

Up!

MAY 2022

HEALTH &
WELLNESS

Making the world
a better place -
one page at a time



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Up Front!

Hi there!

How are we all feeling? Hopefully, a lot better by the time you've finished reading this month's Health and Wellness issue.

This is a very special issue for us because people's mental health and wellness was central to our setting up the magazine in the first place. For the benefit of any new readers, Up! began in October 2020 at the height of the pandemic. We looked around at our own community and saw for ourselves how badly people needed a lift. We determined there and then to do what we could and so created a monthly, positive read with a spotlight on all the great things out there.

As ever, this month's issue is packed with the best positive news stories around. As well as our regular features, we meet some great people doing fabulous work to improve all of our lives.

So relax, find yourself a nice comfy chair and read on!

Bridget & Harry x

Front cover photo: Jasmine Yoga



Helping Up!

MAGGIE'S AT THE FREEMAN

Up!'s Harry Gallagher talks to Marissa Magee about a quite remarkable place

Who remembers the beautiful Carole King song *You've Got A Friend*? No? How about the chorus then ...

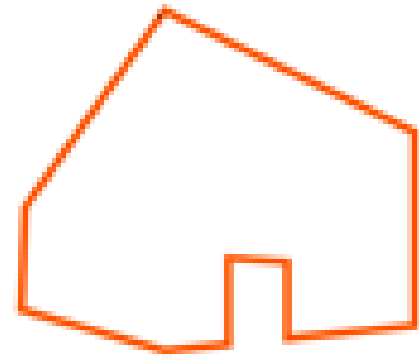
*"Winter, spring, summer or fall
All you have to do is call
And I'll be there -
You've got a friend"*

Recognise it now? Of course you do! As soon as I hear this song, I think of Maggie's. If you haven't heard of them before, here's a potted history ...

Maggie Keswick Jencks was an Edinburgh-based artist, writer and garden designer who in 1993 was told that the cancer she had already beaten once had returned. Not only had it come back, but it was advanced and incurable. Having heard this devastating news, she and her husband Charles were moved to a windowless side ward and left on their own to come to terms with it.



Nathan in the garden room



MAGGIE'S

This shocking experience made Maggie determined to use the time she now had left to draw up a blueprint for a radically improved care facility for anyone trying to come to terms and cope with cancer. This included patients of course, but also their loved ones – basically anyone who felt the need for support, practical or emotional. With help from her husband and her oncology nurse Laura Lee (now CEO of Maggie's) she came up with a blueprint for a facility that was close by – though crucially not part of – a hospital. It should have nurses and staff, but it should feel like home; like a lovely, warm, supportive and informal place where you can just be.

All these years later Maggie would, I'm sure, allow herself at least a moment to be proud of her legacy. There are now Maggie's facilities all over the UK, plus centres in Spain, Hong Kong and Tokyo. Walk into any of them and you'll immediately feel at home. At the heart of every Maggie's is the open-plan kitchen, where the kettle is always on and soft chairs and sofas beckon. The decor is warm.

As with so much else in life, it's the attention paid to the little details that makes all the difference. There are no clocks anywhere, so that no-one using the service will feel rushed. You'll see no-one wearing a uniform - and that

Helping Up!

MAGGIE'S AT THE FREEMAN

includes the nurses. In order to make the unit feel less like a clinical service and more like home, even the toilet facilities are unmarked by 'Male/Female' signs but are instead just doors. And as you'd imagine, there are plenty of smaller side room spaces, where people can talk openly with the guarantee of privacy.

In short, Maggie's wish was for a place where anyone affected by cancer can just be supported, without feeling like a patient. Perhaps it's best to use her own words: "People in fear of dying should not lose the joy of living." Everything Maggie's does is centred around this.

So intensive can be the experience for those going through cancer treatment, that transitioning back to 'normal' life after successful treatment can often be a challenging and emotional time. Maggie's is there for people in remission too, running 'Where Now?' courses specifically designed to help people transition back to work after treatment.

Because finding a way through our benefits



Maggie's Kristy

systems can be an added, unwanted weight on the shoulders of anyone who is ill, each centre also has a Benefits Advisor to help people access any help they are entitled to. Up!'s local Maggie's – attached to Newcastle's Freeman Hospital – has a Benefits Advisor, three Nurses and two Psychologists. Between the six of them, they receive 1,000 visits every month from patients and their loved ones. I don't know about you, but I find this humbling. Marissa Magee, the local Fundraising Manager, calls the staff 'remarkable', and I can't help but agree with her.



Centre visitor, Laura, in the garden

Perhaps as a result of these figures, Maggie's At The Freeman is expanding, so they can help more people who need their service. Soon they'll be offering all kinds of additional feel-good stuff – proposed additional services include yoga and creative writing.

We feel we should let Marissa have the final word on what makes Maggie's so special. I asked what was her favourite thing about the job? She paused for a moment before saying this:

"Hmm ... I can tell you about my best moment. A couple of years ago we had been helping Matt. He was a fit young guy in his 20s who had been having intensive treatment for bone and tissue cancer. He became a passionate supporter of

Helping Up!

MAGGIE'S AT THE FREEMAN

Maggie's and was determined to raise awareness of what we do. One day he said he was going to complete the Great North Run. Matt was by this time a wheelchair user, but he was determined to walk the entire distance, unaided. Come the day of the race, his mum and family wouldn't let him do it alone, so taking turns they pushed his wheelchair – which remained empty beside him – for the whole length of the course, which he completed on foot, finishing last but finishing all the same.

Unbeknownst to Matt, we had managed to bring his brilliant efforts to the attention of that year's race winner, Sir Mo Farah. A few days after the race, Matt was at the centre (with everyone else in on what was about to happen), when he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned around to find a smiling Mo, who shook his hand and publicly proclaimed him 'the real winner of the Great North Run'.



For the next week, people were queuing up to come and see us all. We were so proud of Matt and what he had achieved. He always referred to Maggie's as his 'emotional A&E'."

I don't know about you, but after that I feel a little emotional too...

You can find out more about Maggie's here:

[Maggie's](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/maggiesnewcastle>



30 year-old Nathan, a mechanic from Blaydon has kindly shared his experiences of Maggie's and hopes more young men in particular will seek support for their health and wellbeing.

"After I finished my cancer treatment, I felt like I was in a hole I couldn't climb out of. I had no idea what to expect when my consultant at the hospital suggested I contact Maggie's at my routine check-up. They thought I might need some psychological support and said there was a long waiting list at the hospital.

I was able to speak to someone very quickly and had 6 appointments with Maggie's psychologist, Alice, in a short period of time. These focused sessions have helped me find myself again. I'm now excited for the future whereas before I didn't see a future. I'm spending more time with my little brother and nephew whereas before I wanted to sit and do 'F all'. Having cancer in the pandemic has been hard. I had no routine check ups and couldn't see anyone. Before the cancer, I would be very sociable, I worked as a mechanic and trained at the gym a few times a week. Maggie's support has been my life saver. This has 100% been life changing and has saved me from a very dark place."

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Where the wildflowers bloom

Come, sit with me
On a lazy afternoon
We shall picnic in the meadow
Where the wildflowers bloom

In such perfect idleness
Memories may stir
Like ripples on the water
Watch them fade without a care

Bare feet and laughter
Cloudless blue skies
Warm breeze on freckled skin
The soft tickle of butterflies

Time means nothing here
We are young forevermore
For life began and ended
While we found our way back home

Samantha Turner

Momentum by Gerda Pickin

Easy does it,
you've made it this far.
Let your shoulders drop
and heave a sigh of relief.

Start to make plans
beyond one day at a time.
Vanquish vague fears
and fling open the door.

Raise your eyes
from the ground to the
horizon, let worries die
to a half-remembered ache.

Easy does it,
free-wheel from here.
Who knows where momentum
might carry you.

Plague History with Mr Dufton by Sarah L. Dixon

We tramp compressed snow
from Size three boots
as we babble and scramble
to sit at our desks.

Eager to share stories
your smile plays with The Black Death Ring-a-ring a roses
we silently await a straggler
and your delicious details.

You could even make Maths horrific,
tearing fractions from their settled format
into a mash of senseless numbers.

Mr Dufton,
you give us abscesses the size of cabbages,
gore, disease and our pestilent past.
Crosses mark the doors of the afflicted.

Sing Up!

ROB WYLIE

Friend of Up! and all-round 'good egg', on the restorative power of community singing

My 93 year old mum and those of a similar age often retell tales about front doors being left open for neighbours to pop in. Kids playing on the street, housewives chatting at their door steps, and all manner of community spirit. It sounds so idyllic! Move forward to our present day and much of that is resigned to the history books. Or so we thought...

In the midst of the pandemic we saw a renewed sense of 'community spirit' ignited. Who remembers the scenes in Italy of community singing from balconies? Or in the UK singers and musicians opening their windows or coming out on their door steps and curb sides providing musical interludes as we clapped essential workers. I heard of a guy who played the Northumbrian pipes each Thursday night. I even heard about a couple of churchgoers who decided to drop notes through the doors of their neighbours saying that they would be coming out to sing and play hymns and songs. Surprisingly folks joined them, and soon they were providing hymn sheets for folks to join in! This has now turned into something called 'Church on the street'!



In my own street we set up a WhatsApp group and this led to a door step party for the Queen's Jubilee. We've done Easter gift bags, communal sunflower growing and we now have a monthly food bank collection and play street.

One of the highlights over lockdown was the weekly Thursday morning collaboration that BBC Radio put together where all the stations played the same 3 or 4 songs as a way to unite the nation. Each station chose songs that were favourites on their stations. This led me and my wife to record ourselves singing along and generally having fun. We would then share the videos with our street and with friends as a way of bringing a bit of joy in the midst of all that was going on. This led us to download TikTok and join in the craze of doing silly dances to random songs!

So where am I going with all this? Well, as we emerged into a 'new normal' and as we have tentatively began to open up again, like many people I didn't want to just go back to the way things were before. I began looking for ways to carry on engaging in community activities and to connect with those I may not have engaged with before.

Just before Christmas my wife and I joined our first live community singing event staged by

Sing Up!

ROB WYLIE



Photo credit

The Unthanks in Newcastle. It was a beautiful afternoon of singing together and it made such a difference to our mental health just to be a part of it! This led me to wonder if we could create something locally on the coast that brought people together, yes to sing and be together, but also to help with some of the stress of the last couple of years.

I chatted to a couple of mates and put some feelers out about the possibility of creating with others

some kind of community singing experience, basically I spoke to the wonderful Bridget and Harry Gallagher - and they bit my hand off! Roll forward a few weeks and we now have a gathering on a Monday night in the Enigma Tap in North Shields where Harry and Bridget host some community singing. We call it *Mariners and Marras* and we mainly sing sea shanties and work songs! We meet on the first and third Mondays of the month for a good old sing. It's full of laughter, dodgy notes, with a good smattering of fine ale, and a few soft drinks too!

It seems to me that there is something about gathering to sing, even if you don't know the songs, to listen and join in with a chorus or two. The songs are generally community songs, so they need a few voices to make them really live. Another aspect of this gathering is meeting new people, something that after the isolation of the pandemic you may crave... or not! If you have been struggling in recent times, then why not give singing a go... either by yourself at home, or even better join a community singing venture or a choir! There are lots to choose from!

Peace, Rob.



Complete strangers can stand silent next to each other in a lift and not even look each other in the eye. But at a concert, those same strangers could find themselves dancing and singing together like best friends. That's the power of music.

L Z Granderson

When you're all singing together, it brings things together.

I know the songs that my grandfather and my father sang.

Terry Pratchett

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Moment

Sometimes Ardnamurchan hides it's secrets:
nests of white-tailed eagles,
its propinquity to off shore islands.
You can usually make out Eigg,
its arse to the world,
its gnarled coccyx and spine.
And on nights like this
the peaks of Rum and Muck rise up
at the whim of plate techtonics.
And on nights like this
two young stags will still themselves
against single-malt hills,
as if to pause, mid rut, for us.

Mark Connors

If these are the end times

by which I mean at least a final epoch
with long years to play out,
I'm not sure I could ask for more
than this light early evening, a lone cottage,
Monopoly size amongst
these ancient soaked hills,
the sideways rain and loud cloud
obscuring Eigg, Rum and Muck
for now, the overwhelming promise
of tomorrow when the forecast is good.
I'll sip my single malt and wait
for my lover to rise pink from her bath
and join me in the conservatory
to see what the night sky has in store for us.

Mark Connors

The Pause Inbetween

I know where I have been
And I know where I am going

As I stand on this tranquil beach
Watching its apricot sunrise
I find myself completely captivated
In a moment between two worlds

And it is in this equidistant space
As I watch feather-light ethereal clouds drift
That I am free

So just for today
I find my peace in patience
Like the pause between the in....
And the out breath

Some days I want to fast forward to the future
On other days I reflect upon the past

But right here, right now
With the soft sand under my feet
And the song of the sea birds in my ears

As I breathe
As I swim
As I stroll

I am alive
I am content
I am free

Helen Marshall

Up Lift!

JASMINE YOGA

Joanne Hare fills us in on why an ancient practice is still relevant today

Can you give us a potted history of yoga – where did the practice originate?

The yoga tradition dates back thousands of years, and it has a fascinating history of yoga philosophy which sets it apart from being 'just an exercise class.' People often come to yoga believing it to be a stretch or a way to calm the mind. While it does offer both of these benefits, it's so much more! Yoga philosophy teaches us to be guided by values, to live in the most enriching way we can, treating ourselves and others with compassion and understanding.

The physical 'asana' practice is one aspect and it's the part that people are sometimes first attracted to. It's often through that journey that they become interested in peeling away the layers of yoga to reveal a deeper understanding and a way of being, both on and off the mat.



Over 5,000 years ago in India, the word yoga was first mentioned and defined as 'unity', interpreted as a union of mind and body. Our Modern Yoga practice in the West has developed as a physical, often performance-based practice, with



many styles now offered across the world. It's important when choosing a yoga class, to find one that enables an exploration of individual uniqueness in a safe and inclusive

environment. It's also very important to understand that everybody can practice yoga, regardless of perceived limitations such as 'I'm not flexible enough.' Flexibility is irrelevant when considering a yoga class for the first time, what does matter is that the class feels like a good match.

Tell us a bit about Jasmine Yoga. How did you get started?

It's been a life-enhancing journey for me since launching Jasmine Yoga over five years ago. Since my first class of four, we've welcomed thousands of yogis through our door; it's been an honour to support them on their yoga path.

We are a family business, my eldest daughter Steph also teaches at Jasmine, specialising particularly in well-being focused classes, supporting pregnant women alongside teaching children and teens, both in studio classes and also in the community across North Tyneside schools. My daughter Laura is also a valued member of the team, managing our website, customer communication and organising retreats and events. Owning a family business is very rewarding for us, offering many life enriching times together which we feel very grateful for. We also have Holly working with us delivering weekly classes in her unique style, and from time to time, other visiting teachers.

Up Lift!

JASMINE YOGA



We are privileged to practice in our private studio at Tynemouth Sailing Club on The Haven beach next to Tynemouth Priory. Enjoying exquisite views across the sea, we practise both inside and on our spacious roof terrace. Our setting is simply magical in all weathers and seasons, each bringing a different experience. We offer an average of 20 yoga classes a week, some energising, some relaxing, all mindful and delivered with care. We also offer pop up classes and special events including workshops, relaxation classes and children's yoga. Community is everything to us, and with that comes our commitment to local charities and causes. We fundraise at least once each year, which serves to bring the community together to benefit others.

For someone new to yoga, the different types on offer - Iyengar, Hatha, Vinyasa etc - can be a little overwhelming. Could you explain the difference between them for us and which would you recommend for a beginner?

With so much variety of yoga, it can certainly be confusing for those wanting to try it for the first time! At Jasmine we offer mostly breath to movement styles of yoga in differing degrees of

physicality. We always encourage experimentation to gain a personal wisdom and knowledge of what feels good in each of our unique bodies, one size most certainly does not fit all. In addition to 'Yang' flowing classes, which are often called Vinyasa, we offer passive, introspective yoga too in the form of quiet 'Yin Yoga'. We emphasise breath to movement connection; beginners are helped to learn the benefits of being led by the breath in our Moving Meditation practices as well as New to Yoga and Gentle Flow classes. These are all good introductions for those trying yoga for the first time.

Many women discover yoga during pregnancy, as the classes help to strengthen the body, prepare for labour and help women develop insight into the needs of their changing bodies. We also offer breathing and relaxation time to help each woman connect with their growing baby.



We love teaching children's yoga! These classes are great fun and available every school holiday.

Introducing children to yoga has so many benefits from building strength and flexibility, whilst

developing balance, stability and coordination. In addition it promotes confidence and body awareness and supports healthier sleeping patterns through relaxation and mindfulness. Yoga has been found to promote the release of oxytocin (the relaxing hormone) and reduces cortisol (the stress hormone).

Up Lift!

JASMINE YOGA

There is a bit of a preconception that yoga is mainly for young, slim women. Is this true?

No. Absolutely not. There's a vast difference between how social media portrays yoga and the reality of yoga. Some of the images we see can influence our perceptions of yoga as performance and gymnastic based. At our studio we encourage everyone to come to the mat, regardless of past injury, illness or perceived limitations. The master of yoga, Patanjali, described the physical part of yoga as being 'steadfast and comfortable'. This is our aim when we teach, to honour the tradition of yoga and to enable everyone to explore their uniqueness as they meander through their yoga journey.



Here at Up! we're interested in the links between physical and mental health. What are your thoughts on this?

When we come to the mat for our yoga practice, we often find ourselves needing different experiences, sometimes physical, sometimes emotional, and other times to regain a sense of balance or presence. Our busy lives can feel quite overwhelming; and when the nervous system is on high alert, yoga can offer the space to simply be



present, to help the nervous system unravel, to find peace.

We offer weekly classes with a focus on mindfulness in addition to regular extended practices. All encompass gentle movement, an element of mindfulness, whether that's a body scan meditation, a story or a Yoga Nidra ('Yogic Sleep'). These classes help ease the nervous system from the sympathetic 'high alert' state into the parasympathetic 'rest and digest'. They're available as a perfect unwind and compliment to the many stresses and strains of modern life.

hello@jasmineyogatynemouth.co.uk

<https://www.jasmineyogatynemouth.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/jasmineyoga16/>

<https://www.instagram.com/jasmineyogatynemouth/>

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

MENOPAUSE IS LIVER AND ONIONS

Bloody, bold and sizzling rich, sometimes tough as a shoe, sometimes tender. Filling up the void in my growling womb with a kick to the stomach like a mule. Menopause is a hearty meal that leaves a nasty mess in the kitchen. A thick brown sludge burnt on by heat, sticking, always sticking to the pan. Menopause is Madame Wolf who comes loping, swishing and sniffing, fierce and yellow-eyes in her unspeakable aloneness, her paws swift and sure. Wolf is savvy, finds water by moonlight. The old trails open up to her. Menopause is cunning, all animal instinct. Wolf knows well who she is. Menopause is a cactus flower. She is scarlet, pink and shocking, but also green and lush and cool, as desert life must be. Thrust through with needles she will pierce your heart, make your blood flow like a river. But she will feed you from her grain store and her waters will slake your thirst. Menopause is a day that blows somewhere between autumn and winter when the wind whips the sun into shape. Then the ocean, turning turtle, shows its seething underbelly, fishbone-white and gun-metal grey. It's this year's gulls making maps of the sky, glad just to be and be airborne. Menopause is a salt-sea savour, the haze of a squall across the bay. And menopause has been the power that charges me and drives me. Its microscopes and telescopes have instructed me to see. It's my paper, my ink, my limping pen, the words I have claimed to re-write me, the awful fire in which I've forged a stronger, sharper me.

Abigail Ottley

Next month's theme is -

WHAT LIES BENEATH

Feel free to interpret the theme as you

see fit and send up to 3 poems (no

more than 20 lines each please) to:

TalkToUp@gmail.com

Step Up!

STEVE LOWE

Up's outdoors man gives a little, but gets a lot more back in return

I have a 'special place' inside my head. It's a place that I retreat to when life is tough or when I can't physically get outside. Needless to say, it's a place I enjoy and have visited many times, a place where I feel safe and secure, as well as having a spiritual connection with nature. We should all have somewhere like this.

The great outdoors can be a place of peril and may represent 'the unknown' to some, but it has always been a place of wonder, beauty and enquiry for me. It's my go-to thing during my time off, whether that is close to home or further afield. I take solace in space, colour, beauty and structure. In sounds and motion, smells, touch and texture.



It is especially rewarding to share this love of the outdoors with others, as my other passion is people. I relish sharing and learning, laughing and joking as well as hard graft and achievement from doing things together. I am truly a social animal, and my life has been shaped around these pivots, allowing me to mix business and pleasure through a passion for nature.

It's widely acknowledged that volunteering and the outdoors are associated with better physical, social and mental health. The recent pandemic reminded many of us how vital that connection with nature actually was, and we have re-evaluated that connection in many ways.



The NHS considers exercise essential to living a healthy and fulfilling life; it's medically proven that people who do regular physical activity, such as gardening, have up to a 35% lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke. Studies have also shown that the benefits of gardening also result in significant reductions in depression and anxiety. The benefits of volunteering roles, such as gardening, have also led to an increasing number of GPs prescribing gardening not only for rehabilitation but also as a preventative mechanism.

That's one reason I am pleased to have helped set up the Newcastle Hospitals Green Gym in 2018. Co-founded by Dr Suren Kanagasundaram (Consultant Nephrologist) and Toni Poole (Nursing Lead for Peritoneal Dialysis) at the Trust, the Green Gym works in collaboration with local conservation groups, such as Northumberland Rivers Trust.

Suren and the team have developed a strong community of like-minded individuals, friends and families who work in the NHS and who want to make a difference, protect nature and create a legacy. It's not a 'traditional' gym, because Green Gym offers

Step Up!

STEVE LOWE

fun and free outdoor sessions where members undertake conservation activities across the region, such as beach cleans, planting trees and hedgerows, and creating new habitats.

Last weekend, we were at Cresswell Pele Tower in Northumberland, working on the restoration of a walled garden, once associated with Cresswell Hall, but lying vacant since the 1930s. This was a repeat visit as the Green Gym were the first group to tackle the wasteland hidden behind a tiny door. Since then they have regularly been involved in the garden, making this into a space where anyone can seek and find some solace.



Not only is the garden managed by volunteers, but it is also planned around a community consultation and has been started using plants donated from local gardens. Food is being grown once again and a rich palette of colourful plants has already been established.

The Green Gym helped to initiate a community orchard, which will provide natural locally grown fruit (for anyone who wants it) and shelter for beehives which will be maintained by new

volunteers. As well as producing honey, these bees will act as pollinators, without which our environment, and subsequently our health, will be poorer.



There is an ongoing crowdfunding appeal for this project - <https://www.spacehive.com/bees-and-trees> but anybody can help on this, or other voluntary works, by simply donating some of their time.

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some, it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge. For all, it's so rewarding.

Step up and give it a go!



An experienced wildlife professional, Steve currently works freelance with Northumberland Rivers Trust as well as undertaking work with volunteers on local heritage and archaeology projects.

His hope is to leave the world a better place.

Up Cycle!

GREENING WINGROVE - BIKE GARDEN

The power of getting together to make things better

Here at Up! HQ, we're suckers for stories of communities stepping up and improving their own area, so we were delighted to come across the Greening Wingrove Community Interest Company. (For anyone more than 10 miles away from the centre of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Wingrove is a small electoral ward about 2 miles from the City centre).

Way back in 2013 Greening Wingrove began working with partners to help improve their local area. Their sterling work has flourished and now they run a whole host of brilliant projects that focus on things like reviving community places, saving energy and growing your own veg. Community involvement is at the heart of everything they do, with lots of opportunities for volunteering, gardening and helping local wildlife.



We were particularly impressed with the wonderful Bike Garden project at Nuns Moor.



At the beginning of the pandemic, while we at Up! hit upon the idea for this wee online positive news magazine, the good people of Wingrove looked at their own

great outdoors and decided to set about transforming their green spaces, with particular emphasis on making it easier for people to take to two wheels, thereby helping each other improve their health, both mental and physical. How simple and great is that?



They restored an old, vandalised bowling pavilion to the heart of their community, and now it's home to a coffee and pizza outlet, a small gardening business and a grow-your-own-veg space.

The garden is available to hire out for functions, and plans are afoot to organise and stage community music and arts events, a summer food market, cycle tours, tree planting and a whole lot more.

It just goes to show what can be done with a bit of graft, a few good ideas and a dollop of passion and pride in your own area.

Up Cycle!

GREENING WINGROVE - BIKE GARDEN

Just imagine what our country might look like if we all took hold of our own environments. Our destinies could be transformed. Suddenly we might just remember who we are and what we could be! A bit of sunshine and a fresh wind at our backs and we could begin to remember what a great place this is – or still could be – to live in.

And that's what we are all about at Up! Bringing people together – there's nothing better.

[Greening Wingrove CIC](#)

[Greening Wingrove - The Bike Garden](#)

[The Bike Garden on Facebook](#)



Together, ordinary people can achieve extraordinary results.

Becka Schoettle

Each one of us is responsible for the whole of humankind. We need to think of each other really as brothers and sisters and to be concerned for each other's welfare. Rather than working solely to acquire wealth, we need to do something meaningful, something directed seriously towards the welfare of humanity as a whole.

Dalai Lama

It takes two flints to make a fire.

Louisa May Alcott

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

So what?

We are no longer young.
We are ageing and a little grey,
Our bones crack and our bodies ache.
So what?
Let's paddle in the sea anyway
Let's have a go on the swings.
Let's get tipsy on gin and dance in the garden like we used to!
Let's kiss like teenagers and feel skin against skin.
We are still here, we are alive!
And I for one think that is wonderful!

Samantha Turner

WAITING FOR MY MAN

If oestrogen were a street drug would it come with a warning?

Would shadowy figures in baseball caps and hoodies
skulk after dusk in unlit alleys

pausing to make furtive but urgent phone calls
impatient for The Man to show?

Would restless eyes scan the silent street and
feet scuff and shuffle their impatience?

If oestrogen were a street drug would that be a problem?
I mean would anyone care?

See the touch-paper queue in the street outside the surgery
as they wait for their hit for the weekend.

Would women queue neatly, without complaint, submit dully
with no hint of aggression?

If oestrogen were a street drug would women still be nice?

Abigail Ottley

stirring porridge
quarter turn swap wall for window
a robin

Alison Raybould



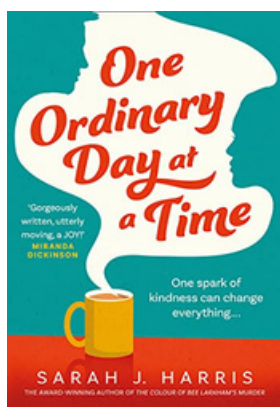
Read Up!

JENNA WARREN

The best books specially selected to lift your spirits

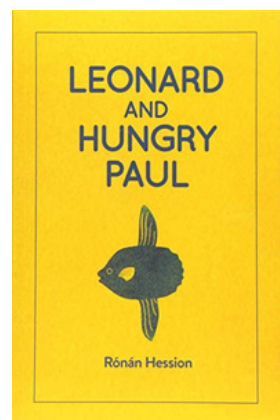
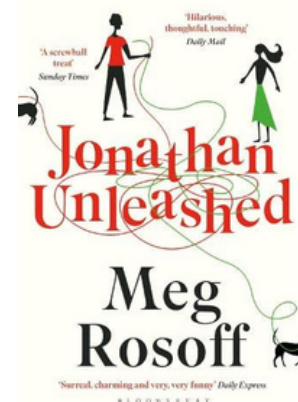


This month, I'm going to talk about one of my favourite fiction genres: 'up lit' or uplifting fiction. I thought this would be a fitting subject for this health-themed edition because these novels often deal with themes of mental health and isolation. The main characters usually find connection, friendship, and a sense of community.



One Ordinary Day at a Time by Sarah J Harris is a wonderful book about an unlikely friendship. Simon and Jodie both work at the same fast-food restaurant. Simon is a former child genius who loves facts and quizzes, and Jodie is a single mum who loves learning, and dreams of attending Cambridge to study English Literature. Both characters are isolated in different ways. After a slightly shaky start, Simon and Jodie realise they can help each other. Simon will help Jodie prepare for her Cambridge interview, and Jodie will help Simon improve his social skills. Simon and Jodie both have secrets, and these are revealed as the novel progresses. This is a lovely book about friendship and the value of education, with fantastic characters who I really rooted for as a reader.

Jonathan Unleashed by Meg Rosoff is a great comic novel written in the wry voice of Jonathan, a young man who has moved to New York to begin a career in advertising. On the surface, Jonathan is exactly where he thinks he should be in his early twenties: he has a fiancée and a good job. However, his job is gradually burning him out, and Jonathan would much rather be an artist. And he and his fiancée may not be quite as compatible as he thinks. This is a funny and insightful novel about the human tendency to do what we think we should do, rather than what is right for us.

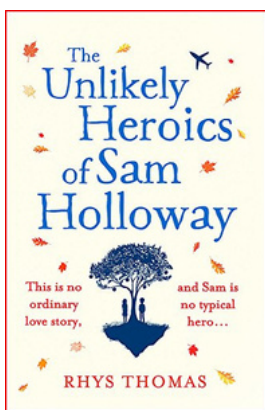
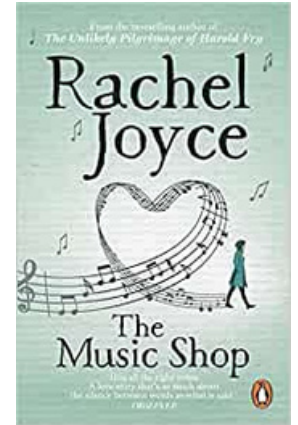


Leonard and Hungry Paul by Rónán Hession is a story about two gentle friends in their thirties, who meet up to chat and play boardgames. The novel follows them through major changes in their respective families - bereavement, new relationships, and marriage. But the book is really about all the tiny moments which make up a life and finding joy in the smallest things. The book is filled with gentle, observational humour which is never at the expense of the protagonists. I particularly loved the fact that they're both introverts, but neither are pressurised to change and become more sociable. They're valued as characters just the way they are.

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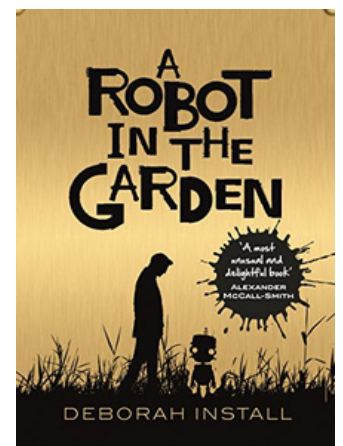
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The Music Shop by Rachel Joyce is set in 1988, and follows Frank, who runs an independent record shop. Frank leads a quiet life, and he has a real gift for introducing customers to the music they need. When Ilse enters his shop one day, Frank finds connection and the potential for romance with a woman who wishes to learn about music. But his new relationship with Ilse brings back painful memories, and eventually she has to come to Frank's rescue. This is a story about music's power to bring people together. It's also a celebration of community, and especially independent shops. I loved Frank's neighbours who run the different shops on his street, and the way they rally round to help each other when needed.



The Unlikely Heroics of Sam Holloway by Rhys Thomas is about a young man who has retreated from the world following a personal tragedy. His life is carefully ordered and quite lonely, and he's having problems at work. But at night, he dons a costume and mask and becomes 'The Phantasm', a local superhero who does good deeds. This way, Sam feels connected with others while keeping them at a safe distance. But then a woman enters his life, and Sam finds he has a choice: keep up his double life or allow himself to get truly close to someone. With his superhero escapades becoming increasingly dangerous, will Sam have the courage to unmask himself? This is a tender and poignant novel with a touch of humour, too.

A Robot in the Garden by Deborah Install is one of the most original novels I've ever read. It's set in a world much like ours, with one main difference: artificial intelligence is much more developed, and it is normal for a household to have its own robot or android. One morning, the main character, Ben Chambers, wakes up to find a small, rusting robot at the bottom of his garden. Ben, who usually eschews responsibility, takes a liking to the robot, who he names 'Tang'. Tang is broken, and Ben becomes determined to fix him. They embark on a journey together, visiting America and then Japan in search of the inventor who made Tang.



It's like a road movie, with a troublesome, childlike robot. Over the course of the novel, we see Ben grow as a character. Caring for Tang helps him confront his own feelings of loss, while also realising he has been in danger of permanently alienating his wife, Amy. The novel tells the story of an unlikely friendship which has a positive impact on Ben and the people around him.

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I can't finish this column without mentioning Matt Haig, a master of this genre and one of my favourite authors. Haig is the author of several quirky, uplifting novels (and a few darker ones), including *The Midnight Library*. But my favourite of his novels is *The Humans*, a wonderful book. An alien finds himself in the body of Andrew Martin, a mathematics professor at Cambridge University. "Andrew" finds humans bewildering, and struggles to fit into his new life. However, he gradually discovers there are good things about being human. Eventually, he is forced to make a choice between carrying out the mission assigned to him by the aliens, and his new life as a human. This is a clever, subtle novel with some excellent humour, and it tells a touching story about an isolated character reconnecting with the world.

Jenna Warren is a bookseller and writer from Teesside. She studied Theatre and later Creative Writing at university. She runs Book Corner, an independent bookshop in Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Her debut novel will be published by Fairlight Books in autumn 2022.



Where Is HoneyB?



Where on earth has Up!'s newest team member been?

Do you recognise this month's mystery location?

If you think you know, or would like to hazard a guess, simply post your suggestion on the Up! facebook group page and tag it #HoneyB. Good luck!

Coming Up!

We hope your monthly prescription of positive news has had the desired effect! Here at Up! HQ we always lean towards the light and we were especially inspired by chatting to the folk behind this month's main features.

We firmly believe that people are stronger together and love seeing what happens when communities get stuck in and make the good stuff happen. Thanks to all our readers who share the magazine with their family and friends. Let's keep it going!

Next month instead of looking up, we'll be looking down! Our focus is on 'what lies beneath'. There are whole worlds beneath our feet, and we'll be exploring a few of them - plus our usual features, of course.

Until then stay healthy, stay happy, stay up!



Much love
Bridget & Harry xx



Don't forget, if you have any suggestions for future articles or features, we'd love to hear from you. Just email us at TalkToUp@gmail.com