

# The UK 3 Peak Challenge, or Snow in July

*Daniel Coyle*

My mum always had a lot of great things to say about Cherry Lodge (CL) during her struggle after she was diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2014. She always looked forward to the treatments because the therapists were so professional and exceptional at what they did. When my friends in Scotland suggested the "UK 3 peaks challenge" my first thought was to use it as a way of giving something back to Cherry Lodge.

My mum and I were overwhelmed by the amount of support we got on our Just-giving page not only from friends and family but also people affiliated with the charity who had heard of the event. It made me realise that CL is a special charity with a real togetherness and family feel. I have raised money for other charities in the past when doing things like the London marathon but never had that kind of response in terms of fundraising, from people I hadn't even met.

The event itself was the hardest thing I'd ever done, even more difficult than when I climbed to the top of Kilimanjaro when I was 16! The physical endurance was tough but the real challenge

was the mental side of it. I'd run London marathons before but the difference is that you know it will be all over in a few hours and is fairly straight forward – run from A to B along a flat road. Once you've slogged through the snow (in July!) to reach the top of Ben Nevis (highest peak in UK) and made it down in five hours, the realisation that you have another two equally formidable mountains ahead is a tough pill to swallow! With the three peaks challenge there is a huge time pressure on top of the physical exertion, sleep deprivation and dealing with the changing elements at altitude. You feel very much alone and at the mercy of the mountains and the changeable weather. I know for certain that I wouldn't have been able to complete it without the moral (and sometimes physical) support – literally – Jonny half pulling me up near the summit of Nevis after I'd pulled my hamstring).

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What kept me going, above all, was knowing what my mum, and others with cancer, go through, is nothing in comparison. In the weeks leading up to the challenge I doubted whether I'd be physically and mentally capable of completing it. Indeed there were several points during the challenge in all three of the hills when I didn't know if I'd get through another one, let alone finish within the time limit! The others were in better shape and always ahead. I ran down the last part of the Snowdon Pen-y-Pass to a great cheer from our waiting driver Neil and my fellow challengers Jonny, Mike and F – 2 minutes to spare! Then straight to the nearest pub to be surprised by my mum! Typical mum, she's always full of surprises. ❁

Dan (r) and his fellow challengers!



## 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.
- \* 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 Mondays 10.30 – 12 noon, Anand Centre, Manor Drive Methodist Church, junction of Manor Drive and York Way, London N20 0DZ. No previous skills needed. Just come along.**

**Cherry Lodge Singers, Wednesday 4.30 – 5.30 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 – This service continues to be available, mainly for members having chemotherapy, which of course means rather more privacy and understanding than can be made available in the average salon.

\* Welfare Benefits – The Barnet Macmillan CAB Benefits Advisor is available at Cherry Lodge on Monday mornings by appointment.

\* 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.

**Sunflower Support group, second Tuesday of every month, 7-9 pm. Parish Hall, 4 Thirlby Road, Burnt Oak, HA8 0HQ.**

### FACING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE...

These courses are very popular so make sure to contact Fiona for more information and to book a place on the next, or subsequent, courses.

Huge thanks to the Summer Soultice crew who raised over £40,000 for us this year and are now supporting our Outreach Nurse, Kirsty.

Editor: Freddy Kater

# Cherry Lodge News

AUTUMN 2015

## FROM HAY FEVER TO LYMPHOMA

*Brian Townsend*

In February 2014 I began to feel tired and put this down to working shifts and doing lots of overtime, as well as having a very lively young daughter. I also developed a persistent cough, so went to my GP who ordered blood tests which came back normal. He put my problems down to acid reflux and prescribed medication. After some months I asked the GP whether this could possibly be something serious, so got a referral to the ENT department at UCH, where a rather rude doctor told me I was suffering from hay fever and advised me to exclude certain foods and take hay fever tablets. I carried on working despite increasing tiredness and difficulty in sleeping due to the worsening cough.

In August, whilst in the shower I discovered a very large lump under my arm which seemed to have come up overnight. By this stage



Brian and Theo Walcott (verified!)

I had begun to feel ill but was still at work. I am a firearms police officer and that night my supervisor let me have a restful time as I felt unfit to work properly. Next morning I saw my GP who ordered more blood tests, which again came back normal. The GP did not know what the matter was and it then took a week to get an emergency appointment at Chase Farm. They did a CT scan and bi-

opsy that week and told me it was Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and I would need chemotherapy over four months as an outpatient. A PET scan at the Royal Free (RFH) was done the following week. On the day of the scan I stayed at my mum's as I was advised not to be around my daughter because of the radioactive injections. The scan was at 12 noon and at 1 pm I saw the consultant haematologist. The biopsy had been re-examined and my diagnosis was an aggressive Burkitt's Lymphoma, which had spread to my lungs, stomach and bowel and needed intensive treatment.

My world came crashing down, all I could think of was not seeing my daughter Millie grow up. The other bombshell was that I would be in hospital for four months. By September chemotherapy was under way at RFH. The first two sessions were incredibly

long but subsequently smaller doses were administered once or twice every day. I also had a series of lumbar punctures to inject chemotherapy drugs to protect my brain. After the fourth one I developed very severe headaches on standing up, sneezing or coughing. This was due to a leak of spinal fluid from the lumbar puncture site. An MRI scan confirmed this and revealed some small areas of bruising between brain and skull, which, together with loss of spinal fluid, caused double vision (my eyesight is now back to normal). A transfer to the Queen Square Hospital was arranged where a "blood patch" was performed. Blood was taken from an arm and injected into a space in the spine to "plug" the leak and to treat the headaches. By now my immune system was barely functioning and this led to severe sepsis, causing me to drift in and out of consciousness over four days. Doctors fought very hard and eventually I was returned to RFH.

Large doses of antibiotics were given over the next month, but no further chemotherapy. During this period I missed my daughter's second birthday and spent Christmas in hospital. On December 30th the consultant said the treatment was creating too many complications, so it was discontinued and I went home on New Year's Eve. Those four months were only made bearable,

**“Who among us hasn't envied a cat's ability to ignore the chores of life and to relax completely?  
Karen Brademeyer**

thanks to visits from family and friends.

My weight had dropped from 15 to eight stone and I was weak, frail and without hair but happy to be home with my beautiful wife and daughter. Then the hard work started – after six weeks an examination revealed a couple of spots on my spleen, probably a result of the infection, but six weeks later I was informed I was in clinical remission which was a huge relief. By now my appetite had returned and I was gaining weight. I returned to work in April 2015 and started a rehabilitation programme at the Marie Curie Hospice, which helped me gain strength. I have since joined a gym and my fitness has improved but I won't be back to full police duties until next year but I WILL get there.

My wife Laura had found a Lymphoma website advertising a meeting at Cherry Lodge. I attended this and, after speaking to people who had been through lymphoma, I felt 100% better as, after leaving

hospital, my emotions were all over the place. I have been to a number of the Lymphoma Group meetings and thank all its friendly, positive members, who have helped me so much. In the summer I went with other Cherry Lodge members for a very relaxing day out in Marlow. There were lovely gardens, delicious food and an exciting boat ride and I met more people with different types of cancer. It lifted me further to see them all bubbly and happy with life. I have made full use of the Thursday night drop-in facilities, having reflexology, Indian head massage and healing which help me relax which I do find difficult at times. I have been lucky in my career as a police officer for 18 years. During the last eight years I have been privileged to meet many famous people, including politicians, members of the Royal family, film, TV and sports stars. That is how I met Theo Walcott who kindly provided his autograph for my 14-year old nephew and was happy to pose with me so my nephew would believe the photograph was real! I am now proud to be a volunteer driver for Cherry Lodge Cancer Care! 🌟

**If you have enjoyed reading this newsletter you can find out more about the progress of Cherry Lodge by visiting our website:**

[www.cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk](http://www.cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk)

or checking us out on:

**facebook**

# I WOULD NOW LIKE YOU TO RELAX.....

**Gina Corbett, Hypnotherapist**



The question I am most frequently asked is "What can you use hypnosis for?" The answer: is almost anything. Hypnosis can be used in so many ways to help you make the positive changes you desire. There is so much misunderstanding about Hypnotherapy. Many people still think that hypnosis is about putting someone into a weird state, and telling them to do something (as in stage and TV shows) and then that thing will happen, but hypnosis does not work like that.

The word hypnosis is derived from the Greek word Hypnos meaning sleep, but in therapy it is essentially a natural state of deep relaxation. Every day we all go into a similar type of changed awareness when watching TV, absorbed in a book, driving on a familiar route, or travelling on the bus, when the mind drifts to other thoughts.

In the therapy room, a relaxed, altered state of consciousness is usually achieved whilst there is still an awareness of your

surroundings, such as sounds around you. It is during this deep relaxation that the unconscious mind becomes open to the positive behaviour-changing suggestions made by the hypnotherapist.

For instance, one member at Cherry Lodge while receiving her hospital treatment was in a great deal of pain, then remembered a technique that had been learned during our previous session and found it extremely helpful in making the treatment altogether more comfortable.

Being in remission is always good news, but understandably for some members the 'What if it comes back' question isn't far away from their minds. This is where hypnotherapy has been valuable in

changing the focus to a more positive state and reducing the negative thinking.

The impact of having cancer often prompts people to re-evaluate their life and want to make changes to enhance physical and mental health.

Contrary to what most people believe, you are in control, not asleep and fully able to recall what was said during the session. Before the hypnosis takes place though, there is a detailed discussion to prioritise the main goal for therapy.

During the therapy session Self-Hypnosis and Mindfulness techniques are taught which reinforce the benefits both during and after the treatments.

Self hypnosis is a form of focused concentration. With it you can change your thinking to help manage everyday situations and move towards your new goals.

Our minds are easily distracted, habitually examining past events and trying to anticipate the future. Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to

your self-awareness in the now, becoming more aware of your thoughts, feelings and sensations and though this may not sound like an obviously helpful thing to do, but learning to do this in a non-judgemental way can have an incredibly positive impact on your life. It will not eliminate life's pressures, but it can help us respond to them in a calmer manner that benefits our heart, head, and body.

The challenges that are faced when diagnosed with cancer can be overwhelming, with high levels of anxiety and worry and a sense of helplessness. Hypnosis is an effective tool in helping take control and develop appropriate coping mechanisms, which can help in remaining proactive during treatment and recovery.

Hypnosis can be used to deal with anxiety before surgery and pain afterwards. Apart from its proven efficacy in actual symptom management hypnosis has several other benefits:

- \* It is safe and does not produce adverse effects
- \* People enjoy the hypnotic experience
- \* Experiencing relief from symptoms without any unpleasant side-effects.
- \* It is a technique that most people can easily learn
- \* Empowers the person to remain in control rather than feel helpless

\* Self-hypnosis can be used to deal with secondary symptoms

Some of the conditions that can be helped:

- \* Anxiety
- \* Anger
- \* Anticipatory nausea
- \* Assertiveness training
- \* Body image
- \* Confidence
- \* Dental phobia
- \* Gagging
- \* Hot flushes
- \* Impotence
- \* Insomnia
- \* Loss of appetite
- \* Nail biting
- \* Needle phobia
- \* Pain management
- \* Phobias
- \* Smoking cessation

Some phobias can be treated relatively quickly

in one or two sessions but other conditions might need more time.

People are often surprised to find, even though never having experienced hypnosis in a therapy setting before, that they can achieve a deep relaxation even in the first session and can feel calmer, in a more positive mood and re energised.

Hypnosis has begun to find a favourable place as a therapy, in hospitals, dental practices, and in the sports arena, as a reliable and safe form of therapy.

When I began my training in Clinical Hypnotherapy 10 years ago, it was with a wonderful sense of excitement embarking on the course and that feeling is still with me today, together with compassion, in being able to work with so many people and help them make positive changes in their lives. The benefits from Hypnosis can be long lasting, with permanent changes that can empower people. 🌟

**Cherry Lodge has two shops and welcomes donations and volunteers. If you can gift-aid donated items the charity can claim an extra 25% on the sale price. For information the Barnet shop address is:**

**1A, Church Passage, Barnet, EN5 4QS**

**If you require assistance, please ring the shop on 020 8440 6287 and someone will come out to help you. Shop manager Patricia or assistant managers Anny and Maria.**

**The Borehamwood shop sells furniture and collection and delivery can be arranged. It is possible to drive up the rear entrance of the shop with donations.**

**111 Shenley Road, Borehamwood, WD6 1AG.**

**For enquiries contact shop manager Daryl or assistant manager Terri on 020 8953 1094.**

**Cherry Lodge is grateful to all those who volunteer for essential jobs around the charity, such as shop volunteers, drivers and assistants, home visitors, receptionists, therapists and fundraising helpers. If you are interested, and for more information, please contact Yvonne on 020 8441 7000 or email her at [Yvonne@cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk](mailto:Yvonne@cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk)**