

Between the years 1969 – 1999 over 11,000 Guernsey women volunteered for a research project organised by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (now renamed Cancer Research UK). Samples of blood and urine are still stored in the UK.

Hope for Guernsey is a locally registered charity that raises money for medical research into illness that affects islanders. In 2006 Roger Allsopp, Hope's Honorary Chairman, retired from surgical practice and decided to attempt a solo swim of the English Channel to raise £15,000 for a pilot study to see if the application of a complex, cutting edge technology could unlock more information from the Guernsey samples and specifically to see if it might be possible to develop a blood test which could help to diagnose early breast cancer.

The Pink Ladies gave the first donation of £2,500 but attached the condition that Barney, their much loved and well travelled mascot, be part of the support team for the swim. They knitted him a special pair of bathers. Derek Coates, M.D., of Healthspan, was next with a very generous offer to match donations up to the target amount, he attached no conditions!

The Swim took place on 30th August 2006 and conditions were not ideal. The following night, still excited, Roger and Barney, at 3.00am, unable to sleep sat together on the edge of the bed and each wrote their story. Barney's was the best.

The results from the Pilot Study and results from ongoing research into prostate as well as breast cancer, has encouraged many further donations from islands, The Wessex Cancer Trust and Healthspan.

In September 2009 two local heroes, Paul Mason and Rebecca Simmons, successfully swam The English Channel raising a further £30,000 for this work to continue at the Department of Cancer Sciences in Southampton. Barney didn't go with them as he was busy elsewhere!