be treated by re-infusing the patient's



own stem cells after high dose chemotherapy. These transplants are carried out to treat lymphoma, myeloma and many types of solid tumours.

The ABMTRR is a valuable international data resource which has been supported in its work by the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation since it commenced collecting data in 1992.

# Medical Feature - Total Body Irradiation (TBI)

by Carol Hargreaves and Annabel Horne

TBI is used as part of the conditioning regimen for some patients undergoing stem cell transplant, it is usually given in conjunction with chemotherapy. TBI causes profound bone marrow suppression. In order for the donated bone marrow to engraft the patient's marrow must be suppressed to make space for the donor cells. The aim of TBI is to eradicate the immune system and also the underlying disease. Also, this type of radiotherapy is able to treat areas where chemotherapy alone would not eradicate disease (e.g. testicles & the fluid around the brain and spinal column).

Following a CT scan to "plan" the radiotherapy the TBI is given twice a day for a total of three days in the Radiotherapy Department. The time spent under the machine is approximately 40 minutes. Cyclophosphamide chemotherapy is also given on the ward for 2 days (either before or after TBI treatment).

In the radiotherapy department the patient will be lying in a Perspex frame, which is on the radiation table and positioned to allow maximum exposure to the radiation. The therapists will place sandbags in specific places on the body to protect these areas from overexposure to the radiation. They will also tape small square measuring devices to the patient which will be taken off after each session. These absorb the radiation and enable the technicians to

ascertain that the patient has received the prescribed treatment dose. Approximately half way through the session the table and the Perspex frame will be rotated so that the other half of the body can receive treatment.

The patient is alone in the room, a family member is welcome to accompany the patient during the set up and wait in a room outside. Some patients find this anxiety provoking, so a sedative tablet is given prior to attending each session to help the patient remain calm and relaxed. During the radiation the patient must keep still, however the therapists and nurse will be in the next room and can see the patient on a TV screen. The patient can talk to them via the intercom system. The patient cannot taste, smell or feel the rays. The patient should wear warm, comfortable clothing (without metal zips) as the room will feel cool. Patients are welcome to take their own music or relaxation tape to listen to.

## Side effects of TBI

### Bone Marrow Suppression

It is anticipated that all blood stem cell transplant patients will develop a high fever during the transplant process and will require at least one course of intravenous antibiotics. Supportive blood product therapy (blood and platelet transfusions) will be needed until the donated cells engraft stage for a period of time after

transplant until the new marrow has matured. Drugs to prevent bacterial, fungal and viral infection are routinely given. The new immune system can take up to a year to regain normal function.

### Nausea /Vomiting

Nausea is a very common side effect of total body irradiation. Patients are given regular anti nausea medication.

### Mouth Ulcers/Dry Mouth

Prior to treatment it is important for patients to have a dental check up and follow up appointments regularly after transplant. Regular mouthwashes will be prescribed, it is very important that patients rinse the mouth 3-4 times daily. Patients should use a baby soft toothbrush, particularly when they have a low platelet count and are at increased risk of bleeding gums. All blood stem cell transplant patients develop a sore mouth during the transplant process. Most patients will require a few days of regular doses of morphine. Teeth are indirectly affected by radiotherapy as the saliva is altered, becoming more acidic, encouraging dental decay. Your saliva will become more viscous and food may have an altered taste, this will return with time. Salivary gland swelling occurs but generally subsides over 2-3 days. Sucking ice cubes or ice lollies may reduce the swelling.