Bucket list ticked, ambition achieved

My name is Patricia Miall and I have been a member of Cardigan u3a since I retired in 2014 when I moved to West Wales.

Those that know me will testify that I love to be outdoors as such as I possibly can. I am an active member of the Tuesday walking group with my husband Leonard, where we have made some lovely friends, whilst discovering the beautiful landscape and environment that we live in. I have also been a member of the Cave Girl Bootcamp group which exists in this area and includes hardcore training outside in all weathers. This group aids its leader Derek Burton to raise money and awareness for local children in a less fortunate position than ourselves. Additionally, I have also been a member of Aberporth Rowing Club where we row Celtic Longboats with a 4 man crew and cox around our beautiful coastline taking in the wonderful marine life as we go. I would have taken part in league races up and down the Welsh coast until Covid struck. Like everyone else all activities stopped. Fortunately because we live in a rural environment, we were still able to walk the country lanes and enjoy the hedgerows and flora and fauna of our countryside.

At the end of December 2022 to my dismay I fell ill, which continued until the end of April the following year before I really sought help. The delay was because I am not usually ill and I thought it would pass. However it didn't. So after 6 months of blood tests and then more specialist blood tests I was diagnosed in December 2023 with a rare Leukaemia, to be precise Chronic Large Granular Lymphocytic Leukaemia. This has a massive impact on my autoimmune system. What a shock for both myself and my family. Being an optimist, I am not a person to dwell on my sorrows. Fortunately, at present, I don't need chemotherapy treatment or any drugs. I am however being actively monitored and on a watchlist, whereby I have regular blood tests to check my neutrophil levels and quarterly reviews with my consultant. So not all bad.

Last year my son ran the Cardiff Half Marathon and I was so inspired by his accomplishment that I decided I should do it too, inspite of everything and much to the anguish of my family and friends. So I put all my positive energy and dogged determination into making this goal a reality. I started my training at the end of April, which I must say didn't go well to begin with. All kinds of injuries and incidents impacted my ageing body. But it did get better and I did settle into my training plan.

On Sunday 5th October, some 23 weeks later and 340 miles of grit and determination (which incidentally is nearly 13 full marathons) I found myself in

somewhat disbelief at the start line of the Cardiff Half Marathon. The atmosphere was incredible. 29000 people registered to participate in the race from all parts of the world and nearly the same amount of spectators willing, cheering and encouraging their loved ones, family and friends to get to the finishing line. So you can imagine my elation, mixed with strong heartfelt emotions since diagnosis, when I ran over the finish line in 2 hours 32 minutes and 7 seconds precisely. I did it! Yay! I got the T-Shirt and not to mention the medal.

In summary, whatever life throws at you, don't let it get in the way. Go out and grab those opportunities with gusto because we don't know what is around the corner and what time we have left. So if I can do it, then so can you. If this inspires just one person to do something extraordinary and out of their comfort zone, then I have done my job.

Patsy