

the Blues"; there could be a few people demanding a council tax rebate for noise pollution!

To further enrich the whole befriending experience, Baz also receives the occasional visit from Yvonne with the help of retired greyhound, Ella. Baz realises that Ella's presence is vital as John has no canine assistant available to lend an ear to John and sing along with him.

John feels that Cherry Lodge gives excellent support to all the befrienders, including him. Baz also feels that Cherry Lodge provides really good help and support to its members. As well as befriending, Baz (like many others) has taken advantage of the therapies available at Cherry Lodge and greatly enjoys the drop-in times when he can meet and socialise with other members.

John also mentioned that the befrienders do meet every few months to share any common concerns and experiences, which is really helpful.

To sum up a truly beneficial experience. 🌟

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A letter to the editor

From FK, Edgware

I, like many others, have been concerned about the large number of community-based services which have been curtailed or even scrapped altogether, meaning that more people with cancer are getting less support than they should with resulting problems and anxieties affecting their well-being. As CL is not made of elastic, it would be interesting to know how the nurses, and indeed, the therapists, cope with the increasing number of people needing its services. Are people referred elsewhere and are long-term members ever barred from receiving advice and services from this splendid charity.

Dear Concerned

Since the inception of Cherry Lodge in the late 1990's we have seen an annual increase in the number of people using our services. With the advancement of treatment options and people living with their cancers longer we have also seen an increase in the complexities of our members' problems.

Cherry lodge has always had a policy that we are here for our members for as long as they feel they need us, we have no time limits on how long someone can utilise our services. For some they may be living with their cancer or they may be dealing with the consequences of having had cancer and some of these side effects may be long term.

There are times when we do feel our resources are fully stretched and so we have started to think more creatively about how we use our resources. This has resulted in renting a hall for some of our group activities and increasing the number of therapists and counsellors available. We are recruiting another cancer information officer to support the two nurses during periods of higher activity and to cover absences. We are introducing mindfulness courses to help empower members and enable them to cope more effectively.

We do actively signpost on to other agencies or services where appropriate, an example would be The Maggie's Centre at the Royal Free Hospital which can offer all we do and more.

As people live longer with their cancers and we have an increasingly ageing population so the demands on charitable organisations like Cherry Lodge will increase. We are a small charity and we can only do what we can do and sadly we need to be mindful that we cannot always make everything right for everyone.

FK Barnet

Our Services & Approach

We believe that cancer support is not just about the time when you are in hospital – it is about your quality of life.

At Cherry Lodge we work in partnership with hospital and community healthcare providers, and offer the additional support that individuals living with cancer so badly need.

Our professional healthcare team works with the support of trained and experienced volunteers to provide a range of services. Services that our members want and need.

Our services include:

- * **Consultations with Cancer Information Nurses and counselling.**
- * **Three site-specific evening groups taking place every six weeks. These are for people with lymphoma, ovarian cancer and one for men's cancers.**
- * **Healthy living advice sessions throughout the region.**
- * **A comprehensive Home Visiting Service (Befriending) – delivered across North London and South Hertfordshire. Contact Yvonne on 020 8441 7000.**

- * **Group Activities – including open discussion and treatment sessions, and tailored exercise classes.**

Tuesday morning weekly 'drop-ins' from 10 – 12.30 pm. Second Tuesday in the month Kathryn's knitting group 1 pm. First and third Thursdays in the month, evening 'drop ins' from 6 – 9 pm. There are two exercise classes, Yoga (Fridays 12.30 – 1.30 pm) and Chi Gung (Mondays 11.00 – 12.30 pm) at St Marks Church Hall, Potters Road, Barnet, EN5 5HY.

Art class now takes place at Howard House, 23 Union Street, Barnet EN5 4HY on the last Friday of the month from 10.30 – 12 noon. For details contact Yvonne on 020 8441 7000. No previous skills needed. Just come along.

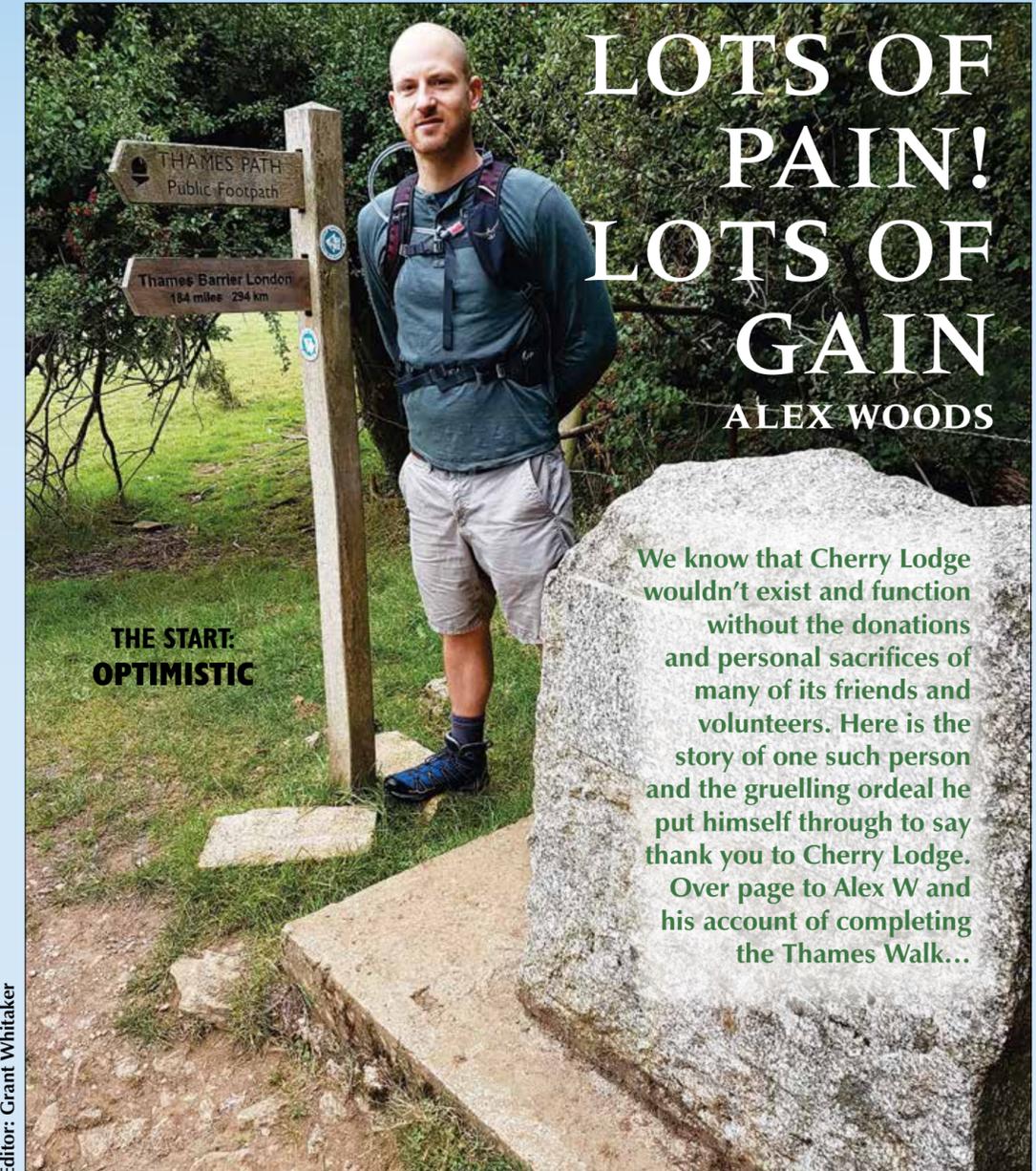
Cherry Lodge Singers, Wednesday 4.15 – 5.15 pm. No audition necessary. Just turn up, join in and have fun.

- * **Relaxation therapies delivered by qualified volunteers – from medical acupuncture to massage.**
- * **Hair Care at Cherry Lodge – Advice on wigs and hair care is available by contacting Fiona. On Monday mornings appointments can be made with Lauren.**
- * **Welfare Benefits – The Barnet Macmillan CAB Benefits Advisor is available to contact by CL members on 020 8440 4227.**

- * **Carers' Support Group – This group, facilitated by Kirsty Mabb, meets on the second Monday of each month, from 1.30 – 3 pm on the third floor Global House, 303 Ballards Lane, North Finchley, N12 8NP. All welcome.**

Cornflower Support group, second Tuesday of every month, 7 – 9 pm. Parish Hall, 4 Thirleby Road, Burnt Oak, HA8 0HQ.

- * **Bowen Technique. Please contact Fiona on 020 8441 7000**
- * **Seated Yoga at Cherry Lodge. First and third Tuesdays of the month at 12.45. No appointment necessary. Just turn up.**
- * **Alexander technique – please contact Lorraine on 020 8441 7000 for details.**
- * **Mindfulness Course – this will start in October and will consist of four 2 hour sessions. Please contact Fiona or Kirsty to book a place.**



THE START:
OPTIMISTIC

We know that Cherry Lodge wouldn't exist and function without the donations and personal sacrifices of many of its friends and volunteers. Here is the story of one such person and the gruelling ordeal he put himself through to say thank you to Cherry Lodge. Over page to Alex W and his account of completing the Thames Walk...

When our family was touched by cancer in August 2015, walking through the doors of Cherry Lodge was one of the defining moments in beginning to get our lives back on track. My lovely wife, Ann-Marie, had been diagnosed with breast cancer a week after we had come back from the holiday of a lifetime in Mexico.

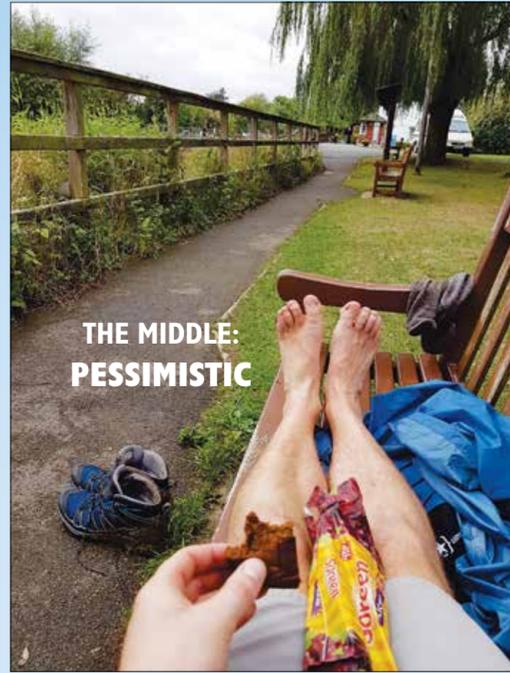
A year on, and we were so proud to see her go back to her job, having endured surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. We both felt an enormous debt to Cherry Lodge, and decided to try and raise some money to help other families like ours get through those dark days.

The challenge needed to be epic, as I'd set myself a target of raising £10,000. So on Saturday 3rd September I set off from the Thames Head Inn outside Cirencester, aiming to walk the 185 miles of Thames Path to the Thames Barrier in eight days – roughly a marathon a day!

I set off on the walk full of determination but predictably short on conditioning – I hadn't even had time to break in the boots I was wearing! Buoyed by the company of friends and family however, we made short work of the first half day and were soon eating the first of many pub

lunches in Cricklade. The strange thing was that we hadn't yet seen any real water! The Thames is more a series of muddy puddles at this stage – very understated and hard to follow.

It wasn't until we arrived at Lechlade – where I



THE MIDDLE:
PESSIMISTIC

overnighted – that the Thames actually began to look like a river. It made me happy to see a hot bath, and a kettle, after that first cold, wet 23-mile stretch, and I have to admit that as I waved goodbye to my friends to go it alone, I was wondering what I'd let myself in for!

After a good night's sleep, I set out for Swinford. It was a beautiful day, and a gorgeous stretch of the river – I hardly saw another soul all day as I walked through luscious green meadows full of butterflies and livestock. Plenty of messages of

support and seeing the donations ticking over kept me going!

By the time I got to Dorchester, at the end of day three, my feet (the dreaded blisters!) and legs were in a terrible state – The last five miles were agony, and that evening I genuinely considered whether I was up to the challenge.

As luck would have it, my walking companion for day four – Dorchester to Reading – was our friend Nat, a no-nonsense army doctor with an encyclopaedic knowledge of field blisters! She had me back in my stride as we took in the towns along the way – Wallingford; Goring; Pangbourne – before overnighting in Reading.

Over the next days I walked from Reading to Cookham and then to Chertsey (where I had an amazing home-cooked Sri Lankan dinner in my B&B!). It felt momentous to cross back inside the M25 on day 6! I was nearly home...

On day 7 my dad and brother (all the way from Madrid!) joined me for the penultimate leg from Chertsey to Putney. The going was hard now but the company, sun, the stunning approach to London taking in Hampton Court and Richmond, and the sense of being within touching distance of the prize kept me going! As we passed

the final lock and walked alongside the much wider tidal Thames, everything was building to a crescendo...

The next day tried its best to be a damp squib! It lashed down with rain all day, and my body felt like it was giving up. I will be forever grateful to the dozen-odd friends and family who braved the elements to join me on that last leg; they pulled me across the line. The hardest part of the walk was the final section, East of Greenwich, through industrial wastelands hugging major roads in teeming rain. Bend after bend, thinking that the Thames Barrier would be just around the corner... until finally – there it was! Waiting there for me

was a welcoming party led by Ann-Marie and our two boys. It was a wonderful



THE FINISH:
EXHILARATED

moment to be reunited. Photo op' duly seized, we quickly retired to the Anchor & Hope for well-deserved pints and a toast to my new best friend Old Father Thames, before begging the lady in her cockles van to do us two dozen rounds of scampi and chips! Saturated fats have never tasted so

good...

A few weeks later and missing a few toenails, we crept past the £10k fundraising target. I was truly humbled by the response, not just from friends and family, but people I'd never met, many of whom had been touched by cancer. Of the eight nights I was away, I was put up (and even fed) for free over half of the time by

complete strangers. It was a life-affirming experience, and after some dark days was the perfect antidote. I am immensely proud to have done something for Cherry Lodge, and I hope the money helps to continue the amazing work that everyone there does. 🌟

BEFRIENDING from the Front Line

In the winter edition I ran an in depth article on the befriending service, how it works and what it aims to achieve. Now we have a real life account of the service in action: Here are the thoughts of Barry D (Baz), a Cherry Lodge Befriender since the beginning of 2017 and his Befriender, John K.

Baz had been first diagnosed with cancer, in December 2016 and he found the

Cherry Lodge site one day while surfing the Internet. Being quite close by in Barnet he visited Union Street and met with Fiona.

Fiona introduced Baz to Yvonne and following a home visit it was agreed that it would be a good idea for Baz to have a befriender and so he was matched up with John.

John had heard of Cherry Lodge following a friend's funeral, when donations

were requested for Cherry Lodge and also because he had visited the charity shop in Borehamwood on several occasions. He recognised the name but didn't have a very good idea of what services Cherry Lodge actually provided.

He became keen to learn more and visited Union Street three years ago, where Yvonne met and interviewed him. Befriending seemed to be, perhaps, an area where



Baz & John enjoy a cuppa and a chat

John might be able to help? Baz does have a few words to sum up his life over the last few months: trepidation, medication and meditation

As mentioned in the article in the last winter edition, "... a befriender must above all have the ability to listen carefully." John does confess that he does try to listen carefully to Baz but if Baz tells a particularly bad joke, which happens

quite frequently, John does have to interrupt and give him some feedback; John is quite sure that it is for his own good (that is Baz's own good)!!

John and Baz have a similar sense of humour, which certainly helps the befriending process, for example, when asked how Cherry Lodge might be able to improve its service and give greater member satisfaction Baz suggested a member's loyalty card but with cherry pips given away instead of reward points! Readers might be relieved to hear that the idea is unlikely to be taken up anytime soon.

The befriending experience often involves John and Baz sitting down chatting

to each other and listening. But sometimes there is the added excitement of visiting an out of town super-store where Baz's microwave (which has not always behaved itself) is taken back and given a stern talking-to! As we all know not having a working microwave can make mealtimes that little bit more challenging.

John and Baz also have a rather strange routine of singing duets of some of the pop music of yesteryear, Buddy Holly songs being the favourite. So far there haven't been any complaints from Baz's Barnet neighbours but if they ever attempt a rendition of Tommy Steele's "Singing

continued overleaf

BITS 'N' PIECES

WANTED
Good Quality Gifts etc. we can use for prizes in raffles
Gold, Diamonds and World cruises accepted, we're not proud!

MATCHED FUNDING
Do you / Did you work in a Bank or an organisation that offers Matched Fund Raising for Charities? Know someone else who does? A great way to raise money for CL
Please contact Tina for details 020 8441 7000

Summer Solstice 2017
An evening of study, drinks and...
RAISED A WHOPPING £47,200 THIS YEAR
INCLUDING LONDON MARATHON SPONSORSHIP CONTRIBUTION
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL

XMAS CARDS
NOW AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE FROM SHOPS & THE CENTRE

TOP SHOPS
Cherry Lodge has two shops which urgently need donations and volunteers.

1A, Church Passage, Barnet, EN5 4QS
Tel: 020 8440 6287
111, Shenley Road Borehamwood, WD6 1AG
Tel: 020 8953 1094

Assistance, collection and delivery of items, including furniture, can be arranged.

Please call the Borehamwood shop. Remember Gift Aided donations and items enable us to claim an extra 25% on the sale price.

DON'T FORGET!
The latest information and news are available on the CL website. It is regularly updated!
Please make sure it is one of your Favourites and visit often. Web address: cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk