

Welcome

From Jane Chiodini



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Summer has arrived, the weather is hot, although today the protective roof has just been used for the first time ever in the Wimbledon tennis tournament (we got all the way to Friday before needing it), and the news of the death of Michael Jackson has stunned the world.

Having written this editorial since the magazine began in 1996, I find this one the hardest I've ever had to write. Those of you who follow it will know I speak from the heart, with honesty and, I hope, humour. I work as a nurse part time in the NHS, have my own training business in my specialist subject of travel medicine, and also have a passion for card making. Since Easter my world has temporarily turned upside down with news that came totally out of the blue and I find myself having to be a patient within my own profession - having been diagnosed with breast cancer, picked up on routine mammogram screening.

The latest statistics from Cancer Research UK tell us that breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, in 2006 more than 45,000 women were diagnosed with the disease. On a more positive side, breast cancer survival rates have been improving for more than twenty years. Six weeks ago I had major reconstruction surgery and my first cycle of chemotherapy commenced last week. We all cope with life events in different ways, but I prefer to focus on the positives so would like to share this amazing thing that has happened as a result of my diagnosis.

If I sound 'chirpy', that's good, I don't want to upset or cause distress to anyone. Believe me when I say I've found the emotional rollercoaster overwhelming at times. One of my greatest fears has been hair loss and researching on the internet I found a website set up by professional hairdresser Trevor Sorbie MBE, who was inspired through the personal experience of a relative undergoing cancer treatment, and this initiative www.mynewhair.org has two sides, one to advise women losing their

hair about wigs and styling options, and the other is to train and advise other hairdressers hoping to offer this service or advice in their salon. I made further enquiries and as a result, two weeks ago, found myself in his salon in Covent Garden for a one hour appointment during which he was also training a lovely hairdresser from Scotland.

Trevor discussed the issues with me for over 20 minutes and then suggested he cut my hair short in preparation, which he duly did into a style I wore for years as a younger Mum, one that is quick and easy to manage and a great bonus in the hot weather now too! Just yesterday I returned and Trevor took me in a taxi to a wig shop in Kensington called Trendco, where he proceeded to choose an appropriate wig, then we returned to his salon where he cut it to personalise it for me. By nature I'm a very 'giving' type of person and find it hard to 'take' but I cannot quite believe not only the generosity of this unassuming and most modest gentleman, but his gifted skill and gentle caring. This positive act of kindness has meant the world in a way I will never be able to fully express and the NHS would do well to take a lesson from the psychological approach to such care. Of course hair loss is not life threatening, but nurturing, by someone who takes one fears to heart, can only help to improve self esteem and thereby support recovery in such a difficult time. Please look at the website and see what it's all about, especially if you know of anyone in a similar situation.

Another great plus is that I've got in to my card making with full vigour, I have extra time and a hobby that gives me great pleasure. This has had a soothing effect, so next time I'll let you know just how many I've made!

Until next time, have a great summer and enjoy your card making!

Jane

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