

Care Time

Winter 2010

Rosie Cole and husband, Den, who has Alzheimer's disease.



Double Life For Bath Businesswoman

Rosie Cole is a very successful businesswoman, running her busy student lettings agency from offices in Widcombe, but her life has another side as her husband, Den, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease six years ago. Since then, everything about Rosie's life has completely changed.

"I set up Roman City Letting on the old Enterprise Allowance Scheme in the 1980s," explained Rosie. "I started from nothing and now, my children work with me supporting a team that manages hundreds of properties throughout Bath for students at university here."

Rosie and Den met over thirty years ago when they were both active in local politics; they lived life to the full until Den was diagnosed with cancer in 1987.

"We were told it was terminal, but we fought the cancer and won," said Rosie. "We thought everything would be alright – but then, Den gradually began to get more and more forgetful and Alzheimer's Disease was diagnosed in 2004. You can't fight that – and it's devastating."

Rosie cared for Den herself every day, but life became very hard and she began to get depressed as Den got harder to manage.

"He would go out and get lost, or not know me. I was at the end of my tether; then I found out about the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset."

The Carers' Centre immediately arranged for Rosie to have a break from caring, sending her for 24 hours' respite to the Ammerdown Retreat in Radstock.

"I was worried about going away, I didn't know what to expect, but it was wonderful! I relaxed for the first time in years, I had a walk in beautiful countryside, I had my lunch freshly made for

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Double Life For Bath Businesswoman Continued

me and I had a long soak in a bath with time to really think my life through. You can't do these things when you are caring for someone with Alzheimer's; you can never, ever relax."

Rosie made the decision to go back to running her business full time. The Carers' Centre put her in touch with the Peggy Dodd Day Care Centre in Bath and Den is now cared for there every day whilst Rosie is at work.

"Den loves going to Peggy Dodd; the centre is fantastic and the care they give to Den is

exemplary. He gets very excited about seeing his friends and care workers there each day" enthused Rosie.

"I am now a Trustee at the Carers' Centre; they do such wonderful work for carers in the area and I know I can use my business experience to make a difference and help them reach out to more carers. When I am at the Centre, I feel free to be myself. Everyone I meet there understands how my life is affected by Den's illness and they offer me tremendous support."

Sports for Families and Carers

Sport Relief has provided funding through the Quartet Community Foundation to run ten sport's sessions for carers and their families.

Bath Rugby Foundation, who are experienced at working with disabled people, are running the fully accessible sport's sessions to help whole families feel confident about engaging in sport with their disabled family member.

The sessions will increase knowledge and abilities to engage in sports and everyone will be involved in deciding how the sessions progress. Families will be able to take home sport's equipment to help them continue participating in sport at the end of the programme. Book your free place now: **01761 431388**

Carers' Rights Day event December 3rd

An event at Bath Racecourse and Conference Centre, Lansdown, Bath, will celebrate Carers' Rights Day on December 3rd. The Carers' Centre will be bringing together carers from all over the Bath and North East Somerset area to participate in workshops, benefit from a break from caring and hear keynote speakers. Book your free place at the conference now: **01761 431388**



Carers' Centre What's On Guide

A new guide to What's On at the Carers' Centre will bring together all the Centre's events into one easy-to-use publication with an advance booking form to reserve a place. Look out for the new guide in the next few weeks.

Neil Drinkwater from the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset with carer Anne Norton and Carers' Lead and Administrator from Widcombe Surgery, Dominic Perdiccia.



Widcombe Surgery Goes The Extra Mile For Bath Carers

Widcombe GP Surgery is now offering extra support for patients through a project run by the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset.

Neil Drinkwater from the Carers' Centre said: "Widcombe Surgery is a real example of good practice. They have three Carers' Leads who identify patients who are carers and help them to access the services of the Centre. Staff at the surgery have received Carer Awareness training to help them understand the needs of people who care for others. The surgery also runs quarterly drop-in clinics where carers can come for one to one support, help and advice."

Surgery Administrator, Dominic Perdiccia, has been a Carers' Lead for over a year. "I act as

a link between carers and the Carers' Centre." he explained. "We had a carers' register before, but since working with the Centre and receiving training, our list of carers has more than doubled. We help carers to realise how much help and support is there for them."

"I didn't know about the Carers' Centre until the surgery put me in touch with them." said Anne Norton, who is a patient at the surgery as well a full time carer for her husband, Jack. "It's good to know there is such a great service available, offering breaks from caring, free counselling, information and support whenever I need it."

The Sky's The Limit For Caring Mary



Jumping out of a plane at 10,000 feet is nothing for plucky Bath resident Mary Allen, especially as it helped raise much-needed funds for the Carers' Centre.

"I have been caring for my disabled husband, Roy, for a long time." said Mary. "I badly needed help and got in touch with the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset - and that's when everything changed for me."

The Centre helped Mary with one to one support and arranged vital breaks away from caring.

"I can't tell you how wonderful it's been to have some time that's just for me, I've been able to be my own person for the first time in years." enthused Mary.

Mary received free counselling to help her through a low patch and she has enjoyed being pampered with relaxing holistic therapies to nurture and refresh her.

"Carers need breaks more than most people, but it's so hard when you have so much responsibility – you can really lose your own identity being a carer." she explained.

Mary needed to prepare for many months for her charity challenge. "I was told I needed to lose weight before they would let me do the skydive, so I joined a gym which was paid for through the council's Give Us A Break scheme and I managed to lose 1½ stone in 6 months."

"The skydive was absolutely brilliant!" said Mary. "I wanted to get right back up there and do it all over again. But the best thing about it all is that I am happier and healthier than I have been in a long time, plus I've helped the Carers' Centre too after they helped me so much."

Donations to Mary's appeal can still be made at www.justgiving.com/MaryAllen

Carer Mary Allen jumps from a plane at 10,000 feet with Skydive South Coast Chief Instructor Nigel Allen to raise funds for the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset.



GP Support For All Carers

Somerton House Surgery in Midsomer Norton has improved services for all their patients who are carers. By working with the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset, access to help, support and information is now readily available to patients at the surgery who look after a friend or family member who is frail, has a physical or mental illness, disability or problem with drugs or alcohol.

Jackie Short of the Carers' Centre explained, "Many people do not think of themselves as carers, so do not access the many services they are entitled to which could improve the quality of their lives. We can offer breaks away from caring, free counselling, one to one support and employment and benefits advice."

The Centre is currently working with all GP surgeries in the area to bring their expertise directly to patients and to improve the services available to carers through their doctor.

More than 6 million people are carers in the UK today and they all have one thing in common: they are unpaid and many face a life of isolation, ill health and poverty. Bath and North East Somerset has over 16,000 carers, many of whom do not realise the support available to them.



Carers' Lead and Medical Receptionist Val Buckfield from Somerton House Surgery with Jackie Short from the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset and full-time carer Val Henfield.

Medical Receptionist at Somerton House Surgery is Val Buckfield. "We have been working with the Carers' Centre to establish a Carers' Lead – a role within the practice which links directly with carers. As I have worked here for 21 years, I know many of the patients very well; my experience helps identify people who could benefit from support available.

"Last month we held a carers' afternoon with a free health check and a talk about what's available from the Carers' Centre. Only this week I've identified 4 more carers we can help."

Carer, Val Henfield, is a patient at the surgery and looks after her partner full time. "This is a valuable opportunity for all carers to realise what help is out there for them. The surgery keeps in regular contact with me; I now know all about the help the Carers' Centre can give me – it's really good to know they are there for me."

Event Brings Carers Together



A major event bringing together more than 60 carers from across Bath and North East Somerset has been held at Salford Golf Club by the Carers' Centre.

This diverse group of local people was brought together with one aim – to ensure their voices are heard when support services are being developed for the forthcoming year.

“Listening to carers is the very best way of making sure they get the services they really need.” explained Sonia Hutchison, Carers' Centre Chief Executive.

“This event has brought together all kinds of carers, all of whom give their time freely to care for another person who is ill, frail, disabled or in need. Some of our carers have learning difficulties or are disabled themselves and we are able to provide extra help and support to make sure their needs are taken into account too.”

Feedback from all the carers at the event will be used to influence the commissioning of services for 2011 from providers such as Bath and North East Somerset Council and the NHS.

“We have had a fantastic response from local carers who want to get involved.” said Sonia. “This event has given a loud voice to carers, as well as created the opportunity for carers to join



Neil Drinkwater from the Carers' Centre with Dr Leon Dysch, Clinical Psychologist.

exciting new forums, get help with employment, meet new people and take a break from their caring role.”

One new support group launched on the day aims to help people who care for those with neurological conditions. The group was launched by Dr Leon Dysch, a clinical psychologist with expertise in the needs of carers living with this extra pressure.

Neil Drinkwater from the Carers' Centre explained, “We want to find out from these carers what they require are in terms of specialist support and how we can help them with coping mechanisms when dealing with the psychological consequences of being a carer of a loved one with a neurological condition.”

For more information about how the Carers' Centre can help, please contact 01761 431388

Left to right: carers Robert Whiting, Layla Miah and Liz Hayward with Sonia Hutchison, Chief Executive of the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset.



Staff Shop For Advice and Support

Staff at Radstock's Co-operative Foodstore have been shopping for advice and support with expert help from the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset.

The store has a number of staff who care for another person, be they a friend or family member who is frail, has a physical or mental illness, disability or problem with drugs or alcohol. Working closely with the Carers' Centre means Co-op staff have been able to visit free "drop in" clinics inside the store during their coffee and lunch breaks, to find out about the help on offer.

Jackie Short of the Carers' Centre said, "Fifty percent of carers have to juggle work along with their caring role. The Carers' Centre helps with advice and information about benefits and finance, health care and advocacy, can arrange breaks away from caring and offers free counselling for those struggling with the emotional side of caring for another."



The Centre works with businesses, social care and health professionals in Bath and North East Somerset to bring their services to the 16,225 carers in the area – many of whom have no idea they are entitled to a wide range of support.

Annette Curtis, who works in the cash office at the Radstock store, cares for her mum, Brenda, who is in her eighties.

"I go to Mum's every day after work." said Annette. "I bring her shopping, help her pay her bills and do a lot of running around for her – sometimes I go and just have a cup of tea with her and keep her company. Carers do need help and finding out that the Carers' Centre is there and can offer so much has been fantastic for me."

Mother's Praise For Caring Son Robert

Lively nonagenarian Frances Whiting has lived in Pensford, North East Somerset all her life, raising her family in the same house she still lives in today with her son, Robert, who has a learning disability.

"I was born in 1912, the year the Titanic went down," she explained. "I've had ninety eight wonderful years, but nowadays I simply couldn't manage without Robert to help look after me; he's a real godsend."

Caring for his mother, as well as looking after the house and its beautiful gardens, keeps Robert busy every day.

"I'm not very good at cooking," said Robert. "So we have help preparing meals and getting Mum up and about each day, but everything else is down to me – fetching and carrying things for her, keeping her company and going shopping with the home-help to get groceries."

Robert is receiving support from the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset, who offer a service to help carers who have learning disabilities.

Lydia Clarke from the Carers' Centre said: "Robert does a fantastic job for his mum, and she really appreciates everything he does for her. Carers like Robert often find themselves quite isolated from the services that are available to them.

"The Carers' Centre has set up a support group called Carers For Each Other that brings carers with learning disabilities together and involves them with other carers in influencing the commissioning of services that can help them."

Frances Whiting is delighted her son is receiving help from the Centre. "I don't know how Robert puts up with me!" she said. "But I'm so glad that he gets extra help from the Carers' Centre, it gets him out joining new and exciting support groups and it makes such a difference to us."

This article is dedicated to the memory of Frances Whiting.

Simon Cares For Supersonic Dad

Simon Fossey is a very busy man; he is a volunteer driver for the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset, driving people who care for friends or family members to regular events where they can enjoy a well-earned break from their caring role.

"I'm a carer myself, so I know how important it is to get away and have some time to just be yourself. I care for my father, who had a stroke nine years ago and also has emphysema and since then, my life has completely changed." explained Simon.

He and his father, Peter, live in Farrington Gurney in North Somerset. Simon lived a full life as a Project Worker helping adult drug users in Oxford until six years ago when his father became so ill he could no longer look after himself.

"Caring for Dad is a bit like being married to him." said Simon. "I cook and clean, do the

shopping and look after him all day every day. My voluntary work for the Carers' Centre gets me out and about meeting some wonderful people plus I am helping an organisation that also helps me."

Though he now has limited movement and tires easily, Peter Fossey is a lively and gregarious gentleman, with an interesting past in aeronautical engineering.

"I was one of the design engineers that worked on Concorde back in the 1970s, though sadly, I never flew in her." he said, proudly. "I've lived all over the world, especially in the Far East and thoroughly enjoyed my life. Now Simon takes care of me – he does everything for me."

"I try and get out of the house each day." said Simon. "My volunteering work means I circulate leaflets about the Carers' Centre to local doctors' surgeries so that other carers can pick them up and find out about the help and support they could be missing out on."

There are 16,255 carers in Bath and North East Somerset and in the UK today, 1 in 10 people provide unpaid care for another person who is sick, frail, disabled or has a mental illness or problem with drugs or alcohol.

If you'd like to volunteer for the Carers' Centre please contact: **01761 431388**



Carer Simon Fossey with his father, Peter.



War Time Romantics Celebrate Sixty Six Years Together

A chance meeting on a summer's day in 1939 brought Mary and Roy Holley together, but after an inseparable few months, the Second World War tore them apart for six long years.

"If it wasn't for the war we wouldn't have met!" said Roy Holley, now a lively ninety year old. "I stood in at a wedding for a chap who'd been drafted and Mary was one of the wedding guests. We didn't get the chance to speak but did a lot of looking! I was delighted when we bumped into each other in a park a couple of weeks later and found out we were virtually neighbours - and the rest is history."

The couple, who live in Weston in Bath, have been married for 66 years, but their romance began during a dramatic period in British history, with letters from loved ones being the only contact from home for men serving their country thousands of miles away.

"I was just fifteen when we met." said Mary. "We got engaged before Roy was sent to the Far East in 1940 and then we only had sporadic letters from each other until I finally saw him again in 1944. Those letters came every few months and were heavily censored – Roy couldn't even tell me what the weather was like in case it gave clues to the enemy."

A long-awaited week of leave for Roy in April 1944 meant the couple were finally married.

"I came home on the Monday and was married on the Wednesday." said Roy. "We spent our two day honeymoon in Weston-Super-Mare – you couldn't book anything in those days so we

just asked the taxi driver to take us to a hotel which had a vacancy.”

Mary still has her wedding dress, borrowed on the day from her sister; her bridal bouquet was made from flowers from a neighbour’s greenhouse and a celebratory family feast of carefully hoarded food marked the occasion.

“After just one week Roy went back to the war; he was involved in the D-Day landings in June 1944 and his ship was torpedoed, so it could all have been over for us. Thank goodness he and his crew were picked up and taken to safety.” said Mary.

Sixty six years on, Roy is confined to a wheelchair and cared for by Mary, who is now eighty-six. They have lived in Bath for forty years and their three children; seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren are frequent visitors.

“We don’t get out easily, but the Carers’ Centre Bath and North East Somerset have regular events which we can get to as they provide us with transport, it’s the only chance Roy and I have to get a break together and it makes such a difference to us.” said Mary.



Mary and Roy Holley from Weston in Bath – celebrating 66 years together and on their wedding day in April 1944.

Carers for each other

Bath and North East Somerset

Carers with learning disabilities now have their own support group through the Carers’ Centre Bath and North East Somerset. The Carers For Each Other group meets every fortnight and is facilitated by Lydia Clark from the Centre.

The meetings include consultation work with the carers, looking at the Carers’ Centre publications together to ensure accessibility for people with a learning disability. After refreshments, carers take part in activities.

“An artist is working with the group at the moment and everyone is really enjoying getting together, talking about their caring role and having a break.” said Lydia. “There is a support worker on hand during the meeting if any carers have individual issues they want to talk about in private.

“The Centre is also trying to help carers with learning disabilities get the support they need to be involved in other events and workshops run by the Centre, including our Carers’ Rights Day event on December 3rd at Bath Racecourse.”

Carers with learning disabilities get together at the Carers’ Centre. Left to right: Julia Pierce, Elizabeth Hayward, Nathan Rodgers, Karen Lobley, Bob Palmer and Robert Whiting.



Carers' Centre Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset was held this year at Kingswood School in Bath. Trustees, speakers and seventy guests found out about the work of the Centre, as well as hearing stories directly from carers about their experiences.

Chair, Jill Tremellen, hosted the event, with presentations provided by Chief Executive, Sonia Hutchison, and Treasurer, Harry Hillis.

Mary Allen gave a moving speech about how she became a carer for her husband, Roy, plus how she found hope through the Carers' Centre to receive the support she needed.

Trustee and carer, Rosie Cole, talked about how she copes with her husband, Den's, diagnosis with Alzheimer's Disease and how the Carers' Centre gave her help and respite.

Gary Smith, who cares for his wife, Sue, talked about his involvement with the Centre and how he and Sue volunteer as well as benefit from the events and breaks organised by the Carers' Centre.

The meeting concluded with a lunch which gave guests, funders and Trustees the opportunity to network. Kingswood School kindly agreed to allow the Carers' Centre to use its facilities for free for the occasion.



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