

It's been quite a couple of months for us recently, but things seem to be coming right a bit now. It all started when I crashed my car; straight into the back of a stationary vehicle. His truck was considerably bigger than mine and he was able to drive off with just a bit of damage to his rear lights and number plate, while my car was write-off. Despite what you might think, I was neither on the phone nor fiddling with the radio. I just wasn't concentrating and didn't realise he had stopped until it was too late. It was first thing in the morning, but that isn't really an excuse is it? Now that it is far enough in the past to get a bit of perspective, I am just grateful that I hit a sturdy pick-up and not a cyclist or a child.

The driver of the other vehicle was very nice; he helped me to get my car out of the way, and offered to stay with me until help arrived. He kindly said it was just one of those things, and never once used any of the adjectives I have thought of since to describe my driving skills on that morning. It went better than the day someone drove into the back of my husband's Landrover at a junction. He climbed out and asked her if she was OK, and she began to tell him it was her wedding day and she and her bridesmaid were heading off to the hairdressers. She started off quite calm, but burst into tears when I joked that this was her one thing that goes wrong on your wedding day and she was lucky to get it over with first thing. I never did hear how her hair or the rest of her day turned out.

The day I wrote our car off, was the same day my dad rang to tell me he had been to see a specialist about prostate cancer. However, when I answered I immediately launched into a tearful episode and he thought better than to add to my worries. But he finally did break the news, and so put the demise of a lump of (admittedly quite expensive) metal firmly into perspective.

I don't know how consistent NHS care is across Scotland, but he certainly got referred very quickly to all the right people, and has had various scans, tests, treatment and most recently an

operation. He is recovering well now and is seeing a specialist in a couple of weeks, to plan what more treatment, if any, he needs.

The big thing I learned about prostate cancer is that, caught early enough, this is one of the cancers that can be cured. Apparently it is so slow to grow that many men have it without even being aware of it and it is only discovered after a patient has died of something else. My dad went to the doctor early enough so that they are able to treat him, and if not reduce the tumour then at least keep an eye on it and contain it. As his GP said ‘Something else will kill you before this does.’

You hear the ‘c’ word, and for most of us it strikes terror into your heart. Men are notorious for not going to their doctor if something is wrong. They struggle on and put up with pain and discomfort. The symptoms of this are easy to spot; a change in peeing habits – you pee more or it hurts or there is a bit of blood. Yes, you can live with going a bit more often, but what is the harm in getting it checked out? It might just save your life.

My dad phoned yesterday with the results of the latest test – it was good news. When he rang we were just leaving to pick up a replacement car and I didn’t want to be late. But this time I stopped and listened to my dad and this time heard the relief in his voice that the news was promising.

We were only a wee bit late. The next bus took us to the garage, and our shiny new(ish) car was polished and waiting. I drove it home very carefully and am delighted with it. You think it’s the little things in life that make a difference but actually they are just the cherry on the cake.