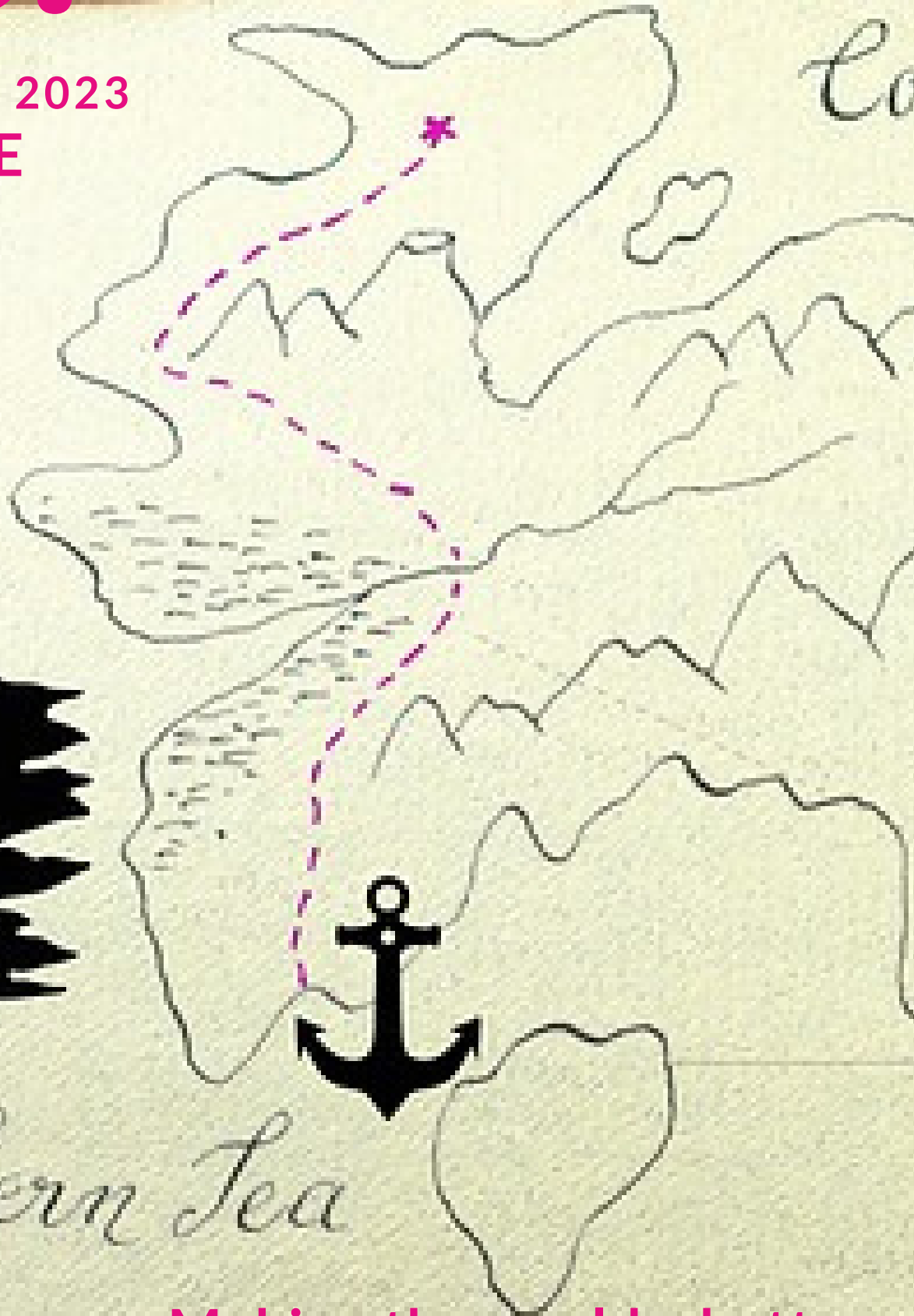


Up!

NOVEMBER 2023
TREASURE



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

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Up Front!

Welcome back everyone to what is our third birthday issue - hasn't the time flown!

Apologies for the missing issue last month, we had a family bereavement and, to be honest, just weren't up to putting the magazine together. The first thing we'd like to do is to say 'thank you' to all you lovely readers and friends for your many messages of condolence, they were very much appreciated.

In fact, at times like these, it's great to be reminded of the true worth of good friends. Speaking of which ... welcome to our new 'Treasure' issue. In keeping with both the theme and our recent experiences, you'll see our first article is giving thanks to the national treasure that is the NHS. We saw at first hand what a wonderful job all the staff routinely do under such difficult circumstances.

So, grab yourself a cuppa and get ready to share our booty!

Bridget & Harry x



*This issue is dedicated to Alan Shone, 1928-2023
a lifelong advocate of the power of kindness and positivity*

Check Up!

HARRY GALLAGHER

A thank you to the people who really keep us all going when the chips are down

For this month's Up! 'Treasure' issue we thought it would be instructive to have a good look at the UK's most popular national treasure – the NHS. If you'll permit, I'll begin with a wee story linked to Up!'s beginnings. As eagle-eyed readers may know, we began this small odyssey just over three years ago at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which for a short time every Thursday night at 8 o'clock, doorsteps up and down the UK (and elsewhere) rang to the echo of heartfelt applause and the clanging of pots and pans. There we all stood in what feels in hindsight like more innocent days, giving thanks for all frontline workers who laboured on throughout a torrid time that none of us had ever experienced before. Chief among these were people who worked in hospitals, dressed in cumbersome and highly uncomfortable PPE, doing 12-hour shifts and longer, all the while looking after our most vulnerable people. What they witnessed during this period is barely imaginable.

Little wonder that NHS nurses are often referred to by the public as 'Angels' (a label that all nurses I know hate – they are just ordinary men and women doing invaluable jobs under very trying conditions). When we think of NHS staff we tend to picture traditional looking nurses and doctors, the latter perhaps dressed in a white lab coat, with a stethoscope around their neck. In short, a picture straight from black and white Carry On films (*that's enough of Kenneth Williams and Hattie Jacques, thank you very much* – Ed.).



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In truth, the NHS – surely the jewel in the crown of our fair country – is a massive and diverse organisation, which provides a huge variety of medical services when we most need it. In the words of its chief

creator and champion, Nye Bevan:



Photo credit [here](#)

“It will provide you with all medical, dental and nursing care. Everyone – rich or poor, man, woman or child – can use it or any part of it. There are no charges, except for a few special items. There are no insurance qualifications. But it is not a

“charity”. You are all paying for it, mainly as taxpayers, and it will relieve your money worries in time of illness.”

That last sentence is an interesting one, isn't it? “It will relieve your money worries in time of illness.” Because it hints at what there is to treasure about our NHS – it's ours, and without it we'd be in a situation akin to the one that exists in America: private companies delivering care and if you can't get insurance – and don't forget that in certain circumstances once you've had, say a heart attack, your insurance for the same condition can become null and void – then you're snookered. Costs spiral massively and many people have gone bankrupt, losing their homes purely due to being ill.

Check Up!

HARRY GALLAGHER

Our NHS of course has been there since 1948, launched when the country was to all intents and purposes bankrupt, and that is an indication of just what we can achieve when the vision and the political will is there. Post-WWII, the country was carrying unprecedented amounts of debt and people were itching for change, for a better, fairer world. Up until then, ordinary people died at home and in utter agony, often for want of what we now view as (and was then too, to be fair) routine hospital treatment. Among the poor working classes, ill-health was dreaded. I certainly remember tales from my childhood of grandparents who had removed their own teeth with the aid of string, door handles and – I suspect – copious amounts of strong alcohol!

Of course, there was resistance to the new service from certain quarters – particularly doctors and dentists. Bevan, when asked how he had got the introduction past the latter group, famously quipped, “*I filled their mouths with gold*” – a reference to his having to agree that they could carry on delivering private healthcare alongside their new NHS duties.

Since those tentative beginnings the National Health Service has of course grown beyond anyone’s wild imaginings, a necessary development given vast improvements in treatment and technology, alongside population growth. But at the heart of it, it could well be argued that the range of treatments delivered by our NHS represents the very best of us all, and is surely an institution worth fighting for in an age when it is often used as a political football.

In these austere times when money is tight



among ordinary people – though not so much, you’ll notice, among the classes of people who didn’t want it back in 1948 – the NHS is an easy target for politicians who’d like to hive it off. Any poorly delivered or costly service, any tragically avoidable death makes headline news, while the routine, everyday easing of pain or curing of life-threatening diseases and conditions goes unremarked. This skewing of facts is, I believe, deliberate and is designed to ease our collective grip on something that matters deeply to us.

At this point I must admit an inherent bias on the part of your columnist, which takes us back to the start of this article. During that aforementioned lockdown, both of my daughters worked on the NHS frontline. They and their colleagues were in the same care unit, working 12-hour shifts in terrible, stressful conditions – and for a shamefully low rate of pay (there’s another thing – why are the people who kept us all fed and alive during lockdown so poorly paid while those at the top who broke all the rules reap obscene rewards? Ah well, another day for that one).

Back when we were doing all that clapping and clanging on doorsteps, at the unit they worked at, in an incredibly moving gesture, the police turned up in force – we’re talking up to a dozen vehicles here – every Thursday night and at the appointed time switched on their blue flashing lights, put the sirens on, then got out and applauded the staff

Check Up!

HARRY GALLAGHER

inside the unit. My daughters reported that staff morale inside the units soared. Just that simple and public act of thanks had such a huge effect on them all and made the rest of the time worth it. Ordinary people doing difficult jobs thanking each other. People can be just great, can't they.



What happened next is the dispiriting bit. Weeks after the initial applause stopped, it was pay review time. The then Home Secretary said that there would be no pay rise for those staff this year, because they were 'unskilled'. Those words prompted me to write this poem, which I'll leave beneath for you to ponder.

Here's to our NHS and all who sail in her, and a sad shake of the head to conniving politicians.

'Unskilled'

*She is not 'unskilled',
she is full of humanity,
she deals with it daily -
the blood and spit of life
in all its dark glory.*

*She is particularly good
at holding the hand of your mum,
who doesn't know you anymore,
who cries in the night
for a hug from her daddy,
long cold in the ground.*

*She has a degree in There There,
performed in sing-song
at four in the morning
while changing wet sheets
and making it better.*

*Her cloak of invisibility,
an unwanted superpower,
renders her open to attack
from gladhanding climbers
on their way upwards
to nowhere special,
greasing the pole behind them.*

*She has diplomas in kindness,
patience and back breaking work,
to the background noise
of the sneers and smears of some jerk
who wouldn't have the wherewithall
to do her job.*

*She is as skilled as magicians.
Her body is the foundry
of a nation suddenly grateful,
her heart its steel press;
if she falls, we all fall.*

*She is powered by thanks
and a job well done,
the pacified pulse
of a world gone haywire.*

*She is he, is husband, midwife,
cleaner, nurse, care giver, osteopath;
and she stands as mighty as a forest
as she carries us all on her back.*

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF TREASURE

Coming for a Song

Children are walking from the primary
to the big school
for the Christmas Carol Service,
trudging two abreast in a crocodile
with the smallest holding hands;
the teachers are looking out for cars
at every crossing.

There's the sort of blessing I would wish,
a memory I'd hug all my days:
having somebody beside me
to hold hands with,
someone at the junctions
making sure the cars slow down,
and in half an hour, a song.

Donald Adamson

Gift

One of those bright March days
with winter, back turned, in a sulk
and the sun urging the soil to wake up.

Then a sudden startled leap from wire to bush -
a splash of red, yellow, black
on creamy beige.

Just time to slip out my phone,
snap a useless photograph of blurry dots
before I frightened them away.

One of those bright March days,
made delightful by this small gift
of Waxwings, proud visitors,
showing off their ruby jewels.

Tonnie Richmond

An Ordinary Magic

It's a slow process.
Chop, slice, cut,
gather the vegetable detritus.
Tip it into the trendy crockpot
sitting on your kitchen windowsill.
When it's full, take it down the garden
to that special place
where, with a little help
the magic will begin.

Add some browns -
paper, cardboard, dried grass,
mix and give the occasional stir.

Now wait. Time, microbes, worms and bugs
do the transmutation. Six months later,
crumbly, wonderful muck.

Tonnie Richmond

Write Up!

THE DOOR-TO-DOOR POET

Meet Rowan McCabe, the man with the most dangerous - and rewarding - job in poetry!

Tell us a bit about the day-to-day life of a door-to-door poet when you're on the road making contact with folk ...

Well firstly, for anyone who isn't familiar, Door-to-Door Poetry involves me knocking on strangers' doors and offering to write poems for them, for free, on any subject of their choosing. I try and find a handful of people in every place I visit. Two weeks later, I go back and perform the poems on the doorstep for every person. I also give them a written copy.

In terms of day-to-day life, my last big adventure was travelling to 12 places around England from 2019-2020. Usually, I picked the place because I felt like it was saying something about an issue which was at the front of the public's consciousness. So I went to an Anti-Fracking occupation camp in Blackpool for example, and also



Boston in Lincolnshire, because it was the town that voted higher than any other to leave the EU.

An average day would involve me hopping on a train, probably multiple trains, maybe a few buses, to some far flung place I've



never been to before. I'm absolutely hopeless at geography, so a lot of the time I didn't really have any idea where I was going.

I'd check into a hotel, spend the evening having a curry, then in the morning I'd grab my coat and briefcase and get out and start knocking on doors.

I did Door-to-Door Poetry in the North East first, but nothing quite compares to the fear of knocking on a stranger's door somewhere far from home and trying to persuade them to have a poem written for them. It was an intense year. When I look back on it now, I can't believe I actually had the audacity to try it. Boston was the first proper place I attempted it outside of my home turf and I was sure it was going to be a total failure. And yet, it wasn't, and here we are.

It's such a lovely idea to deliver the poem as a gift on your return. What's been your favourite experience?

It feels like a massive cliché, but the truth is there's too many to mention!

One that springs to mind is meeting Alan in Bensham. He invited me in but made it clear that he had no interest in poetry whatsoever. But he made me a cup of tea anyway and started to tell me about his life.

Alan was born in Germany shortly after the second world war. His mother had Jewish heritage and his family had fled the country. But

Write Up!

THE DOOR-TO-DOOR POET

when they got to the UK things didn't get much better. It was just after the war, everyone was paranoid, and Alan and his family found themselves in a bit of an out-of-the-frying-pan-into-the-fire scenario. Later, when they moved from Scotland to England, they were singled out again. Alan told me, if he ever saw people being racist in the street or on public transport, he felt compelled to challenge them. I wrote him a poem about that.

When I took it back Alan seemed to really enjoy it. In fact, it inspired him to get involved in the local poetry scene. He came along to see some of my shows and also went to a poetry event that my friend Jenni had organised. They met up a few times. To see the little ripple effect that our conversation had had was magic.

Sadly, Alan died a few years after this. His family invited me to the funeral. There were so many people there, they were spilling out of the church into the car park. Alan said meeting me had been one of the highlights of his life. In moments like this, the project took on an



incredibly personal aspect. It had a really deep effect on me.

Has the project panned out as you expected or were there surprises along the way?

Definitely surprises. I went to Bensham because it has a famously large orthodox Jewish population and I thought it could be interesting to speak to some of those people. Alan wasn't actually Jewish, and neither were any of the other people I spoke to. But I did end up chatting to a Muslim who asked for one about hating



snakes. In Boston, I thought the topic of Brexit would probably come up. It didn't. Suffice to say, every time I went into a place thinking I knew what to expect, something totally different happened.

What would you say you've learned from the experiences?

Going back to this idea of the unexpected, I think the biggest lesson was that a place's reputation doesn't have any bearing on the kind of conversations you can have. And what I think is interesting is that I wasn't the only one making these assumptions. When I spoke to people about where I was going, everyone seemed to have a strong opinion about it. "You're going to Moss Side in Manchester? That's really dangerous." "You're going to a posh area [like Grantchester in Cambridge]? No one will answer the door." The reality is often very different from what myself and others thought

Write Up!

THE DOOR-TO-DOOR POET

would happen. And I think there's a huge lesson in that. About the way we interact with strangers. And about the way we go about our life in general.

So what's next for you now?

Well, I am currently working on a book about Door-to-Door Poetry. It's a mixture of non-fiction and poetry, which I'm learning is actually a bit of a difficult thing to pitch to a publisher. So it's taking a little longer than I'd hoped, but I'm chipping away at that. I'm also in talks with a few people about making the project into a radio show.

Aside from that, I've started working on a collection of 'normal' poetry. I've been amassing poems that I haven't written on doorsteps over the years, so it feels like a good time to focus on getting that stuff out there too.

With a bit of luck there'll be something on the shelves in the next year.

To find out more about the project visit

www.doortodoorpoetry.com

Books available from www.rowanthe poet.co.uk

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Quirky Treasure Troves



Dog Collar Museum, Leeds

"Collars in the collection range from sixteenth-century German iron collars with fearsome spikes and ornate gilt collars of the Baroque period, to finely-chased 19th century silver collars and 20th century examples fashioned from tyres, beads and plastic."

Derwent Pencil Museum

"Located in Keswick, the home of the first pencil, visitors enter this museum through a replica graphite mine which would have served as the source of the pencil industry over three centuries ago."

Discover secret WW2 pencils with hidden maps; one of the largest colour pencils in the world measuring almost 8 metres; The Queen's diamond Jubilee pencil; miniature pencil sculptures; and much more!"



Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF TREASURE

Hoard

The Galloway hoard from Viking times
was full of coins and gold,
priceless armlets and precious silks
whose folds gave cushioned rest.
Amongst the prizes, a vessel stood,
its silver gilt chased with leopards and tigers
to guard the store within.

Amidst the treasures held inside
were two balls of dirt.
Protected, cherished,
transported with care
across who knows what
distance and peril,
to be buried in this Scottish ground.

Perhaps it is dirt from a distant garden
fondly remembered, dreamt of still,
or tokens from graves of those
loved and missed,
a tactile reminder clan.

What makes a traveller
value this soil, adding weight
to a well-laden pack,
useless for barter or trade?
Not every treasure
will shimmer or glisten,
some just tell of home to
those who listen.

Gerda Pickin

Buried deep within

Did I want buried rubies
diamonds and gold
No!
My finest silver
is
currently on a school bus
trying to find her way
around a social circus
She needs to know
that
the best treasure is found by
Pushing
through the dirt.

I've moved to a land with smugglers
They hid it near a rock
I wonder if they were
more
scared of getting caught
or
the other people seeking their
treasure
now the rock is falling
I hope the legends and stories do not fall away.

Your birthstone was opal
it makes sense for someone who
was so many colours
part rebellious
part responsible
part mother
part wife
part fighter
part unlucky
Always breaking through the iron.

Sheena Proudlock

Uplift!

LIVE WELL WITH CANCER

Meet the woman to whom the Big C means Care, Compassion and Community

Where did the idea for Live Well with Cancer come from, and what's your vision for this young charity?

One of the most rewarding roles in my 30 years as a Cancer Nurse Specialist was as a Macmillan One to One Complex Case Manager in the Living With and Beyond Cancer nursing team. The service ran for 7 years with funding from various charities and the Northern Cancer Alliance. Unfortunately, the service never received statutory status, closing in 2019.

To this day, I will never understand why such a successful service did not receive permanent funding. After hearing the outcry from existing service users who were concerned about who would fill the gap, I founded Live Well with Cancer with the aim of supporting anyone affected by cancer in North Tyneside and the surrounding areas.

Together with three other trustees who all had lived experience, either as patients or as a carer, we settled on three core values that would guide our mission. **We Care** about people affected by cancer, **We Empower** them to improve their wellbeing, and **We are a Community**.

Our vision is to create a service that provides the support people need when they need it, collaborating and working in partnership with the other wonderful organisations providing invaluable support to our community.

When we set out four years ago, we dreamt of



having a café with a garden and a community centre above. As of July this year, we moved in to our new Wellbeing Centre above North Bank Café at 38 Nile Street in North Shields.

What was behind the decision to locate your premises in the centre of North Shields?

Before we moved into our own premises, we held workshops, events, and support groups in various community spaces in North Tyneside, with many located in North Shields. We always knew that, when the time was right, we wanted to deliver our services in the heart of a community. We also knew that there wasn't a building in the coastal area where people affected by cancer could drop in for support.

When the opportunity arose to move in to Nile Street, it was probably a year earlier than we had planned, and yet we could not turn down the chance to have such an amazing space. North Shields is ideally placed with its new transport hub and easy access for everyone in North Tyneside.

Uplift!

LIVE WELL WITH CANCER

The North East has some of the highest rates of cancer in the UK, and evidence suggests that many people are reluctant to seek support. We want to change that by engaging with our community and offering many different forms of support. Our Wellbeing Centre is a community space for our workshops, events, support groups, and 1-2-1s, while North Bank Café is a comfortable space where people can drop in for a coffee and a cake or seek support in an informal space.



A cancer diagnosis was often viewed as a death sentence. How have things changed in recent years?

Things have changed dramatically since I started my career in cancer nursing 30 years ago. When I first started, many of those with a new cancer diagnosis would ask 'How long have I got?' There is a definite shift to 'What are you going to do about it?' Education and research have been pivotal in changing the mindset of many, but there is still

lots to do in terms of educating people. There is still the fear attached to the word 'cancer'. Despite the improved cancer outcomes, older adults often associate cancer with death.

Advances in research have led to significant improvements in detecting and treating cancer earlier. The development of new cancer treatments has helped to take a more individualised approach to cancer treatments. Research performed by Cancer Research UK indicates that 50% of people diagnosed with cancer in England and Wales survive their disease for ten years or more.

For those people who can't be cured, the advances in treatment options have meant that they are becoming more manageable chronic diseases for many, where people can live with their cancer and maintain a good quality of life.

Here at Up! we love the fact that magic happens when people get together. Tell us about some of your favourite encounters since setting up Live Well with Cancer.

Live Well with Cancer is all about community. We love to get together, especially over the festive period. Our Christmas Fayre has become a highlight of our calendar, even if the Grinch keeps turning up!

One of my favourite community campaigns is our Christmas Bauble Appeal, which we have run since the beginning of our charity. The idea for the campaign came from one of our trustees, who felt very isolated having her cancer treatment over the Christmas period. She felt the world was carrying on around her whilst she felt at her lowest. The suggestion was to make Christmas baubles to hand out to people undergoing treatment over the festive period.

Each year, the campaign has gotten bigger as our growing community pull together to create

Uplift!

LIVE WELL WITH CANCER



handmade baubles. We have volunteers from all over the UK, with many groups taking part, including schools, guides, and sewing groups. We often receive heartfelt letters from the crafters giving their reasons for making their baubles. Last year, we delivered 1,000 baubles to our local hospitals and hospices, with many of these made during our An Afternoon with Michael Bauble event, an amazing session where 55 crafters were crammed in together making Christmas baubles.

More recently, more than 60 people braved the North Sea to celebrate our fourth birthday. It was



amazing to see so many people dipping at Cullercoats bay to raise funds for our charity.

Do you have any tips for anyone looking to support a friend or family member diagnosed with cancer?

Everyone is different, but I can give some general advice. Generally, giving them a friendly hand squeeze or hug can go a long way. Give them a call or send a message to let them know you're thinking of them. Let them know that if they want to talk, you'll be there to listen, and then make yourself available. Respect their need for privacy. Don't make it about you.

- Make time for a regular check-in phone call or text message. Your friend/family member can respond when they feel up to it. Try not to ask a question as they might not have the energy to answer.
- Be flexible – they may need to change plans last minute as the effects of cancer are unpredictable.
- Always check if it's okay to visit. Let them know it's perfectly okay if they don't want you to visit. Don't take anything personally.
- Don't be scared to laugh together when it's appropriate to do so.
- Don't try and fix or ignore uncomfortable topics of conversation. Be there and listen. Try to listen instead of thinking about what you are going to say next. When the person with cancer is talking, pay attention to what they are saying.
- Do not be afraid to make plans for the future. This gives your friend or family member something to look forward to, which is especially important because cancer treatment can be long and tiring.

Uplift!

LIVE WELL WITH CANCER

- Offer practical support, such as cooking, childcare, or lifts to places.
- If you commit to helping them, it is important that you follow through on your promise.
- Try not to let your friend's cancer get in the way of your friendship. As much as possible, treat them the same as you always have.
- Talk about topics other than cancer. Ask about their interests, hobbies, and other topics not related to cancer. People going through treatment often need a break from talking about the disease.

Finally, don't be afraid to talk with your friend. It is better to say, "I don't know what to say", than to

stop calling or visiting because you are scared of not choosing the "right words".

Here are examples of phrases that are unhelpful or even harmful:

- I know just how you feel.
- I know just what you should do.
- I'm sure you'll be fine.
- I know you'll fight this.
- Don't worry.
- How long do you have?

Instead, saying these things can help show your care and support:

- I'm sorry this has happened to you.
- If you ever feel like talking, I am here to listen.
- What are you thinking of doing, and how can I help?
- I care about you.
- I'm thinking about you.

www.livewellwithcancer.co.uk



There are amazingly wonderful people in all walks of life; some familiar to us and others not. Stretch yourself and really get to know people. People are in many ways one of our greatest treasures.

Bryant H. McGill

I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures.

Lao Tzu

It seems like the world's major cities are getting more and more homogenized, so I think it's important to go off-road and find treasures in offbeat destinations.

Cynthia Rowley

*Kiss a lover, dance a measure, find your name and buried treasure.
Face your life, its pain, its pleasure, leave no path untaken.*

Neil Gaiman

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF TREASURE

Harvest

The seasons turn,
in spring we plant the grain,
with rain and sun fields go from green to gold,
and then, it's harvest time again
our labour reaps the crop that we have sown.

The morning sun burns off the dew,
scythes burnished, bright and ready,
the Headman sets the pace for all,
he's broad and strong and steady,
in the reaper's wake we stoop and take
and tie the sheaves of barley,
the stooks are set in ranks to dry,
a regimented army.

Full harvest moon casts its silver bloom,
we clear the fields and hear the Church bells ring,
horses home the bounty bring,
we've stacked and thatched,
all's safely gathered in.

The tithe barn's roof is steeply pitched with ancient oaken rafters,
on clean scrubbed boards the supper's set,
the air is full of laughter,
the young folk dance, the Fiddler plays
his tunes are bright and jolly,
the children watch the Old Maid's
twist the new straw into dollies.

The year is done,
the winter's solstice comes,
the ploughboys turn the furrows straight and true,
cold east winds blow, to bring the frost and snow,
to break the earth that once more we can sow.

Graham Bell

Natural

(After W.B. Yeats: 'Sailing to Byzantium')

For myself I would not wish to be
some jewelled artefact
but berries on the moor
eaten by birds and snails.

Or picked by a woman
filling her basket, taking what she needs
for jam, changing my form,
ladling me into a jar
and storing me in the dark

until with passing time
a stranger would arrive
rummaging about the house,
sifting through the junk
for – who knows? – treasure,
coming upon jars of darkest red

still with the taste of the fruit
that grew on the moor
and the sun and the rain and the earth
that made me.

Donald Adamson



Digging Up!

STEVE LOWE

Up!'s outdoors man has all the right stuff!

Grey Northumberland skies, in all their shades, release their cargo of rain, right on cue, as the first trowel starts to scrape the sub-soil revealed by the machine. Within minutes, clothes are drenched and torrents pour down noses, dripping into the early excavations. Yet enthusiasm remains at its highest as the amateur archaeologists begin to unravel the secrets of the past, submerged in the landscape and only hinted at by pictures from space.

Undeterred by the rain, the army of volunteers toil determinedly, under expert supervision, and like a well-crafted mystery tale, the picture of the past



begins to form. Clues unearthed along the way redraft the past, sometimes mislead or deflect. A roman bell, misplaced in context, surprises the seekers of the dark age secrets.

But experience and perseverance slowly revive the past as smears, lumps and bumps begin to guide the

workers and layers are peeled back, hidden relics revealed and the jigsaw has another piece. As the final day approaches, those present can reflect on the treasures recovered.

Bags of slag, decayed clay circles, encrusted metal blades and whorls from spindles, then the spectre of long-gone wooden buildings within the horizons of the past. Priceless stuff with little material worth, but collectively this is archaeological gold! Probably the only known Saxon industrial site in the north, before the Vikings arrived to shake the foundations of the golden age of Northumbria.

A real gem of a site, hidden from view for centuries. Magic.

I have to admit, this is typical of my approach to treasure. Nothing could be further from Indiana Jones (I don't have a whip or a fedora), as an archaeologist's wealth is information, especially where documentation is absent.

One of the common questions that I get is "*what is the best thing you have found?*" and people could be disappointed to hear me say "*the next thing*", instead of regaling them with tales of precious stones and hidden gold. In that regard Dr Jones has much to answer for. But the essence is the same because I just love STUFF.

My home could be described as a house of "wonder-rooms", or as "cabinets of curiosity". Because, unlike my sister's clutter-free rooms, mine are laden with STUFF. I have the happy opportunity to indulge myself through things I find when I am out and about. Things where shape, texture, history, context and intrigue provide my curious mind with stimuli that resonate within me in a never-ending search for knowledge and understanding. And probably, above all, memories.

I feel that no room reveals more about me than my kitchen wall, plastered in words and images, of

Pick Me Up!

HARRY GALLAGHER

Making a song and dance about ordinary people who do extraordinary things

So here we are ... three years young and going strong. We decided to theme this month's issue as 'Treasure' for one very good reason: the treasures being all of the people and organisations we've been fortunate enough to feature and celebrate in the last three years.

And this article is about one particular organisation we featured in an early Up! issue – the good folk of Phoenix, er...Folk! Or more accurately it's about two of the mainstays of Phoenix Folk who make up the folk duo Miggins Fiddle. Step forward guitarist Maurice Condie and violinist Marina Dodgson, who since the first Covid outbreak have shared a similar trajectory to us here at Up!



Over the last three years, Maurice and Marina have become such firm friends and great champions of Up! that it's hard to believe our days and purposes weren't always interlinked. All of which brings me to the reason for this article.

After working together on a joint project marrying my poetry to their originally composed



folk tunes, all set on the Northumbrian Coast (Frets'n'Bows'n'Tales'n'Ales), we were discussing what we could work on for our next collaboration.

After much head scratching, and 'umming and 'arr-ing Marina suddenly said, "Why don't we do a book and album about 'Up!'?"

After much prevaricating, trying and failing to think of reasons why not, I gave in. No sooner had I agreed to the project, Marina set about selecting her favourite Up! features from our stash of back issues and I was tasked with writing a poem for every one of them, while Miggins Fiddle wrote a tune to match every poem.

Miggallagher's Pick-Me-Up features poems and tunes based on a range of our favourite interviews from the past three years – from Nessie Hunter Steve Feltham to Maggies Centres to BAY Foodbank via a Community Garden, a Syrian Poet/Refugee and all points in between.

And it's not just a book ... it's an album! If you open the front page, you'll find a code. Simply click onto this page, enter the code and you get to download the album onto your system, so you can hear the tunes and poems as well as read them.

Miggins Fiddle and I are currently touring the book/album, so keep an eye out for us. And in the meantime, remember there are great people doing wonderful everyday things all over the place. You just have to keep your eyes and ears open and - of course - stay Up!

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF TREASURE

Engagement Ring

He wrapped it in a sonnet. I meant so much to him, he was the luckiest man alive. Now open the present was the fourteenth line. Inside, five Ceylon sapphires in a cross, diamonds, gold. I lost it at school once, offered a reward. Six months later it dropped at the feet of two girls tidying the paper store. I kept my word, gave them the reward. If all promises were so easily kept. Years later, emptying the pockets of a suit to take to Sketchley, I found a jeweller's receipt for earrings in an inside pocket. A gift for my secretary, a thanks for her support. Transpires, the level of support was beyond her paygrade. I took off both rings, hid them in the bottom of a jewellery case, forgot them in the storm of divorce. When I tried to sell them I learned they weren't worth much. Divorced and over it, I put them in a velvet pouch, tied the drawstring tight, took them on holiday. By the harbour wall at Pafos, I put some pebbles in the sac, hurled it, lost treasure, into the Mediterranean Sea.

Rachel Davies

FINDING MYSELF ALONE IN THE MUSEUM

The tarnished coins
the fragments of pottery
the corroded weapons
the long-lost jewellery
*don't worry -
someone will discover you
someone will pick up the pieces
someone will hold you
someone will treasure you...
...it's just a question of time.*

John Lanyon

Next month's theme is: WINTER

Feel free to interpret the theme as you see fit
and send up to 3 poems to:
admin@positivelyup.co.uk

Full submission details can be found on our
website: [https://positivelyup.co.uk/poetry-
submissions](https://positivelyup.co.uk/poetry-submissions)

Growing Up!

JENNIFER C WILSON

Up!'s resident marine biologist dives deep into her past in search of treasure

Well then, treasure...

A lot of options for a history-loving marine biologist, with X marking the spot on many a pirate's treasure map, deep-sea minerals being worth (more than) their weight in gold, and of course, biological treasures, in our rare and wonderful critters.

What am I starting off with then? Actually, a bit of a call-back. In Britain, arguably the most famous 'treasure' (whether you agree with the institution or not) are the Crown Jewels. These days, the current set are safely under lock-and-key in the Tower of London, but historically, our monarchs



haven't always been so careful with the physical representations of their rule. The infamous King John, as I've written before, apparently lost his in the Wash, when fleeing during his spectacular fall-out with the Barons. (That's my history AND marine biology in a single fact!)

And that leads me seamlessly into another treasure; the joyful nostalgia for the things we loved as children.

How do I get from King John to childhood nostalgia?

A certain (now silver) fox.



In November 2023, Disney's *Robin Hood* burst onto our screens, and for many of us, into our hearts. Not wanting to lower the tone of this fine publication, but the titular rogue has, over the years,

stolen far more than King John's gold... (I am not ashamed to admit that one of my earliest crushes was on a cartoon fox!). On a recent rewatch of the Disney version, followed within a week or so by *Prince of Thieves* (watched primarily in memory of our beautiful, cruelly-destroyed, Robin Hood Tree), it was amazing how many features of the Disney version are captured in probably the most famous iteration. The clucking lady-in-waiting of Maid Marion, crashing in through a window, and of course, the wit.

In case I haven't made it clear enough: you should watch/re-watch both of these films. Immediately.

I read an old article on the BBC earlier this week, which talked about how media memories formed during our childhoods can act like

Growing Up!

JENNIFER C WILSON

geological layers, and with a few very broad exceptions, you can have a pretty good stab at aging an individual based on what television programmes they enjoyed. Now, two of those examples which don't work would be *Dr Who* and *Blue Peter*, which have seemingly just 'always been there', but for programmes which had a much shorter original run, perhaps only a series or two, you've got a good chance.



Going back (ish) to our fox, *Maid Marian and her Merry Men* was a favourite of mine, which ran from 1989 to 1994. Very odd to think that I could have gone straight from that onto the first series of *Friends!* Because of its popularity, it was repeated quite a few times in the following years, but if you remember the original, it probably means you're going to be in your late-thirties/early-forties now.

Of course, a BIG assumption is that you're watching programmes made for children AS A CHILD. Recently, there was an anniversary on Twitter, of the live-action, 'original' *Horrible Histories* series. I think most of us can agree, it's an excellent programme. And that's the problem. I

could have sworn I watched that as a child. But nope. The series I love, with the 'six idiots', ran from 2009 to 2014. Despite my imagined memories, at no stage was I the target demographic for that series. So, there are plenty of anomalies that can throw the 'TV for geological aging' argument, but I still think it's fun, and tangentially treasure-related, so let's stick with it. What 'treasure' would you be uncovering from your youth? As a related activity, why not head over to YouTube now and enjoy some clips from an old favourite; it's remarkably good for your mental health, let me assure you.

In this run-up to Christmas, I think it's important to take as much time as you can for yourself, and uncovering some personal 'treasures' can be a really lovely way to do this.

And of course, it doesn't need to be media-related.

We may not have many days of great weather left in the year, but as I'm writing this, it's one of those gorgeous 'cold but bright' days, where there's not a cloud in the sky, the trees are stunning shades, and the air is relatively still; the perfect day to get out into nature and rediscover some joys. I'm thinking nature walks, heading to the closest water body and just 'being near it', or even just grabbing a cup of tea outdoors, if there's somewhere you can achieve that. For me, I love my early-morning walks along the coast on days like this, and am keeping my fingers crossed they last a little longer yet...

*As well as being a full-time marine biologist,
Jennifer also writes historical fiction.*

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Coming Up!

So here we are, our birthday candles are blown out, the cake has been reduced to mere crumbs on the plate and we're both several pounds heavier. Onwards!

Here we go full speed into winter, which just happens to be next month's theme. The clocks have changed, the nights are drawing in at a frankly disgraceful rate and the fat man in red is priming his reindeer for the Big Day.

Having said all of that, do remember that the legend of St Nicholas is completely unconnected to the human invention that is the obscene consumerist present buying spree that we are all encouraged to gorge ourselves in. Instead at this point, perhaps we should take a good look around the world and give some thought to that most unfashionable word - peace.

We'll be back next month with all the best of the season!

In the meantime, we wish you love and peace.

Bridget & Harry (and Alfie) xx



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