

# News

Winter 2020



## My Story...So Far

by Ann-Marie W

*You never expect cancer to happen to you. I want to carry on working so it's a matter of asking what can I do and what can only I do?*

It is estimated that more than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone the ritual of female genital mutilation (FGM), and current trends indicate that each year, approximately three million girls under the age of 15 are added to these statistics.



Ann-Marie on a research visit to Kenya where FGM could soon be history.

Eleven years ago, a 10-year-old girl walked into my life while I was volunteering at a refugee camp in West Darfur; she'd had FGM and then been raped and become pregnant and even though we couldn't do much for her (apart from giving her and her baby a safe delivery) I began to worry about other girls. I'm proud that instead of just being worried or traumatised or tearful, I

was moved to action. I gave up my job as an HR consultant, my regular income and comfortable life in the West to do something.

"28 Too Many" (the charity I founded and lead) certainly aren't the only ones working to raise the issue, but we have been on the case. In the last 11 years I've probably spoken to over half a million people in different contexts about FGM.

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## "I had to rethink my options, and evaluate what 'dreams' were still possible..."

various symptoms, but it wasn't until much later, whilst researching information for a friend's cancer diagnosis that I inadvertently saw my own prognosis - not as long as I had hoped.

I talked to a couple of friends, for support, and had a coffee with the CNS at Cherry Lodge where I had acupuncture and attended a lymphoma support group every six weeks. Her advice was that prognosis is never very accurate and should not be sought or given. Yet my challenge was how to unknow what I now knew.

One of the challenges was that I could not see myself living past the immediate 'work' years to 2022 or even sometimes past the 32 months of active chemo. Both my parents died of terminal cancer in their early 60s without enjoying any retirement, and I had hoped to do various social projects in retirement - including the options of training to be a magistrate; prison visiting; a volunteer Museum tour guide at the Victoria and Albert Museum and for pleasure, travelling to the other half of the world I had not yet visited, and taking an art history college or art therapy degree.

I had to rethink my options, and evaluate what 'dreams' were still possible to be factored into my 7 years of working life. The silver lining of a cancer diagnosis for all the doors that closed, others opened. I have been grateful that my cancer journey and resultant disability issues, particularly mobility and chronic fatigue, have enabled me to become an advocate in new fields and I seek out opportunities to support cancer research and awareness including events at Cherry Lodge such as fun days out swimming and boating at Millies in Maidenhead or walking with llamas, dinners at North London Hospice, choir and Lights to Remember memorial events at Marie Curie Hospice and creating the "Please Offer Me a Seat" badge for using the tube. I still go to Cherry Lodge every couple of weeks for acupuncture and have had an amazing massage course too!

I chose to keep working through my chemo, to ensure the charity kept going; to give me something worthwhile that was 'bigger than me' to keep doing, and to 'save' my sick leave for when I might really need it(!) further down the line. I also used my 'downtime' from work during chemotherapy to train and qualify as a lay minister, and now serve as chaplain at Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead. This work has become some of the most enjoyable work that I do, and could not probably have been undertaken unless I had experienced caring for both my parents through cancer in my 20s, and facing my own mortality.

One of my highlights was visiting West Africa in 2015. Shortly before my 3-week trip I discovered a lump in my groin the size of a pea, and within a week it was the size of a lozenge. I had found another cluster of lumps a few days after the first, and went back to the doctor 3 days later. After various tests I decided to go ahead with the trip, and somewhere deep inside me, I was concerned if I did not go to Africa now, I would never get there again. In hindsight it was probably a bit crazy to travel when I was possibly quite ill. The 'old' me was still running the show and thought it was a huge waste of the airfares, all the arrangements, accommodation and plans. I was taking a companion, and we made plans for her to receive any 'bad news' that required me to come home immediately. I reckoned, if I was that ill, 3 weeks would make little difference. And if I wasn't, 3 weeks would be fine!

I thought a lot about my health, but there was no point worrying until I knew. We heard nothing from the UK about my test results - no one calling me urgently home - it was good to be away, have something to do, a distraction, company, and feel useful. On the way out on the plane I started a bucket list putting down 29 items.

I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins lymphoma - something I had never heard of - and 'Googled'





One of my most important bucket wish list items was a 28 mile marathon - covering a route in the shape of Africa, departing my home at 9 a.m. and taking 12 hours! We had a stunning day in June 2018, and 20 teams, walked or ran a mile with me in a wheelchair. The target was to raise £14,000; £500 for completing and launching each of the 28 country reports where FGM is still prevalent in Africa.

The teams were amazing - a car of goodies, acting as a support vehicle by a friend and my PA; packs and a T-shirt for each team; photos and a medal ceremony for each entrant; and I managed only one 5 minute loo break in 12 hours! Our target of £14,000 was smashed as we raised nearly £20,000 due to amazing generosity of over 100 friends, supporters and kind families.

Each year our small team delivers original research, campaigns for change on a National and International level, and contributes to the changing of policy and law to protect current and future generations of women and girls all over the world. We have campaigned for change at the UN in 2012, 2019 and will go to New York in 2020; we've helped put codes of practice in the NHS for FGM; we've helped advocate for mandatory reporting of FGM; we've done prevention work in schools and have won multiple awards for our work, but there is still much to do to end FGM.

All of this reminds me time is short and this is not yet the season for rest. But I wouldn't be able to do it without the ongoing support of friends, amazing medical professionals and of course, Cherry Lodge.

**Find out more and support: 28 Too Many at [www.28toomany.org](http://www.28toomany.org) and [www.nofgmribbon.info](http://www.nofgmribbon.info)**

## New Gardening project for Cherry Lodge members and volunteers

Cherry Lodge has been offered the opportunity of a garden plot and to work on it with an expert within Shenley Park

You can do as much or as little as you want - no previous experience needed just a little enthusiasm

Shenley Park had previously been known as Porters Park, then a site of a Mental Hospital, Shenley Park is now a unique self-funded Park for all. The Park is steeped in history and hosts an Orchard, Meadow, Woodland walks, Historic buildings and an amazing 2 acre landscaped Walled Garden with an Amphitheatre. The Park is open all year round and is free to use as are the car parks. Events are held throughout the year it is a perfect base for walks and has a Tea Room.



## The Carolynne Cooper Therapy Room

**Fiona K**

**Carolynne became a member of Cherry Lodge Cancer Care in 2017 and was an active user of the services here. She was a regular attendee at our Tuesday morning drop in and became well loved and respected by many of our other members and therapists.**

In her memory, and at her request, the family beautifully renovated and refurbished one of our rooms. This is now known as the Carolynne Cooper therapy room.

**We are very grateful to the Cooper family for their generosity and continued support to us.**



**The Walled Garden is open 10-4pm weekdays only (weather permitting) until Easter 2020. The rest of the Park is open all year round the tearoom is open from 8am daily.**

**If you are interested, please speak to Yvonne on 0208 441 7000**



# Walking with Alpacas in Elstree

A CL Regular

Despite threatening clouds, the weather stayed fine on Sunday 20th October 2019, when a small party from Cherry Lodge Cancer Care enjoyed the novel experience of walking with alpacas. We were the guests of Barry and Nathalie, of Pages Stud Farm and Cattery in Elstree, who invited our group to meet and walk with their alpaca herd.

Alpacas are usually kept in herds that graze in the Andes at 3,500m above sea level. By contrast, the Elstree herd is very happy in Hertfordshire at a mere 77m above sea level!



Walking with Alpacas

People often confuse alpacas with llamas but they are smaller and more cuddly looking. They do, though, have a reputation for snorting, grumbling and screaming, etc – so we went well prepared for their vocalisation.

Led by alpaca handlers Sarah and Barbara, we took the herd through a field (to let them get accustomed to us) and then along the road to a bridle path by the side of Elstree airport (which sounded only fractionally less busy than Heathrow). Some of the alpacas were definitely less boisterous than others; Jean described hers (Hugo) as very handsome but somewhat unpredictable, which was probably an understatement!

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“People often confuse alpacas with llamas but they are smaller and more cuddly looking

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There is no doubt that everyone had great fun and all were thrilled to be given the opportunity to go on this outing, even though it made them use muscles they didn't know they had. As well as alpacas, the farm has an assortment of other livestock (mostly rescue animals) and there was an opportunity for us to sit among the pigs, the chickens, and the goats. Rosie very much enjoyed her time with the young kids. There are also miniature horses and mammoth rhea birds (which do not encourage being touched), tiny quails and guinea pigs. It was, though, the walking with alpacas that this outing was really all about.

Many thanks to Barry, Nathalie, Barbara and Sarah for making us all feel so very welcome, spoiling us and putting on a very lively afternoon tea.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Irena

Thank you for your enquiry, yes we do accept male (and female!) volunteers for both our shop and the Centre. In fact everyone over the age of 16 for the shop or 18 for the main building is welcome.

Depending on the role that people are undertaking, most roles do not need particular skills other than a willingness to give their time, be reliable, flexible and have a good sense of humour.

There are a few roles that would need qualifications, such as volunteering as a complementary therapist or counsellor. However, for most roles, such as shop and reception work we offer training along with a DBS check. Cherry Lodge also reimburse all travel expenses.

You have not told me how old your grandson is but we are currently looking for volunteers for our Barnet charity shop to help with the till and putting out stock and we are also looking to recruit new people for the fund raising planning committee and the subsequent events put on by us. We also need receptionists that can work on a relief basis (for example fill in when someone is sick)

Should your grandson wish to speak to me about possibly volunteering at Cherry Lodge please ask him to ring me for an informal chat on 020 8441 7000

Yvonne S

The Editor  
Cherry Lodge Newsletter  
Howard House  
Barnet  
Hertfordshire

From Irena J (Colindale)

I wonder if you could give me some information about becoming a volunteer with Cherry Lodge. Do you accept male volunteers both in your shop and within the organisation? What particular skills are you looking for in volunteers, do they go through a training stage and are they supervised? Do you pay expenses? Thank you for answering my questions. I am trying to encourage my grandsons to think about volunteering!

Thank you!

Irena



# Bits & Pieces

**Save the date!**  
**Soulstice Fall Ball**  
**24th October 2020**  
Holiday Inn Elstree  
For tickets contact Tina  
at Howard House

## Don't Forget!

The latest information and news are available on the **CL website**. It is regularly updated, please make it one of your favourites and visit often.

**Web address:**  
[cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk](http://cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk)

## Marathon Runners 2020

- Andy Georgiou
- Ismail Mehmet
- Kyri Papasavva
- Giles Pratt
- Gary Withers

Please give them your support if you can - see the **Cherry Lodge website** for details on how to donate.

## 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**

## 2019 Grand Raffle Prize Winners

### First prize:

3 nights in Amsterdam with B & B for two. Travel by Eurostar Premier Class. (trip organised by Allison Bros Ltd. World Travel Services):-

**Richard Mabb**

### Second prize:

Dinner for two at Carluccios restaurant.

**The Boggit family**

### Third prize:

£100 John Lewis voucher.

**Steve Gray**

### Fourth prize:

Luxury Christmas hamper.

**Rose Whitaker**

**Congratulations and thanks to everyone who took part.**

## Newsletter

If you are receiving this newsletter directly and no longer wish to, please email Tina:

**[tina@cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk](mailto:tina@cherrylodgecancercare.org.uk)**

and we will remove you from our mailing list.



**Like us on Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/CherryLodgeCancerCare/](http://www.facebook.com/CherryLodgeCancerCare/)

# 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. Contact Fiona for more info.
- ✿ 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 – 12.30pm. 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 – 1.30pm) and Chi Gung (Mondays 11.00 – 12.30 pm) at St Marks Church Hall, Potters Road, Barnet, EN5 5HY.
  - Circle Dancing Round the World, with Ingrid. Held on Thursdays 2-3 pm at the Open Door Centre, Christ Church, St Albans Road, Barnet, EN5 4LA. Please contact Fiona or Yvonne for further details.
  - Arts and Crafts Group takes place at Howard House on the last Friday of each month from 10.00 to 12 noon. Please sign up on the noticeboard in CL.
- ✿ Cherry Lodge Singers, Wednesday 3.30 – 5.00pm. No audition necessary Just turn up, join in and have fun.
- ✿ Healthy living advice sessions throughout the region.
- ✿ Relaxation therapies delivered by qualified volunteers – from medical acupuncture to massage.
- ✿ Hair Care at Cherry Lodge – Advice on wigs and hair care provided by Lauren on alternate Tuesday afternoons. Please contact Lorraine to book an appointment
- ✿ 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 – 3pm 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.
- ✿ The Centre is now open on Tuesday evenings from 6-8pm for pre-booked reflexology and Alexander Technique sessions. Contact Lorraine to book.

***If you have any news, thoughts or comments please email me or pass a message on through someone at Howard House - many thanks.***

**Grant Whitaker**  
**Editor, CL Newsletter**

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