

La Lettre Jèrriaise - Marianne Sargent - Lé 10 dé Juillet 2021

Hello everyone. It is me again, Marianne Sargent, with your Lettre Jèrriaise this week. In this letter I would like to talk about my son's friend Peter.

When Harry was two-years-old Ged and I moved to the lovely village of Chinley in the Derbyshire Peak District to live nearer to Ged's family.

Ged's sister came over to Bradford to pick up our furniture in a huge horse box. It took nearly a full day to load everything and at the end of a two-hour drive we arrived in the dark at our new end terrace house that backed onto the railway line. Apparently the terrace had been built at the turn of the last century as accommodation for the railway workers.

One hundred years ago Chinley Station was a major stop on the London and Midlands to Manchester line with five platforms and four tracks. Nowadays the station has just two platforms. When Harry was really small we used to walk to the top of our road and turn right onto a humped back bridge that traversed the railway and wave at the trains passing through. Harry loved it if a driver ever waved back or sounded the horn.

In the spring after we moved I took Harry to the local parent and toddler group at the village community centre. Never in my life have I experienced such a warm welcome. Within an hour I had made friends with a group of women and taken on responsibility for running the toddler group! Harry quickly bonded with all their children and, in particular, one little boy called Peter, who also liked trains.

Nine years later and five years after we moved back to Jersey, I still count these women as my closest friends and we continue to Zoom every Friday evening. Harry too is still close to their children and over lockdown when we were unable to have a birthday party for him, it was them that joined him for online party games. Harry and Peter are especially close and regularly WhatsApp and game online together on a near daily basis.

Just after new year in 2009 when Peter was eight years old, he was diagnosed with a childhood cancer called Neuroblastoma. His tumour caused a spinal cord injury. I can honestly say I have never met a person as brave, resilient and positive as Peter. He smiled through endless rounds of chemotherapy and took on the use of a wheelchair with a

mindset framed around what types of tricks he might be able to achieve. After more than a year of treatment Peter rang the hospital bell in February 2020.

Unfortunately, six months later Peter's cancer relapsed and this time it is metastatic High Risk Neuroblastoma, which is complicated and hard to treat. He is currently undergoing treatment via the NHS and his disease is stable. The ultimate aim is to achieve remission and then maintain it. However, many of the treatments for this type of cancer are not yet available on the NHS and future treatment could include a clinical trial in the USA or Spain, which costs hundreds of thousands of pounds.

So we are fundraising. Harry and I are participating in the 30 Bays in 30 Days challenge during the month of July. We have made a donation to Jersey Hospice Care and the National Trust in lieu of the sponsorship money, which this year we would like to go to Peter.

If you would like to sponsor us, we would be very grateful. You can do so online at www.solvingkidscancer.org.uk/fundraisers/30-bays-in-30-days. I will also be carrying a sponsor form around with me to the various events that will be happening in the coming months.

Until the next time everyone. Take good care of yourselves and stay safe. Goodbye for now.