In the ‘Forward’ magazine of the Spinal Injury Association, Peter Chilcott, who has a C5/6 spinal injury, raised a very specific question when he asked why he still has to use a urinary catheter designed in a past century. He had endured an episode of catheter blockage that lasted 12 hours and since then there have been many further recurrences at unscheduled times by day or night, each requiring the urgent assistance of community nursing staff.

Medical practice has witnessed so many outstanding advances in recent years, yet the design and performance of the indwelling catheter has not fundamentally changed since it was first introduced over 70 years ago. Roger Feneley, as a urologist and Janet Blannin; as a continence advisor first worked together in this field of healthcare over 30 years ago. Throughout that time they have been made only too well aware of the many troublesome complications which indwelling catheter-users experience. Little progress has been made to resolve these common problems. The conventional indwelling catheter presents an anachronism that appears to damage rather than protect the bladder.

In an ageing population, thousands of older and disabled people seek help from loss of bladder control and would benefit from a 21st Century Catheter system that:

- mimics the normal filling and emptying of the bladder
- protects the bladder’s natural antibacterial defence mechanisms
- can be controlled and maintained by the user
- is neat, user-friendly and provides that essential ‘feel-good’ factor.

Life for those who use a urinary catheter whether intermittently or indwelling, can pose many questions, some urgent for which a rapid response is sought. Catheter management is a specialist field requiring knowledge and skills and such expertise is not always readily available. We hope this website will provide a service that was not previously available.

The 21st Century Catheter Project was established in conjunction with the Bladder and Bowel Foundation not only to highlight the unresolved needs in this field of healthcare but also to provide help and support to those who regularly use urinary catheters. We need to know more about their experiences and every-day problems so that we can offer relevant information and advice. By sharing their experiences we hope that they will provide help and support to other catheter-users. Please respond to our call for action and help us raise the profile of this understated field by registering and contributing towards this ambitious project. The problems are challenging and they demand multi-disciplinary collaboration. Your participation whatever your background and expertise would be most welcome.

The Team

Peter Chilcott, Website Administrator is responsible for the day to day management of the website and production of the Newsletter. If you would like to contribute an article for publication on the site or in the Newsletter or have any comments about the content, please contact Peter at web@21ccp.org.

Janet Blannin is a registered nurse now retired from clinical practice with extensive knowledge and experience of continence and catheter problems. She will be moderating the Forum and answering any questions or concerns users may have in respect of catheter use. If you would like to contribute by sharing your expertise Janet is looking to build a network of practitioners keen to be involved in this project to raise the profile of catheter management. You can contact Janet via Forum@21ccp.org.

Kumyul Albone, Honorary Secretary provides administrative support to the 21CCP team and co-ordinates the activities of the Management Committee.

Gill Turton, Communications Manager of the Bladder and Bowel Foundation maintains the close working relationship between the Bladder & Bowel Foundation and the 21st Century Catheter Project.

Roger Feneley, Chairman and Founder of 21ccp has retired from clinical practice but remains concerned at the lack of progress in long-term catheter management. He cannot accept that catheter-users should be exposed to such a high risk of complications and he feels greater emphasis should be focused on the design specifications of the catheter. Roger secured the funding that has enabled this project to become a reality and will continue to be involved in every aspect of this important work in his role as Chairman.