



## Thank you to our London Bridges Walkers!

On Sunday 27th June we were delighted to have been joined by over 100 participants walking in aid of St Mark's Hospital Foundation and The Griffin Institute in our first ever joint fundraising enterprise. Thank you to everyone who took part including St Mark's clinical staff, and a special shout out to St Mark's patients Bethia, Sharad and Natalie.



## Natalie shares her St Mark's story and motivation behind taking part in the London Bridges Walk.

"I'll be walking 13.5 miles for St Marks Hospital Foundation and I'd like to tell you why.

In February 2019, at the age of 36, I was diagnosed with locally advanced, inoperable cancer. It filled my pelvic cavity. My tumours were growing back into my spinal nerves and pushing forwards crushing my vaginal canal. I was constantly being hospitalised to try to manage the horrific pain and I'd lost so much weight I was skeletal.

I started off with an aggressive course of chemotherapy and at the same time 29 days of pelvic radiation and then more chemo in the hope that it would shrink the cancer enough to operate. I responded well to this treatment but sadly my cancer started to grow back very quickly after treatment finished and so I was referred to St Marks Complex Cancer Clinic.

I was told I would need an operation called a Pelvic Exenteration. In order to treat my complex, recurrent cancer they would need to remove my ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, vagina, rectum, anus, 4 spinal nerves, my left piriformis, left pelvic sidewall and they would also need to cut cancer from my left ureter (the tube from your kidney to your bladder) and then reimplant the ureter back into my bladder.

There's so much to process with a surgery like this. I lost my chance of having a child, I have a permanent colostomy, I am menopausal in my 30s, I have a pretty freaky looking body now, I had to relearn to walk and it has seriously impacted my quality of life. I don't know of many other surgeries that leave you to deal with so much.

I was so worried about what life would be like after this surgery and, I won't lie, it's not always easy, BUT I'm here, against the odds I am alive and SO happy to be here! And that's all thanks to this amazing team at this amazing hospital.

When you have a late stage cancer that has already recurred once there's a good chance it will come back again, but honestly, every day I am here is a gift and I give thanks every single day for St Marks and the amazing people who work there who give people like me the chance to keep living.

Mr Jenkins and his team are my absolute heroes. **Thank you for the gift of more life".**

If you would like to support Natalie, please consider making a donation to her [fundraising page here](#).





## Congratulations to Bowel Cancer Screening

St Mark's Hospital is the FIRST in the UK to roll-out home-testing kits for bowel cancer that targets 56 year-olds. It was chosen after becoming the first hospital to clear its backlog of more than 24,000 screening invitations that built up during the pandemic when many services were suspended. Congrats to all of our wonderful colleagues in Bowel Cancer Screening for this fantastic achievement! 🥰



## 'Mind, Body and Soulathon'

Proving that age is just a number, May celebrated her 82nd birthday in style by undertaking an epic fundraising challenge and, we are delighted to announce that she has successfully completed her 40 laps of Southend Pier. May undertook her 'Mind, Body and Soulathon' in aid of St Mark's Hospital, Northwick Park and Southend University Hospital. We are incredibly proud of May for all that she has achieved and for supporting our charity 💙 If you would like to support May, please consider [making a donation](#) and helping her reach her 3k target!

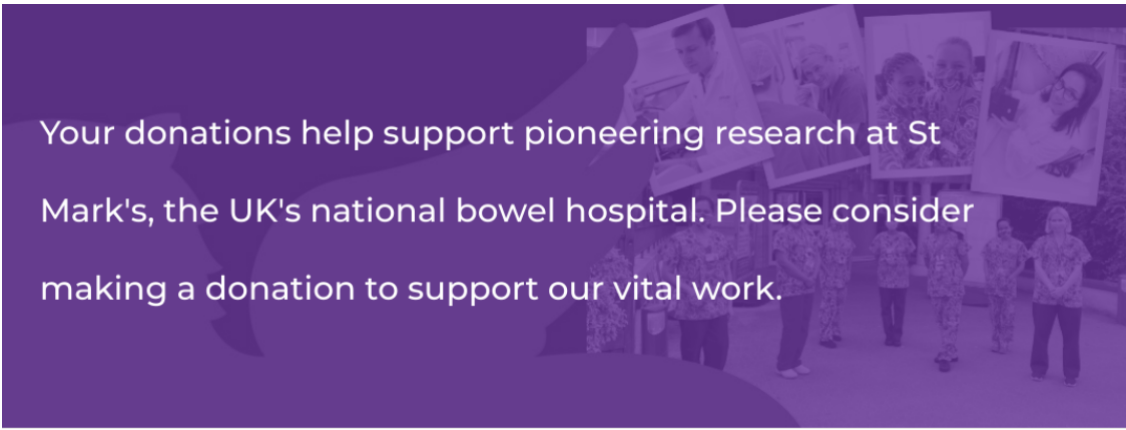




Looking for a challenge? Join our Virtual Virgin London Marathon Team this October! By running for our charity you will be helping support research, education & innovation at St Mark's, the UK's national bowel hospital. Contact the team today to reserve your spot! Email: [info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk)



Listen now to an exclusive interview with St Mark's Specialist Dietician Hannah Voison who spoke to Lydia at Radio Harrow [Radio Harrow](#) talking about coeliac disease and IBS for coeliac awareness week. You can still listen to the recording which is available [here!](#)



### Donate Here To Support St Mark's



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