



Tim Hodinott with his father, Paul.

The newsletter of the
Carers' Centre Bath &
North East Somerset

**Pull out
and keep
What's On
guide.**

No Fair Deal For Carers

Tim Hodinott has been caring for his father, Paul, for the last 8 years. A former project manager in military safety, Tim was forced to retire from his job early as his father's health deteriorated.

"I retired when I realised I couldn't cope with my working life and caring for my father any more," explained Tim. "Looking after him has become more and more onerous. In many ways I do not have a life; when you become a carer you can't do the things you want to do any more."

Paul, who is 94, recently had a stroke that has left him with limited mobility and Tim with extra pressure and caring responsibilities.

"I worry constantly about Dad falling over," said Tim. "He insists on being looked after at home as he's so unsteady. Fortunately, I've been on first aid and moving and handling courses through the Carers' Centre which have helped me when I've had to deal with emergencies."

Tim does manage to get to the gym 2 mornings a week before his father needs him. "Carers have to fit their own health needs in around the person they care for," he said. "I get very little time to myself. Though I have family nearby, I don't expect them to help as they have their own families and lives to lead."

Tim has enjoyed many of the activities and events organised by the Carers' Centre, but as his father's health deteriorates, it is no longer possible for them to enjoy days out together.

"As a carer, I receive £55.55 Carers' Allowance each week for looking after my father all day every day. Nobody can survive on that – carers simply do not get a fair deal."

For help and support, please contact: 01761 431388

Eco E-newsletter

Care Time is now available as an e-newsletter. If you want to help us reduce our postage and printing costs, as well as do a bit to save the planet, please send us your name, address and email address to info@banescarerscentre.org.uk and we will ensure you receive Care Time electronically.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Latest What's On Guide

A Friend in Need

Carers All At Sea

Free Carers' Counselling

Extra Help for Bath Carers

New Service for Bath Carers

A new drop in service for carers in Bath has been launched by the Carers' Centre. Patients at Oldfield Surgery in Oldfield Park can now access free help, advice and support from Carers' Centre staff on the first Saturday of every month. Free financial advice is also available to help with long term planning for people over the age of 65.

"We have been setting up drop-in clinics in GP surgeries, hospitals and health centres across Bath and North East Somerset to find "hidden carers" who would benefit from our services," said Sonia Hutchison from the Carers' Centre. "People often do not realise they are carers and can experience a life of increasing isolation, ill-health and loneliness, without knowing the range of support available to them."

Sarah Dix, who works at the surgery and acts as a Carers' Lead, identifying patients who are carers, said: "The drop-in's a great idea. As well



Left to right; Sonia Hutchison, Chief Executive of the Carers' Centre with Harriet Bosnell, Somer Housing Older Persons Housing and Support Manager, Sarah Dix, Carers' Lead from Oldfield Surgery and carer Janet Siderfin who attended the event.

as providing help and advice, it gives carers a chance to meet with other people who are in a similar situation to themselves and have a break from caring."

Somer Housing Independent Living Service is supporting the Carers' Centre by providing free financial advice for carers at the event. Any patient from the surgery who cares for someone who is frail, has a physical or mental illness, disability or problem with drugs or alcohol can come along, receive expert advice, take some time out and enjoy coffee and cakes.

You Got A Friend...

Being a carer can be lonely and stressful, with no one really understanding what you are going through. Having someone to talk to who understands how you feel can make a huge difference to a carer's life.



Volunteer befriender Enid Green.

Enid Green cared for her husband, Patrick, for 12 years, the last two of which he was in a wheelchair and needing oxygen.

"I didn't even realise I was a carer until I read about the Carers' Centre in my local Parish Magazine," said Enid. "I got in touch and they helped me so much; I couldn't go out of the

house at all, as Patrick could not be left alone. The Centre suggested befriending would help me - to have someone visiting me regularly whom I could talk to. It was a wonderful idea and I became very close with my befriender as she really understood what I was going through."

After Patrick died in 2004, Enid decided to help other carers who were going through difficult times.

"I started volunteering for the Carers' Centre in 2005. I now befriend 3 carers, visiting them regularly, listening to their problems, taking them out for a coffee or to the garden centre for a bit of a break. One carer I help is blind, so I help her to fill in forms and read to her. I thoroughly enjoy my volunteering work. The people I befriend have become good friends and we appreciate what we give to each other."

The Carers' Centre is looking for more befrienders to help local carers. People with some time and energy to give are welcome to get in touch and apply to become a volunteer. Applications can also be made through the Carers' Centre website at www.banescarerscentre.org.uk



Julie Vangorph who is cared for by her husband, Dennis.



Brian and Lesley Williams with Cheryl Thomas from the Carers' Centre.

All Aboard the ss Great Britain!

Carers enjoyed a day at sea aboard Brunel's ss Great Britain on a day trip to Bristol organised by the Carers' Centre.

The regular Two's Company events are created for carers and the person they care for to enjoy a day out together.

"Many of those who come along to our events have mobility problems, so we always visit the venues beforehand to ensure full accessibility," said Peggy Nethercott from the Carers' Centre. "The ss Great Britain has great facilities for people with disabilities, and gives free entry for carers."



Valerie Brandling with her son, Michael.

"It's so lovely to have a day out," said Julie Vangorph, who is cared for by her husband, Dennis. "We used to do so much together, but since I had my stroke, mobility is a real problem. Dennis does everything for me; I don't know what I'd do without him. Two's Company events give us the opportunity to relax and enjoy something exciting together."

This event was funded by Give Us A Break.

Counselling To Help Carers

To help with the emotional responsibilities of being a carer, the Carers' Centre offers free counselling and support. Counsellor Jenny Hailes has over five years' experience of working with carers, and understands the emotional difficulties experienced when caring for another person.

"Carers can sometimes feel a sense of guilt, often finding it difficult to put their caring role aside and find time for themselves," said Jenny. "A carer may feel that they have lost their identity and find it hard to find someone who can empathise with their feelings and situation.



Counsellor Jenny Hailes

Depression, tiredness and being overwhelmed with responsibilities all take their toll. I try to give a 'toolbox' of strategies to help carers to cope."

Jenny is a qualified counsellor and operates her service under a strict code of confidentiality. "People need to feel completely at ease when they talk to me," explained Jenny. "We have a comfortable, private counselling room at the Centre where carers can feel free to express themselves in a safe, non-judgmental environment."

Carers can refer themselves to the service, or come through their GP or support worker. Sessions usually run for 6 – 8 weeks and are free of charge. Contact 01761 431388 or email info@banescarerscentre.org.uk for more information.

Sonia says... We're Building A New Future



The Carers' Centre Team left to right: Gill Evans, Alison Hillis, Trisha Jordan, Peggy Nethercott, Sonia Hutchison, Neil Drinkwater, Jo Grobler, Jill Tovey and Lydia Clark.

There is change afoot at the Carers' Centre. We have said goodbye to Jackie Short who worked tirelessly to find "hidden" carers to benefit from our services. Sadly, Alison Hillis is also leaving us. Alison has been with the Centre for 10 years of dedicated service.

We have received £24,000 for a Carers' Employment and Training Project from Lloyds TSB Foundation and £450 from Waitrose through its Community Matters initiative. Nationwide Community Foundation gave £4,778 to advise older carers about pensions, benefits, budgeting, finance and housing. A big Thank You to our funders!

Financial advice is also being provided by Somer Housing Independent Living Service at drop-in clinics in GP surgeries, hospitals and health centres across the area. Home visits for help and advice are

available too. Find out more online or by getting in touch with us.

Carers' Week is coming up in June and we have a full programme of events and activities for carers. Take a look at our What's On calendar to see if there is anything you would like to come to.

Chief Executive



Goodbye To Alison



"Alison Hillis has worked for the Carers' Centre for the past 10 years. Her expertise, warmth and dedication have been greatly appreciated by the Trustees, staff and all the carers who have come to know her. She has made

an enormous contribution to the success of our charity. I want to thank Alison for her great work and for stepping in as Acting Chief Executive in our hour of need. Many carers will have known her for a long time and she will be greatly missed by everyone," Jill Tremellen, Chair.

Carer Wendy Noble-Mackie was on the interview panel which selected Alison for her role back in 2001. "I've known Alison for over a decade now. She has been my main support and we have grown together. She is so reliable, trustworthy and honest - she's been fantastic. She always hears you and I'm gutted she's leaving. I'm proud to have been there from the beginning and seen her growth. She always goes the extra mile."

Carers, Trustees and staff of the Carers' Centre all wish Alison the very best for the future.

Carers Going Up
There are now 1026 carers registered at the Carers' Centre, that's more than ever before. Registering means carers receive help, support, information and advice, as well as every issue of Care Time – all for FREE!

**Contact
the Carers'
Centre**

Carers' Line: 01761 431389

Office: 01761 431388

Email: info@banescarerscentre.org.uk

Freepost: The Carers' Centre

(no stamp needed) FREEPOST

(SWB 10722) Radstock BA3 3ZZ

Visit us: 1 Riverside Cottages, Radstock BA3 3PS

Website www.banescarerscentre.org.uk