



BREAST CANCER RESEARCH TRUST

BrEaST *Bulletin*

August 2023

Every now and then I am astounded by the contents of a book. A book that grabs your attention from the moment you turn the first page, keep you wanting more and not letting go, till the very last word. Such was the case when I was given a copy of "Reconstructing Aphrodite".

The book is a unique combination of photographic and surgical artistry and in her moving photographs, Terry Lorant captured the spirit of beauty and wholeness even after the removal of one or both breasts. The book offers the most intimate stories as a gift and reminder that no woman has to face breast cancer alone.

The women portrayed in this book, are more than breast cancer survivors. They are a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. They are an example of an inner and outer beauty, triumphing in the face of adversity. Their stories are inspirational to everyone, whether or not they have personally faced the specter of breast cancer.

One of the quotes that made a profound impact on me personally, was through the story of Nancy, who was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 31. Nancy said: "It is important to be alive, but it's equally important to live life fully".

Can we just take a moment and think about what that really means?



Life is precious. Adjust your sail and guide your way even if it means sailing upstream or against the wind. Make your life meaningful so that you leave behind **your** footprints on the sands of time.

Abraham Lincoln once pointed out - **"It's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in those years"**.

BrEaST wishes,

Cindy Jacobs
Manager: Marketing/Fundraising & Events



Warrior Woman

A photoshoot in honour of YOUR journey through breast cancer treatment

Immortalise a moment in time so you (and those you wish) can revisit feeling glamorous in a way that may have seemed impossible.

A tailor-made photoshoot experience that reflects your preferences and vision to ensure an end result that capture your feelings, vibe and atmosphere. The photographic studio will allow a safe space for real emotions.

Package:

- Complimentary makeup artistry.
- Five edited photos in digital form (options to add/print).
- Packages start at \$300.

Saturday 23 September, 9am at 109 Rostrevor Street, Hamilton.

Limited spaces available so don't delay in booking your slot by emailing Cindy.Jacobs@breastcancerresearch.org.nz

All proceeds will be donated to the Breast Cancer Research Trust.



**Breast Cancer
Research Trust**
Gaining Knowledge. Saving Lives.



EXERCISE CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF RECURRENCE

As a breast surgeon, Dr Liz O’Riordan is well acquainted with worst-case scenarios. So when she discovered a lump on her breast in 2010, her initial reaction was terror. “I remember howling on the sofa: ‘I’ll be dead in a year,’” she says. “I thought it was the end of the world.” To her relief, the lump was a benign cyst. In 2014, she noticed another lump. Calmly this time, she went for a scan and, again, it was a cyst. Early 2015, the same story: another lump, another cyst.

When a further lump appeared six months later, she almost didn’t go back, but her mum insisted. “I looked up at the screen during the ultrasound and saw a cancer,” she remembers.

Unlike her frenzied reaction to the first lump five years earlier, she remained calm and practical, calling her parents in Scotland to explain her diagnosis and treatment. “You sound like you’re talking about a patient instead of yourself,” her mum noted. She was lucky to have been diagnosed in time for treatment to be curative, but, since she was only 40, she’d receive the works: chemotherapy, mastectomy surgery, radiotherapy and hormone therapy.

Her insider knowledge was both a blessing and a curse. “I wanted to tell my surgeon: ‘Can you use this stitch, and put the drain here,’” she laughs wryly. “And she had to say: ‘Stop. You need to be a patient.’ But I was more aware of the things that can go wrong.”

Although an expert on the surgical side, Dr O’Riordan was shocked to learn how little she knew about the psychological impact of breast cancer treatment, particularly when thrust into a brutally abrupt menopause caused by hormone therapy. She would tell patients that symptoms would last around six months, “because that’s what I’d heard. I had no idea what it was like.”

“Going into instant menopause at 40 was the hardest thing, and a massive learning curve,” she says now. Some menopausal symptoms can improve after six months, but others are more permanent and a vast array – from brain fog and headaches to insomnia and joint pain – are not yet fully understood or treated.

Having spent years performing complex surgeries, suddenly brain fog meant she couldn’t remember the word for a pen. She realised that many post-treatment issues are invisible. Your hair might have grown back, but you may still be struggling. “You smile and you put on a face, and everyone says you look great,” she says. “But there’s so much going on, including fear of recurrence.” If breast cancer returns and spreads – usually to the bones, brain, liver or lung – then it is no longer curable, and the fear of this happening can be all-encompassing.

In 2018, Dr O’Riordan had a local recurrence in her chest wall, which is when the cancer returns but is caught before metastasising elsewhere in the body. This exacerbated the anxiety she was already feeling.

“It reached a point where I was almost wanting my cancer to come back so that I can stop waiting for it to happen,” she explains. “Obviously I don’t want to have stage 4 cancer, but I had no idea that the rollercoaster of depression, anxiety and fear would be with me for the rest of my life.”

While the fear never completely goes away, she eventually found a way to stop it from controlling her life. “I can reduce the risk of it coming back by exercising, not really drinking and eating well, but I’ve accepted it’s

out of my control,” she says. “So instead of worrying about the odds, I just have to live my life.” How long did it take to get to that place? “Five years.”

Although she says she has now come to terms with her post-mastectomy body, it’s almost like a sense of grief that’s always there, with good days and bad days. At one point she admits “it’s still hard to look in the mirror”, but then continues: “I’m lucky that I’m small-breasted, so it’s not that obvious. I’m not ashamed anymore. And I want to empower women to be confident after mastectomy surgery.”

Having spent years working towards becoming a surgeon – documented in her new memoir, *Under the Knife* – she was forced to retire early. The reasons were partly physical and partly psychological. She provides evidence-based facts to her followers who are desperate for information and support.

These days, she lives as healthily as she can, and says that exercise was a big part of helping her keep a sense of who she is during treatment. “Back in 2015, we knew little about how important it is,” she says, referring to the body of research now showing that **exercise can reduce your risk of recurrence by as much as half**.

“For me, it was about a sense of identity separate from cancer. I wasn’t a cancer patient when I was running, I was just Liz.”

After all she’s been through, Dr O’Riordan knows that life is short, and she knows what’s important. And that is...? “Fun,” she laughs. “I never wore bright colours before, I was quite conservative. But now I love playing with how I look and dying my hair blue. I may be nearly 50, but I’m going to wear what I like. Age is just a number.”

Reference entry

Rosamund Dean, 4 July 2023. Daily Telegraph UK / NZ Herald

[Dr Liz O’Riordan: ‘I’m a breast cancer surgeon – this is what surviving cancer myself taught me’ - NZ Herald](#)



26 OCTOBER 2023
HAMILTON LAKE, INNES COMMON

Entertainment from 4.30pm | Walk/Run from 5.45pm
Pink Walk distance: 1 lap | Run distance: 1.5 laps

Wear your BREAST pink or yellow finery to support breast cancer awareness.
Prizes for BEST dressed individuals, BEST dressed group & BEST dressed pooch.

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BREAST CANCER TRIALS ANZ 44th ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING 2023

Breast Cancer Research Trust members, Doctors Ian Campbell and Marion Kuper, and Research Nurse Jenni Scarlet recently attended the Breast Cancer Trials ANZ 44th Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) held in Auckland 26-28 July.

Raewyn Calvert, past Trustee, trial participant, and member of the Breast Cancer Trials Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP) was acknowledged for her recent 10-year membership on the CAP. Members of the CAP provide a patient perspective in the development of trials and in the conduct of the BCT research program.

The ASM is a great opportunity to network with research colleagues from around Australia, New Zealand, and from around the world. It is also an opportunity to learn about new ideas, future clinical trials, and update on current trials and results.

This three-day conference included presentations from world leading speakers, updates in surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, supportive care, pathology, and laboratory research. Presentations covered updates in trial coordination, upcoming novel and targeted drugs for specific breast cancer subtypes, to a trial of a specialised blood test for assisting in breast cancer diagnosis in those for whom diagnosis is more difficult e.g., BRCA mutation carriers, women with breast density.

Dr. Marion Kuper presented on the Waikato Hospital experience of the "ABCpro study". This study is introducing weekly electronic reporting of patient reported outcomes (PROs) with specialist nurse support for those living with advanced breast cancer. The aim of this study is to provide more proactive care and to better support those living with incurable breast cancer. Initial findings show that electronic reporting of symptoms is an effective and valuable strategy to provide real-time clinical feedback to Oncology teams, leading to improved symptom control and improved quality of life for patients.



From left to right: Jenni Scarlet, Dr. Marion KuperHommel, Raewyn Calvert, Dr. Ian Campbell

A NEW TREASURE HAS BEEN FOUND - OP SHOP POP UP FOR BREAST CANCER



Our flagship store, Op Shop for Breast Cancer, located at 750 Victoria Street in Hamilton CBD has found a new treasure - the OP SHOP POP UP for Breast Cancer!

With a wide range of active wear, nursery items, luggage, sleepwear, lingerie and clothing from \$1.00, you will be sure to find a treasure of your own.

Both shops provide a much-needed revenue stream for the vital funding the Breast Cancer Research Trust needs to make clinical trials and other research happen.

**So 'POP' in at 750 Victoria Street, Hamilton
and
SHOP. DONATE and SAVE LIVES!**

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE OP SHOP POP UP FACEBOOK PAGE](#)



Be part of the inaugural Breast Cancer Research Trust team, undertaking the United Airlines New York City Half-Marathon on Sunday 17 March, 2024. **Just 20 entries available – so be quick to secure your bucket list adventure to the Big Apple.**

The Breast Cancer Research Trust is conducting this trip to raise awareness and funds for ongoing breast cancer research in New Zealand. Join our circle of walkers and joggers to take on this incredible event and do your bit to gain knowledge and save lives. This is one of just a few events that stops the city to enable people to walk and jog over the Manhattan Bridge, through Times Square and finish in Central Park.

It wouldn't be a trip to NYC without indulging in some of the incredible activities in the city that never sleeps. This trip will include dining, sightseeing, shopping and Broadway plays.

The Breast Cancer Research Trust is proudly partnered with Marathon Tours, a division of Calder & Lawson, to offer you this incredible experience. Marathon Tours have been taking tours to NYC for the past 15 years, and with their help and support, you are guaranteed a fantastic and fun time.

Walk/Jog Twin-Share Package from \$4,995 pp

Walk/Jog Single Package from \$7,375 pp

Supporters Package (based on twin-share) from \$4,250 pp

Inclusions:

- 7 Night's accommodation at the Renaissance Hotel, in 14 March 2024, out 21 March 2024
- Daily breakfast
- Welcome reception event
- Guaranteed race entry
- Private race day transfer to the starting area
- Runners breakfast on race day
- Celebration event at a Manhattan bar following the marathon
- Private hosted dinner in Manhattan
- 24x7 travel assistance from Marathon Tours leader.

To secure your place in the Breast Cancer Research Trust team, send an email by [CLICKING HERE](#)

A non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 is required by 31 August 2023 to guarantee your place. The full balance is payable by 30 November 2023.

As part of the Breast Cancer Research Trust team, we kindly ask you to fundraise a minimum of \$2,500 to enable us to hold lives together through evidence-based breast cancer research.

WE CAN ALSO ASSIST WITH:

- Airfares - ask about adding flights to the package
- Airport/Hotel transfers
- Pre-book your recreational activities before you travel
- Let us help with sightseeing bookings and extending your trip

IMPORTANT: A "Marathon Race Entry Only" is not possible. Entries MUST be purchased as part of a package that includes accommodation.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Flights & travel insurance – our consultants can book your travel and assist with policies
- Transfers and meals if not stated

- Passport and visa requirements are an individual's responsibility

MARATHON TOURS:

- Is a division of Calder & Lawson House of Travel. A fully bonded and accredited agency, based in Hamilton since 1984.
- The only New Zealand agency who is a member of T.O.U.R.S – an international association of marathon organisations.
- Has a wealth of local knowledge of NYC, having escorted annual groups of Kiwi runners to the Big Apple for over 15 years.



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