

# flourish

A creative magazine by and for the cancer community



● Move, Dance,  
Feel: The  
Movement

● Moving  
Forwards  
After Loss

● What Moves  
You? Our  
Contributors  
Answer

● The  
Language  
Of Play

● Get Moving:  
Resources  
& Support

**THE MOVEMENT ISSUE**

# flourish

Flourish Magazine is a joint venture between integrative cancer care charity Yes to Life and creative health charity Artlift and funded by Macmillan, aiming to explore the benefits of an integrative and creative approach to living with cancer.

The magazine is created with the support of a steering group that includes people living with cancer and partners Macmillan, Macmillan Next Steps and Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust.

It features a range of creative responses, expert information and interviews in each themed edition that offer support and represent the diversity of the cancer community.

## Artlift

### [artlift.org](http://artlift.org)

Artlift is a Gloucestershire based specialist creative health charity co-producing projects and courses for people living with mental health challenges, long-term chronic pain and/or who are living with or moving on from cancer.

Artlift also provides artist residences, Creative Health consultancy and training and Workplace Wellbeing services.

Twitter [@ArtliftB](https://twitter.com/ArtliftB)

Instagram [@ArtsOnPrescription](https://www.instagram.com/ArtsOnPrescription)

Facebook [@ArtstoMakeYouFeelBetter](https://www.facebook.com/ArtstoMakeYouFeelBetter)

## Yes to Life

### [yestolife.org.uk](http://yestolife.org.uk)

Yes to Life is the UK's integrative cancer care charity, which empowers people with cancer to make informed decisions about their care options. For well over a decade, Yes to Life has provided evidence-based information to those looking to support their cancer journey and treatment with lifestyle and complementary approaches.

Twitter [@YesToLife](https://twitter.com/YesToLife)

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Thanks to The Cancer Hive magazine for the inspiration.

## The Movement Issue

**Hello and welcome to the third issue of Flourish Magazine, a magazine by and for the cancer community from integrative cancer care charity Yes to Life and creative health charity Artlift, who are based in Gloucestershire.**

For our third issue we're exploring the theme of 'Movement'. Often our first response to the word is to think about exercise, and when you think about exercise, what comes to mind? The gym? HIIT workouts? Pounding the pavement? All of which, if you're going through cancer (and even if you're not) can feel a bit... daunting. What I love about this issue is how our contributors have bust the idea of movement and what this means wide open.

In these pages you'll find stunning artworks that explore growth and expansion across our bodies, minds and landscapes, but also restriction and the loss of movement, and how we can cope with this. There's writing on the ever-changing seasons, on moving through grief, dancing to heal and the power of play. The movement explored in this

issue is a softer kind, one that's accessible to all, one that's allowing people to reconnect with themselves, find freedom and perhaps most importantly, have fun.

The content in every issue is received through an open call and I'm always overwhelmed by the standard of the submissions we receive, the generosity and openness with which people share their experiences, and the inspiring creativity of those going through cancer. I wish we could feature them all here, but sadly we only have a limited number of pages, so many of the submissions we received will be featured online as part of our digital content. On the Artlift and Yes to Life blogs we'll release weekly content for the issue, which this time includes music, blogs, embroidery, photography and more.

We aim to show a diverse range of responses to the cancer experience and as such have included submissions with challenging themes. We have provided content warnings throughout so that readers can choose what they feel able to engage with.

If you have a moment, we'd love it you could tell us what you thought of the magazine in our short survey by scanning the QR code on the back cover. Thank you for reading!

**Natalie Beech**  
Editor-in-Chief

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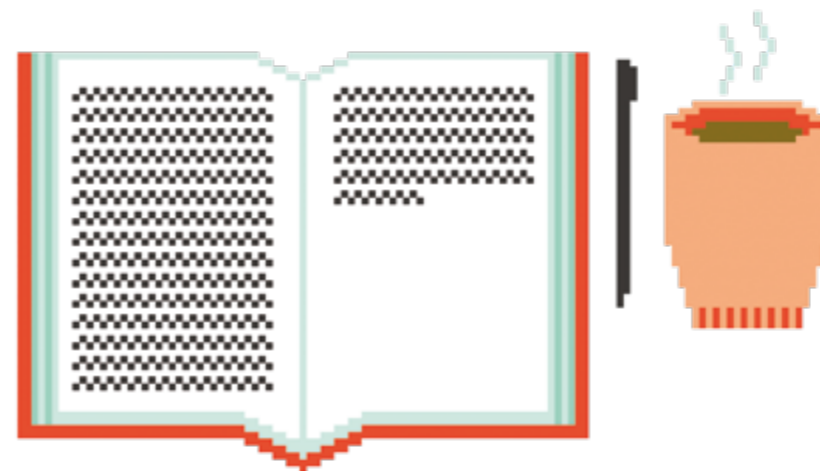
Denise Bates

# What moves you?

We asked this issue's contributors what moves them in their daily lives. Here's what they had to say...

"Human connection and kindness move me to softness, injustice moves me to rage."

"I think the enormous kindness played out every day on social media in cancer forums. Often seen as toxic places, the support between strangers facing the same issues is truly heartening."



"Listening to and observing the person you have spent a lifetime with, show courage and determination to live life to the full in the face of a terminal diagnosis. Would I have that courage if it was me?"

"A sense of power and freedom in my body together with being immersed in fabulous music will always get me moving!"

"The desire to articulate my experiences and interests through the written word."

"The ability to see and appreciate the beauty in everything, from the love and support of friends and family to the natural beauty around us every day that goes unnoticed by so many people."

"Being creative and spending time with my grandchildren is what moves me most of all!"

"I am moved by kindness and compassion, getting outdoors and into nature gets me moving, and being around people with a positive outlook helps me keep moving."

"As a HSP (highly sensitive person) most things move me - for better or worse, but I'm always being MOVED."

"What moves me - music! It's like time travel, the rhythm, lyrics and physical moves - muscle memory, troubles put aside for a few moments of joy."

"Nature - ever-changing, going with the flow of the seasons and changes whilst always holding so much beauty."

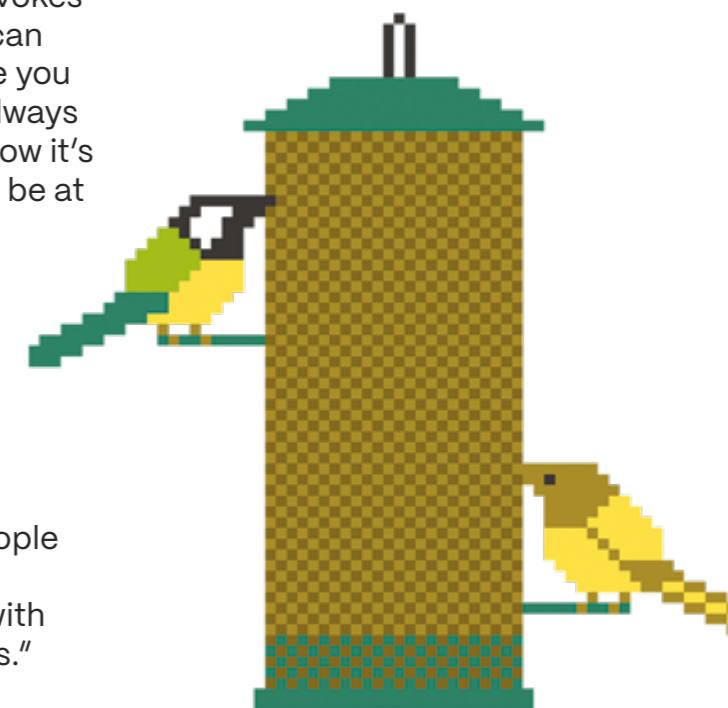
"#1 is music. Music evokes emotions. Music evokes memories. Music can lift you up and take you places you can't always understand but know it's where you need to be at that moment."

"The serenity I experience every time I am in the water; the sea makes me emotional and connects me deeply to nature."

"The smell of newly mown grass and summer rain on hot paving stones. The sun streaming through the window and watching the birds playing on the feeder. Beautiful music making the hair on the back of my neck ripple."

"Sitting quietly with a beautiful view."

"Helping other people to overcome their fear when faced with a cancer diagnosis."



# The Movement of the Seasons

By Josephine Smith

Filtering through,  
The warmth of the sun,  
The trees, the leaves,  
I walk, I run.

I smell the flowers,  
Feel the beauty,  
Summer is here,  
With all its bounty.

May blossoms, snowing,  
Carpeting the ground.  
Perambulate the colours,  
Aromas abound.

The smell of mown grass,  
Birds sing with glee.  
A low-pitch buzzing,  
From a giant Queen Bee.

Summer traverses.  
The warmth on my face.  
A beautiful feeling,  
An exceptional place.



This photo was taken at Hyde Park in London this July. I was sitting on the grass waiting for Bruce Springsteen to take the stage. That's my shadow, wearing the bucket hat. As I sat still, I watched all the feet passing me by. Hundreds and hundreds all swiftly moving past. I just watched their feet and imagined what they looked like without looking up. Strange?! Yes, I know!

**Image and Words**  
by Jill Goehringer  
Follow Jill on Instagram at @illbag



This was a class organised by Cirque du Dance at Stroud Brewery back in June, as a taster session. Their classes have proved so popular during the summer that they have put many more on, including silks and hoops and other creative classes for kids. I loved this class, as being attached to a bungee rope, it gave me great freedom of movement and was a very liberating experience all round. I felt rejuvenated and alive and didn't stop smiling throughout the whole class. This is the bug move! You spring forward and touch the ground with both hands and feet, then spring as high up you can!

**Image and Words**  
by Karin Ayres



# Move Dance Feel: The Movement

**For our Movement Issue we spoke to Emily Jenkins, founder of Move Dance Feel, an organisation offering free, accessible dance classes sessions both online and in person, to those who identify as women living with and beyond cancer.**

Emily Jenkins, dancer and founder of community interest company Move Dance Feel, describes starting the organisation as a “divine path laid down for me”. Emily grew up in a community where cancer was “quite normal and quite common”, witnessing first-hand the toll cancer can take on the body and mind when her grandfather got cancer. Additionally, as her mother also experienced health difficulties, from a young age she developed a deep understanding of the complex challenges associated with social isolation, and thus aims to unite people through her work.

Fast forward to 2014 – Emily was working for various organisations in London, seeing the positive impact of dance first-hand, but also seeing that it wasn’t reaching the people who could benefit the most.

“I’ve always worked in dance thinking about where it’s not happening and why, and considering accessibility on all levels. It’s no good doing the thing we know is hugely life-enhancing if people just can’t access it.”

Her personal experience and research led her to the cancer space. The benefits of physical activity for supporting cancer patients at all stages of their journey are well documented, but Emily saw how dance specifically could offer something more. Cancer can leave us feeling out of



control, but Move Dance Feel’s sessions aim to help restore a sense of agency and create a sense of community.

“I could see the transformative potential of dance, individually and collectively, and how it was supporting wellbeing, mentally, physically and particularly socially – that social connection of dance just makes us feel really good.

“Cancer has such a huge impact on the body. I believe we need to start with the body, to begin to move through this, to try and make sense of it, to at least find some comfort in the body, even though that must be a very difficult reconciliation, to try and rediscover this sense of home or trust in a body that has been attacking you, or been seen as such a problem in the medical landscape.”

She began to put together proposals and trial community sessions in London, developing a proof of concept that would eventually launch Move Dance Feel in 2016. Since then, Move Dance Feel has gone from strength to strength. The more sessions Emily ran, the more evidence there was of the benefits.

It only takes a quick look at their website to see the glowing testimonials from participants, with over 80% saying that dancing made them feel more connected to others, enabled them to better manage their health, and felt positive changes in feelings of stress and anxiety.

In 2020, Emily was selected as a Winston Churchill Fellow, where she travelled the world researching similar projects, and gaining support to develop new training opportunities for people working in both the dance and the health sectors. In 2021, she went on to win the National Lottery Art, Culture and Film Award, propelling Move Dance Feel into the national spotlight.

What makes Move Dance Feel different is that sessions are led by professional dance artists trained in working with people affected by cancer, and facilitated with symptoms and side effects in mind. All sessions can be done either standing or seated, with different options available for those with a limited range of



movement, and factors such as dizziness and nausea taken into account in the movement itself. Importantly, participants can take part as often and as long as they like, beyond treatment and recovery.

This approach has seen Move Dance Feel grow into an international community of women supporting one another, whether that’s together in a physical space or from afar.

“Women find strength in one another, we are stronger together. What is it to just bring women together, move through this without depending on the verbal, and show that there’s an unspoken understanding.”

“It’s really that – a space where women can feel safe, somewhere they can feel understood without having to be explicit around their needs, where they’re invited to move, have fun, and be seen as individuals, rather than patients.”

**Find out more about Move Dance Feel’s sessions and training programmes at [www.movedancefeel.com](http://www.movedancefeel.com)**



This piece contains references to surgery, which some readers may find difficult. If you are going through surgery and need support, please see the resources at the back of the magazine.

# The Creature & The Dancer

By Konstantina Katsikari

She dances, sweat dripping down her back. She doesn't usually sweat this much, but after today's session, there was not a single body not soaked through. Heart beating louder with each move, as if trying to get others' attention with every breath. In between breaks, she'd look down and see it beating through her light-grey top. She didn't pay much attention to it, not wanting to lose sight of the choreography. As the other dancers change into their street clothes, pack up and leave, she feels pressure on her shoulder blade, a recurring phenomenon for some months now after any physical activity. She doesn't think much of it, probably a pulled muscle or something. "It'll go away with time," she reassures herself. After all, she knows her body. Or so she thinks.



## The build-up

It is weeks later, and her newly experienced breathlessness and increased back pain make dancing a laborious task. She feels defeated by her own mind, bringing her down for not trying hard enough. She has convinced herself her physical pain is all mental. That her fatigue is due to her unemployed status and feelings of worthlessness, the weight loss because of depression. Her chronic cough, the main factor preventing her from dancing as she once did, tests her limits every day. Deep breaths feel like tremendous effort, like that of climbing the Himalayas.

As all of these external physical symptoms take hold of her life, a new form of life takes up space inside of her. It is not depression or anxiety crippling her, but rather something of a significant size that is mutating, growing inside her.

## Life on hold

Relief was the general sensation when first hearing the diagnosis. A 'papaya-sized creature' was what the intellects would come to call it; trapped inside the lung, perfectly inhabiting the walls of the left ribcage and slowly expanding towards the larynx. And as this fruit-shaped creature is feeding and growing, it slowly drains the life out of her.

The dancer's body, once agile, young and active, is

now fragile, wounded and weak. It went from weight loss to weight gain, from having hair to losing all hair, from moving to not being able to get out of bed. And like a tidal wave, it went in motions: treatments experienced in cycles, the body adapting, responding differently every time round. So did the mind, trying to cope with the intensity of the circumstances.

## The rebirth

Lights dimmed to a point where only shadows are visible, the doctors make their way in. They seem pretty serious as they stare down at the young dancer, who at this point, has had her fair share of visits, bodies orbiting above her hospital bed. Being entertained only by her own thoughts all day, dissociating from her own self, she's glad to see strangers in lab coats approaching her with what is just visible as a tray of some sort. As they cautiously take steps towards her, she immediately understands what she is about to see.

In heavily dimmed lighting, the doctors lean forward, bringing the reading lamp that was attached to the bedpost close to the dancer's blanket-covered lap, and switching it on. Then, as if handling a precious stone, they carefully position the silver tray on the lit area of her body.

At first, the lifelessness of it catches her by surprise.

I guess she expected it to be a brighter colour, or at least somewhat of a more threatening character. Instead, it is a dull, deflated shape, sitting shamefully on her lap.

She doesn't know how to feel. She asks for permission to be alone, at which the lab coats quickly exit the room in perfect synchrony.

Staring down at the lifeless creature on her lap in an empty room, her mind wanders off, to women giving birth and seeing their babies for the first time. Such was her mother's case exactly 23 years ago. Sat in a similar hospital room, she gave birth and saw the living being that was growing inside her for months for the first time.

23 years later, her daughter, the dancer, is holding the creature that was growing inside of her for months, lifeless. It has ceased to grow. Had it continued growing, it wouldn't have brought new life to the world; it would only have killed the life created these 23 years ago. The same life that grew to be a dancer. The same dancer who would eventually grow to become a mother.

She calls the lab coats to come back in. They take the silver tray and disposed of its contents the only way they know how. She doesn't care to know the details. This lifeless form is no longer a part of her. It is now her turn to grow again.



This piece contains references to radiotherapy, which some readers may find difficult. If you are going through radiotherapy and need support, please see the resources at the back of the magazine.



# The Process

By Denise Bates

I created this mask based on my experience of having five sessions of palliative radiotherapy on incurable lymph-node tumours between February and March this year. The process involves wearing a mask expertly custom moulded by NHS hands to secure you to the scanning table in the same position each day.

Your eyes are shut and as it is extremely close fitting, you cannot move – all you can do is breathe and listen.

"Where do you go?" In my head I go to the beach...

My breath matched the ebb and flow of the waves on the shore, whilst the machine zapped the tumours, breaking them up, like waves crashing onto rocks. The

right-hand side of the mask, when being worn, is the dark, cloudy, rocky shore.

The stones are positioned exactly over my tumour site, falling into the sea. The left-hand side is that calming, sandy beach with a dream beach hut and love and hope in the gentle waves.

There are 10 branches to the tree in the centre of the

mask. 10 years is an elusive milestone for many cancer patients – mine will be in 2024.

The 31 red beads in the field represent poppies, acknowledging the 31 lives lost everyday in the UK to incurable secondary breast cancer.

Words have a huge impact on cancer patients' wellbeing, Oncologists can be creative in the phrases they use to

describe your fate in clinical letters, "Understandably shocked and surprised" versus what I had actually said, "FFS". Which is more appropriate when dealing with another cancer recurrence?

These phrases circle the head, where they constantly occupy your mindtalk, with 'Just Be', my calming mantra, pushing through

the back of my mind. A fighting analogy is often used with cancer, but many of us vehemently dislike this. I wanted the words to not be cancer negative, but instead to honour the voices of my Cancer Whisperer Soulmates, past and present.



**By Ruth Flanagan**

In my work with porcelain, I have been able to story my emotions. Through metaphor, I have gained a deeper knowledge of my lived experience, allowing gentle and coherent insight into my world for others to understand beyond words.

Using the arts has allowed me to be in the present moment, process what I have been through and story my emotions. So, let us not solely rely on the medical model of health; we can

use the arts to create new conversations about cancer and recovery and provide insight into this complex and challenging disease.

**Ruth is an artist and researcher and has run a pilot project to support others in their creativity and recovery from cancer. She is planning free workshops soon in Manchester (once she has the funding!). See Ruth's work at [@R\\_and\\_R\\_Creative\\_Arts](#) on Instagram**





# The Language of Play with Toby Peach

By Lucy J Turner

We spoke to award-winning theatre maker Toby Peach about the power of play in getting us moving.



**Toby is the founder of Beyond Arts, an organisation aiming to amplify the voices of young people who have experienced cancer, and Associate Director for young people and families at Coney, an arts and social change charity on a mission to spark change through the power of play.**

## **Tell us about yourself and your practice.**

My name is Toby, I'm a theatre maker with a background in community theatre and I had Hodgkin's Lymphoma 15 years ago. Since that time, I have been interested in working with cancer communities and evolving the cancer narrative, my particular focus is working with young people with cancer. I do that in a number of ways and have done it through telling my own story, sometimes it is through amplifying other voices and sometimes it is helping other people find their own language.

## **What does movement mean to you? And how does movement show up in your work?**

Movement is important for me in helping me find ways of working with people. Play is super important to the young people and young adults I work with, as it's a language I find we all speak and are comfortable with. I find we can explore themes, we can create stories, we can connect to audiences.

Play is a huge part of my practice, I find I go to that as a way to open up spaces, to open up conversations.

## **How do you like to move your body?**

I love to move through play, I like games that tell me to move. I wouldn't choose to dance but I am someone who likes to move with intention! I like playing games that mean I am passively moving but I'm actively playing.

This last year has been really difficult for me because I had tendonitis in both of my Achilles and that has had a real impact on the way I can move. I've really noticed how important moving was to my own mental health.

You'll know from my short film *The Hurricane* (a short film exploring the world of remission, highlighting the diverse experiences and the invisible impacts of life beyond a diagnosis) how important running was when I was understanding life beyond treatment. Moving in that way is really important to me.

## **Do you see "movement" differently after having cancer?**

One of the things I've always thought about, is the appreciation of being able to move. The counter that a lot of the cancer community has felt is – being stuck in a room and unable to move – it is a very difficult time. I appreciate that I have freedom and privilege in being able to

move now. I often change workshops after thinking, "how can I make this more accessible?".

## **How do you keep moving?**

From a physical point of view, movement is very good for my mental health. I do yoga every morning when I have the opportunity to.

I had an interesting conversation recently with Alice May Purkiss who I do a podcast (*After Thoughts* a storytelling podcast that looks at life beyond a cancer diagnosis when you're under the age of 30) with. We talked about how mentally, we are further away from our experiences of cancer.

In the last series we decided to take a step back and had some new voices taking on the hosting roles. I found that step back interesting and I thought, I'm probably healthier now mentally to support others to do that work. When I think about people moving, I think, there are new stories to be told and a need for us to evolve the cancer narrative. We need to keep finding new ways for us to do that.

What also keeps me moving is knowing there is an impact in meeting people and sharing stories! I feel something special when I do those projects!

**Find out more about Toby Peach and his work at [tobypeach.co.uk](http://tobypeach.co.uk)**



This piece contains references to grief, which some readers may find difficult. If you are grieving and need support, please see the resources at the back of the magazine.

# You Died

By Ellie Grace

Ellie's poem is part 5 of a longer 5-part poem, which you can read in full as part of our digital content on the Artlift [artlift.org](http://artlift.org) & Yes to Life [yestolife.org.uk](http://yestolife.org.uk) websites.



Dad / brain /  
tumour eating reason and prefrontal cortex /  
life slipped away / soul lifted and left /  
my own brain diminished / traumatised it  
shrank.  
My circular thoughts,  
heart-stirred and stomach-wrenched  
held me in the narrow pit.  
Once the rhythm of meditation occurred,  
though,  
minute to minute guided by breath  
a slim space opened at the forefront of my  
mind.  
Up there, soothed by the tutorials of  
in-breath / out-breath / in-breath / out-  
breath  
I slipped in to find, on one occasion,  
a lake as smooth as glass.  
From there  
I do not recall how or when  
a mat was rolled out.  
But yoga:  
It lit a candle and held sacred space,  
Saying what no other landscape of the mind  
could say:  
"You are safe."  
Opening my hips and heart  
so that tears rolled  
hot and wet  
gulping from my gut and eyes at once,  
The mat beneath soaking them in like dry  
earth.  
Unnameable emotions  
Running through muscle and nerve,  
Loosened from hip joint  
to belly  
and collarbones.  
The body took its time  
to soften its grip  
on grief's great tenancy.  
At the ashram they named me Kamala Devi,  
Blue lotus flower,  
A rare and exquisite beauty:  
A bud that makes its way toward the light.  
From the mud it grew  
And so I followed the light in the way only mud  
weeds know how:  
Through the cracks, just like Leonard Cohen  
knew.  
My muscles they opened to it,

Merging this way and that  
uncertain always  
of how to stretch and merge out to where the  
sun might warm my face.  
It took time.  
And in between,  
the chaos still  
of not knowing, yearning and seeking.  
Until some moments started to take shape  
that connected bodily pain with mental ease.  
Moving meditation: it gave me space.  
This is all in language now, however,  
in a way that it couldn't have been at the time,  
for stories have a way of smoothing out the  
past.  
Then, there were no words.  
No words but breath and salt.  
This yoga, it had a poetry all its own.  
But, but, but!  
I moved its bulk through me  
that knotted hell we call grief  
but which finds no real human name.  
I moved and cried and sweated it in porous  
fashion  
unsewing its vicious stitches  
back out into the air.  
These days I carry it privately  
like a briefcase in one hand  
knowing my hips still harness the final residue  
of something  
that longs to stay within.  
These last particles  
have become me  
which is to say it is a tenant on the inside,  
Always a shifting space devoted to its history.  
For no clean line will mark my healing  
and scars are always changing  
and time and hearts play tricks of the mind.  
I see too  
that your brain failed you  
but your love, it persists  
And my tools are mine and my body is my  
depth  
for which I am always  
always in awe  
and grateful.  
One day  
no longer scared  
I will make a baby from it.  
This is my Hatha Yoga.



## Just Cruising

By Bridget Cordory

I care for my husband, who has prostate cancer. We used to own a narrowboat called 'Let it Be', which was moored on the Gloucester Sharpness canal.

Cruising the canal was peaceful, and we loved observing the wildlife. We sold the boat when we went off travelling and now, due to Alan's health, we just enjoy walking along the canal and going on outings with the Willow Trust.

Practising my art enables me to cope with caring and gives my mind the opportunity to enter a world where I only need to focus

on the technique of batik. I apply wax to cotton as a barrier for the dye and the colours are built up from white through to black, but the dyes do their own thing. Going with the flow of the dye across the material creates images that are often removed from my original intention!



## When in doubt, dance it out

By Lucy J Turner

I'm happy to admit, I'm not the greatest dancer. I can suffer with two left feet and often find myself clapping out of sync with others and yet I'm the first, and often the last, on the dance floor.

Music and movement have always been a huge part of my life. My parents often tell me that I learnt to dance before I learnt to walk. Happy, sad, tired, anxious, you'll find me dancing, even if all I can manage is a slow standing sway by myself.

Even after my gruelling cancer treatment, which left me feeling wrecked and lethargic, I found my body instinctively moving whenever music was on. The simple act of flailing my body around to a beat can completely change my mood. It helps me forget.

It makes me feel alive. My body can get lost in the music and lost in the rhythm, taking me out of my head even just for those four minutes of the song.

I regularly rearrange the furniture in my living room and close the curtains, put on some music and dance around to my perfectly curated playlist, aptly named 'When In Doubt, Dance It Out'.

The word "dance" may be a little generous, but the point is it feels great, it feels great to move my body in a way I wouldn't otherwise.



This piece contains references to grief, which some readers may find difficult. If you are grieving and need support, please see the resources at the back of the magazine.

# Forward, onward, upward

By Phillipa Anders

In November 2020 my husband, Rob, experienced pins and needles in his hand and lower arm. In December 2020 he was diagnosed with a Glioblastoma (an aggressive brain tumour, which usually comes with a prognosis of 12–18 months). 10 days later, on the day he was due to have emergency surgery, he died. Rob was a fit and healthy 49 year-old.

The loss of a life partner turns you and your life totally upside down. Your identity has gone overnight. Your friends are likely to change. Your future plans and dreams may have totally disappeared. Your goals will have to be reconsidered, reimagined.

You're at the start a new chapter, whether you like it or not. A chapter of personal redesign. Of re-planning, re-shaping, re-calibrating,

re-orientating. You have to find your inner strength, an uninvited strength that you never imagined you'd have to let in. You're in the most painful place you can imagine.

Yet somehow you have to find the courage, the brain space, to work out what to do next. When I reflect on the last two and a half years, I realise that movement – in its many shapes and forms – has been a recurring theme. It's how I am doing this. It's from movement (or being moved) that I find strength.

## COMPASSION moves me ...

I am the kind of person that cries very easily. The John Lewis Christmas advert usually has me in pieces, the feel-good news items crumple me, the two minutes silence on Remembrance Sunday has always broken me.

Human compassion is such a beautiful thing – I find it emotionally overwhelming. It makes me 'feel' – after feeling so numb for so long.

## POSITIVITY keeps me moving ...

Take the anger, the emotions you feel and use them. Don't waste energy questioning why. Don't get sidetracked. Sit with your grief, of course, allow the complexity of feelings to run their course (I'm not sure they ever go away), but in time, you will also find the space to use your energy for good.

'Good' can mean many different things for different people. It might be that you can support someone going through something similar. Maybe you will volunteer your time with a cause close to your heart, or spend time getting as fit and healthy as

possible. Take time for you through mindfulness. Put the phone down when your children speak to you.

## WALKING provides the time and space to make sense of it all ...

Walking is helping me rebuild myself: the new me, the me that has been changed beyond belief, a new version of myself, whether I like it or not. I use this time to get my thoughts straight, to work through a problem, build up my strength to do something out of my comfort zone, to have an empty head, a full head, to enjoy and notice silence, to listen to music, to sing to myself like no one is listening, to talk out loud to friends, myself, my dogs, no one, nature.

In sunshine, rain, snow and wind. Through towns, cities and forests. Along coastlines, rivers and farm tracks. To see the bigger picture and the tiny details: daisies, ripples in water from rain. Where the sky meets the land. To notice the

shape of an individual cloud or to see the whole sky. To work through a specific issue or to step back to see the whole picture. To gain perspective.

Rob's death has somehow made me stronger; it's given me a new perspective, enabled me to find a healthier balance to my life, to reprioritise things. It's opened up my heart (although bruised and battered), it's opened up my mind to new experiences, to living. It's made me determined to honour him by growing, not fading away. To thrive, not merely survive. Once I'd realised that I was allowed to be happy again, I could start to live. To move and be moved.



**By Joanna Wilde**

This is a recent embroidery piece that I submitted to the Costume for Gloucester, a collaborative community stitching project celebrating the area's rich textile history. I am one of over 100 local stitchers and embroiderers in Gloucester that have contributed to the costume, which was worn at the Gloucester Day parade

in early September and is now being displayed at the Lady Chapel at Gloucester Cathedral.

This embroidery represents the migration to and settlement in Gloucester since Roman Days; the centrepiece shows the Gloucester Basin, with a pattern of moving swirls denoting movement in the city, the stitching pattern developed from earlier embroidery works of mine

depicting microscopic images of my clear cell ovarian cancer.

This embroidery is my way of saying thank you to Gloucester, for treating me well and giving me more years than I thought I would get, enabling me to move with my life with cancer.

**Find out more about A Costume for Gloucester at [voicesgloucester.org.uk](http://voicesgloucester.org.uk)**



This piece contains references to death and end of life care, which some readers may find difficult. If you are in need of support, please see the resources at the back of the magazine.

# In Motion

By Anon

My body moves definitely now,  
much slower and more considered.

Overly sensitive, sharp awareness of pain.

Vehemently denied.

Energy used to flow through  
my limbs like electricity.

Melanin skin is still shining though.

End of life care can't dampen  
my spirit or change my soul.

New normal, new normal, new normal.

To my body, an ode.  
Thank you for everything.

# The Magic of Movement: Prehabilitation Services and how they can support you

By Katie Jacobs



## Tell us about your role

My name is Katie Jacobs and I'm a Clinical Lead Physiotherapist for the Prehabilitation team at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

## What is Prehabilitation?

Prehabilitation means getting ready for cancer treatment in whatever time you have before it starts. It is a programme of support and advice in Physical activity, Nutrition and Emotional Wellbeing, that more and more NHS hospitals are using.

## Why is prehabilitation important?

There is an inspiring, large and fast-growing field of scientific evidence highlighting the benefits of physical activity on overall health, disease prevention, cancer recurrence rates and response to cancer treatments. Research shows that if you get support early on and are able to boost your physical and mental health resilience, you're

more likely to leave hospital sooner after surgery, cope better with side effects, have more treatment choices and better long-term health.

## What would you like people to know about prehabilitation?

Cancer and cancer treatments are often compared to running a marathon. In the same way that you should train before a marathon, it's important to increase physical activity before cancer treatment. Research shows that we can improve our fitness and build muscle in as little as two weeks. So, it's worth being physically active even if there is only a short time before cancer treatment starts.

Physical activity is defined as 'any MOVEMENT that uses your muscles and more energy than at rest'. As you can imagine, it is not possible to have one set of exercise guidelines for everyone with cancer. The benefit of a Prehabilitation service is that we are able screen patients to identify if they are suitable

for a universal education and exercise group or if they have more specialist 1:1 needs.

## What has surprised you about working in prehabilitation?

Since working in Prehabilitation, I've noticed a shift in my thoughts and a greater appreciation of the magic of movement on a psychological level. I admire the unspoken respect between patients as they arrive, the sense of camaraderie and community as they work at variable intensities. I always think the hardest part is turning up and I firmly believe that we can all make meaningful changes, regardless of our starting point.

That's what I consider an encouraging movement based on movement!

**You can be referred to the Prehabilitation service by calling 0300 422 4784 or emailing [ghn-tr.cancerprehab@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.cancerprehab@nhs.net), or ask for a referral from your cancer nurse specialist.**

## Resources

Below is a list of additional resources and organisations to those featured in the magazine, which we've compiled to help support you through cancer, from national organisations to Gloucestershire and Bristol based ones for those living in the area.

### CAAFI Health [caafihealth.com](http://caafihealth.com)

Caafi Health is a grassroots organisation that works to improve the health and wellbeing of the diverse populations in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

### Cancer Care Map [cancercaremap.org](http://cancercaremap.org)

Online resource that aims to help you find cancer support services in your local area.

### Charlie's [charlies.org.uk](http://charlies.org.uk)

Community cancer support and therapy centre based in Gloucestershire.

### Gloucestershire Cancer Exercise [gloscancerexercise.org.uk](http://gloscancerexercise.org.uk)

Exercise sessions for those living with and beyond cancer in Gloucestershire.

### LGBT+ Experiences of Cancer [lgbcancer.wordpress.com](http://lgbcancer.wordpress.com)

### [livethroughthis.co.uk](http://livethroughthis.co.uk)

Personal stories and helpful resources about living with or beyond cancer.

### Macmillan Helpline [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)

For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00

### Macmillan Cancer Information Hub at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital [gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/cancer/macmillan-cancer-support-information-hub](http://gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/cancer/macmillan-cancer-support-information-hub)

Located in the main Outpatients Unit, just past the Main Atrium. A place to get

information, support and signposting with the help of staff and trained volunteers.

### Maggie's [maggies.org](http://maggies.org)

Charity that provides free cancer support and information in centres across the UK and online.

### National Centre for Integrative Medicine [ncim.org.uk](http://ncim.org.uk)

NCIM is a Centre of Excellence championing a transformation in healthcare – one which takes a whole-person approach, puts patients back in charge of their health, and helps them to feel more informed about their care.

### NGS Macmillan Wellbeing Centre in Bristol

Located at Beaufort House at Southmead Hospital, North Bristol Trust. Supports anyone affected by cancer with information, support and advice. Services include care planning, physiotherapy, arts on referral and more.

### Penny Brohn UK [pennybrohn.org.uk](http://pennybrohn.org.uk)

UK Charity providing free, integrative care to those living with cancer.

### Your Circle [yourcircle.org.uk](http://yourcircle.org.uk)

A directory of care and support, connecting with people, places and activities in Gloucestershire.

### Wigwam and Yes to Life [yestolife.org.uk/cancer-support-groups](http://yestolife.org.uk/cancer-support-groups)

Yes to Life's online and Gloucestershire-based cancer support groups, plus links to other resources.

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We would love to hear your thoughts on this issue of Flourish Magazine! Scan this QR code to take our quick survey.



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