

# My Story 011

**Since March 2007, Stitchlinks have been asking people to tell us their Story, and also asking whether knitting and stitching has been helpful to them.**

All Stories are voluntarily offered and anonymity is guaranteed. Only once we have been given permission do we publish so that others can appreciate, take inspiration and draw comfort from them.

This booklet is one of a series that contains a small selection taken at random from the long list of Stories we have received. Each is reproduced as it was entered on the online survey form, with the only exception of taking out any way that individuals can be identified.

Read at your leisure and be fascinated, comforted, thrilled, encouraged and inspired.

You are not alone.

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**Story 189 From email**

*“I was not just a victim and helpless. I could still create”*

I have been stitching, knitting, crocheting, making bobbin lace almost all my life. My gran and mother taught me embroidery knitting when I was about 4 years old.

In my teen years, I crocheted to help relax while studying for A levels.

In my twenties I learned bobbin lace making and found it was the only thing which could make me “switch off” from work – it needs a lot of concentration. Through bobbin lace-making classes I made many special friends, many of whom cross-stitched as well. We would get together in a small group at our houses or a local church hall and called ourselves “Laughter & Lace”.

One of my good friends took up bobbin lace making to help deal with her grief at the death of her 11 year old daughter in a road accident. Over the first 12 months she gradually came out of her terrible trough of grief and started to laugh again. She also cross stitched some beautiful Thea Gouverneur designs.

During my thirties I divorced and produced a huge amount of cross stitch! It always calmed me and helped through the lonely evenings.

During my forties, I had a very stressful job which involved much travelling. I took cross stitch with me wherever I went. Evenings in strange hotels in strange countries passed much more easily with cross stitch.

When I was 48 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Despite being told it was a “non-aggressive” form, it has recurred three times. I have had 4 operations and am facing at least one more. I have had radiotherapy and chemotherapy. During the chemo I also managed to contract chicken pox and ended up in hospital yet again!

On every sojourn in hospital I had some knitting or cross stitch with me. It passed the boring or anxious hours. When I couldn't sleep, I sat and knitted or stitched, much to the consternation of the nurses. I even tried to stitch while being infused with my chemo cocktail but the needle was in my right arm – my stitching arm, so I was causing damage and had to stop.

Throughout the chemo, knitting scarves out of all the new yarns – as gifts for the friends who were so supportive – was a tremendous help. I was not just a victim and helpless. I could still create and give my creations to my friends. A few weeks ago, I was stressed and fretting about the future. My husband said “Go and take out your cross stitch. You are always happier when you are stitching.” What a commendation of the therapeutic power of stitching.”

I attend a Marie Curie Day Centre once a week. I did a mini tutorial on cross stitch to the group and gave them all some Binca and some easy designs to try. One is now working on 14 count, one has stayed with Binca and 2 are doing needlepoint (the printed canvas and larger needles are easier for them). They all seem to be enjoying it. Anyway, I must get back to my cross stitch, I'm feeling withdrawal symptoms! Wishing you every success in your endeavours.

**Story 91**

*“I picked up a cross stitch project ... and found a lifeline”*

I started Stitching many years ago purely as a hobby. I have always knitted from childhood and with five children and ten grandchildren this has been an economical way to help dress my family.

In 1999 I finally had the chance to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a nurse and began my training at the age of forty seven. However shortly before I was due to take my final exams I was diagnosed with Osteo Arthritis in my knees and spine. I now have very limited mobility and have become relatively housebound, as a result of which I also became very depressed.

A few years ago I picked up a cross stitch project I had started previously and then abandoned, and found a lifeline. Cross stitch and knitting have helped me focus on something other than the pain I constantly suffer, and both are helping to keep my hands supple and so far free of arthritis. They have also improved my concentration and given me a modicum of independence as I stitch and knit projects for a small charge for other people.

I have found a whole new circle of friends through stitching magazines and on-line. Both of these activities are extremely therapuetic and I find that if I do become stressed or despondent I can relax with one or other of my hobbies.

**Story 15**

*“the rhythmic movements can help to engender a state of meditation”*

I have had ME for 13 years and migraine since my early teens. This combination results in fairly high pain levels on a bad day, particularly in my head, neck and shoulders, and a low level of pain even on good days.

Gentle movement helps alleviate the pain, and crochet is ideal as I can sit comfortably supported while working, and the work itself is not too heavy to hold.

There is just enough concentration needed to provide a distraction from the pain without using too much energy, and the rhythmic movements can help to engender a state of meditation. Memorising the movements when starting a new pattern is beneficial in encouraging my poor memory to work better.

**Story 95**

*“. Knitting ...helped me immensely. ”*

My mum taught me to knit when I was a child, we also knitted at junior school and throughout my life I have knitted. Depending on what else was going on my life I either knitted or I didn't.

In 1996, I was in a non-knitting phase. Mum had died in the January, peacefully, in her own bed. We'd been busy looking after her and then care for Dad continued when he was on his own.

October 1996, a beautiful afternoon and I went for a run. My aim was to achieve a 10 mile run and it was to take me through the village where Dad was spending the afternoon at my sister's home. As I approached the village, it was obvious that something had happened and as I drew nearer I could see an ambulance, police, gathering crowds and a lady with my sister's dog. I just knew that I was involved with whatever had happened and I was right. Dad had been knocked down by a "born again" biker speeding along the main road while Dad was crossing the road.

Everything I saw at the scene of the accident was locked into my brain having to break the news to my sister going to identify Dad and wondering why i had thought "It's going to be strange at Christmas with both Mum and Dad gone." Try getting to sleep after all that! I listened to the radio to try to sleep and put the sights and sounds out of my mind.

Eventually I decided that I would get the knitting needles out again and picked a fair isle beanie hat pattern. I'd never knitted fair isle before but I found it took my mind off everything else completely because it had to have my undivided attention. Knitting that hat helped me immensely. "

**Story 102**

*“Knitting has allowed me to lose myself in another world”*

Having developed ME 6 YEARS ago, I need to try and relax and focus on non stressful subjects.

Knitting has allowed me to loose myself in another world and I am always forward planning my next project. It has also encouraged me to look on websites for patterns and projects such as this. I get great pleasure from the colours and feel of the yarn.

Telling Your Story helps others to appreciate their own circumstances. Please help by completing the survey at [www.Stitchlinks.com](http://www.Stitchlinks.com)