

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

What's On
events guide
inside



Michael and Valerie enjoy a day out together on the Two's Company visit to ss Great Britain in Bristol Dockyard.

The Son Who Slipped Through The Net

"My son is 56 years old and I feel only now, people are listening to me," said Valerie Brandling, whose son, Michael, has a learning disability and severe arthritis. **"When I finally tried to get some help, I was told Michael had "slipped through the net" and had missed out on forty years of support – until then I had cared for him completely on my own."**

In 1950, Valerie came from Jamaica to England to join her husband and work as a nurse. "The British were losing a lot of men in the War and came to the Colonies to recruit more soldiers to fight. My husband, along with many others, decided to join the RAF and serve his country."

Despite a recent heart by-pass, 78-year-old Valerie makes sure Michael no longer misses-out on vital services. He now has his own flat, and lives independently with help from paid care workers. "Michael wanted his own place, and it makes sense to prepare him for a life when I am no longer here," explained Valerie.

"I still have to pick up all Michael's problems when there is a crisis. It's very stressful getting health workers to listen to what you have to say as a carer. Michael has had a lot of mental and physical problems over the years, and I have had to really fight to get medical staff to see him as a person, not just a patient."



Valerie and her son in his flat in Combe Down, Bath.

Valerie found out about the Carers' Centre four years ago. "Now I know where to go when I need advice and information – if I have a problem – I call the Carers' Centre." Michael and his mother also attend Two's Company events so they can enjoy a break together. "I am very interested in helping other carers through the Carers' Centre. No-one knows more about caring than us and there is a lot of work to do to make sure our voices are heard."

Training For Caring

Groups of local carers have been learning practical skills for caring through courses provided by St John Ambulance. Judith Goldsmith, Carer Support Programme Manager, runs the courses in Carers' Centres throughout the region. Judith is a Registered General Nurse and cares for her 86 year old father who has dementia and prostate cancer.



Carers Lucy Gelsomino, Sally Forse, Jim Lingard, Pamela Collins, Judith Goldsmith from St John Ambulance and carer Chris Jordan with their Certificates of Achievement.

"The courses bring carers together to share their experiences and coping strategies with other carers," said Judith. "Over the four half-day sessions, carers get to know each other, feel free to discuss sensitive issues and safely share their thoughts and ideas."

Topics covered during the programme include infection and medication, memory and memory loss, continence, moving and handling people safely and first aid.

"I make sure there's a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere with no written tests or homework," added Judith, who runs up to 20 courses each year. "Every carer receives a St John Ambulance Certificate of Achievement on completion."

So far, St John Ambulance has helped 450 carers in the region to update their practical skills and knowledge. Carer feedback is very positive with comments such as: "I am much more prepared for accidents and emergencies," "It has helped me cope in the home and realise I need time for me," and "Judith is the best teacher I have had; informative, good-humoured and knowledgeable."

The Carers' Centre is working with St John Ambulance to arrange more training for carers. For information on when the next course is taking place, contact the Centre.

One Stop Shop For Carers

After listening to feedback, the Carers' Centre has been busy making improvements to speed up the response to carers' requests for support.

New members of staff have been recruited to help meet this challenge, each bringing with them specialist knowledge and experience to add to the established team.

David Harris, Operational Manager, said: "This is an exciting time for the Carers' Centre; we've had the opportunity to reshape the way we work and achieve the best outcomes for carers.

"Over the coming months, the team will be working to ensure that carers have access to the broadest possible range of information, advice and support."



Carers' Officers Lorraine Frapwell, Peggy Nethercott, Neil Drinkwater, Jo Grobler, Tom Fox-Proverbs, Lydia Clark and Clive Brooks.

Healing Massage Treat For Carers

Carers at the Carers' Centre have enjoyed a new sense of relaxation and refreshment through the ancient art of Indian head massage.



Carol Channon treats carer Stella Goldie to an Indian Head Massage.

Practised by women in India for over a thousand years, Indian head massage was brought to the West in the 1970s. The treatment includes massaging the head, neck, shoulders, hands and arms and works on areas affected by mental and emotional stress.

"I think carers miss out on a lot and have so little time for themselves," said volunteer Carol Channon, a qualified Indian Head Masseur and former nurse. "I decided to train in Indian head massage when I retired, and now I can help people to have a treat, relieve tension and clear their minds.

"As it's a fully-clothed treatment and doesn't need special equipment, I can go anywhere to give a massage," said Carol. "As well as relieving muscular discomfort, it is good for calming the spirit."

The Carers' Centre is offering free Indian head massage to carers, please contact the Centre to find out more and to book your place.

Left to right – Volunteer Catherine Constant, carers, Anne Wright, Rita Williams, Mary Holley, Gladys Graham, Peggy Nethercott from the Carers' Centre, Aileen Mowry, John Tucker, Deputy Manager at Prior Park, carers Gil Pitman, Diane Benham, Jane Rodgers, Chris Jordan and volunteer, Sue Comely.



Gardens Are Good For You

Green-fingered carers met with gardening guru John Tucker for an expert horticultural advice session. The Gardens Are Good For You event was organised by the Carers' Centre and brought more than 20 carers to Prior Park Garden Centre in Bath for top tips on all gardening matters.

"We run these afternoons for carers several times a year," said John, who is Deputy Manager at Prior Park. "My mother-in-law cared for her husband for many years. He had Parkinson's Disease, and I saw how hard her life was. My gardening talks give people a break from their day to day caring; hopefully they learn something new and get a bit of fresh enthusiasm for their gardens too."

Peggy Nethercott from the Carers' Centre said: "Gardening is something everyone can enjoy, even when you are at home a lot caring for another person. We want to thank everyone at Prior Park for all the help and support they have given to our carers over the years."

Anne Wright lives in Lansdown, Bath and cares for her husband, David. "I wasn't a gardener at all until I became a carer and the job came to me as my husband couldn't manage it anymore. I've had to learn it all from scratch, but I've had so much help from John and his talks at Prior Park. Thanks to him, I now use gardening for pleasure and relaxation and I get a lot of enjoyment out of it."

What's On October to December 2011

Here's our exciting range of activities, information sessions, training, breaks and events for carers and people who work with carers throughout Bath and North East Somerset.

Every year we help thousands of carers to benefit from the support available to them, get involved in influencing the development of carers' services and enjoy valuable breaks away from caring.

To participate in any of these events, simply contact the Carers' Centre.

Mail: FREEPOST (no stamp needed) (SWB 10722) Radstock BA3 3ZZ

Office: 01761 431388 **Email:** info@banescarerscentre.org.uk



OCTOBER

7th Memory Café

Information and advice for carers of people developing memory problems.

2.00pm to 4.00pm

The Hawthorns, Hawthorns Lane, Keynsham BS31 1EW

17th Carers For Each Other

A support group for carers with a learning disability.

2.30pm to 4.30pm

At the Carers' Centre

17th Bath Carers' Peer Support Group

A peer support group for carers to help each other.

10.30am to 12.15pm

Community Room, Kingsmead Court, Kingsmead North, Bath BA1 1XB

18th Parent Carers Aiming High Meeting

For parents of a disabled child: help shape local social care, leisure health and education services.

10.15am to 12.30pm

Southside Hub, Kelston View, Whiteway, Bath BA2 1NR

19th Money Surgery

How to fund long term care and plan for the future; for self funders. Refreshments included.

10.30am to 12.30pm

The Oval Office, St Peter's Business Park, Wells Road, Radstock BA3 3XU



25th Relaxing Families Project

A one-day workshop for all the family with bread making, den making, cooking over an open fire and foraging for wild food! Eligibility criteria applicable.

10.30am to 3.30pm

Magdalen Project, Magdalen Farm, Winsham, Chard, Somerset TA20 4PA

26th Parent Carers Drop-In

Pop in for a chat, support or information. With refreshments.

9.00am to 11.00am

At the Carers' Centre

26th Two's Company

Come along together for a trip to the movies. Show times, venue and film details soon to be announced!

26th Loan Shark Initiative

Ensures people in the hands of loan sharks are able to access appropriate advice, affordable credit and other sources of support.

1.00pm to 3.30pm

Bath City Football Club, Twerton Park, Bath BA2 1DB

27th Carers' Centre Annual General Meeting

For carers and professionals to look at the successes of the past year and help us plan for the future.

Lunch included.

10.00am to 2.00pm

St Luke's Centre, Hatfield Road, Bath BA2 2BD

28th Memory Café

Information and advice for carers of people developing memory problems.

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Open House Centre, Manvers St Baptist Church, Bath BA1 1JW



31st Carers For Each Other

A support group for carers with a learning disability.

2.30pm to 4.30pm

At the Carers' Centre

NOVEMBER

4th Memory Café

Information and advice for carers of people developing memory problems.

2.00pm to 4.00pm

The Hawthorns, Hawthorns Lane, Keynsham BS31 1EW

5th and 6th Relaxing Families Project

An overnight residential stay and a Firework Night experience with a difference - designed exclusively for disabled children and their families. Eligibility criteria applicable.

Magdalen Project, Magdalen Farm, Winsham, Chard, Somerset TA20 4PA

8th Indian Head Massage

A fully clothed treatment - any combination of head, shoulders, arms and hands.

10.00am to 1.00pm

10th New Beginnings

To help female carers discover their potential, look at current skill levels and help plan a pathway to employment, confidence, education or training.

9.30am to 3.30pm

Centurion Hotel, Charlton Lane, Midsomer Norton BA3 4BD

13th Relaxing Families Project

A workshop for disabled children and their families. Includes storytelling, yoga relaxation exercises and a healthy lunch. Eligibility criteria applicable.

Universal Yoga, Redhill House, Red Hill, Camerton BA2 0NY

14th Carers For Each Other

A support group for carers with a learning disability.

2.30pm to 4.30pm

At the Carers' Centre

20th Relaxing Families Project

A fun and informative fire safety workshop. Times to be confirmed soon.

Bath Fire Station, Cleveland Bridge, Bath BA2 6PU



21st Holistic Therapy

Full body massage for 1 hour or back, neck and shoulders for ½ hour.

10.00am to 3.00pm

At the Carers' Centre

21st Bath Carers' Peer Support Group

A peer support group for carers to help each other.

10.30am to 12.15pm

Community Room, Kingsmead Court, Kingsmead North, Bath BA1 1XB

21st Refreshing Day for Carers

A relaxing day away from caring with a therapy session and workshops.

10.00am to 4.00pm

The Ammerdown Centre, Radstock BA3 5SW

25th Memory Café

Information and advice for carers of people developing memory problems.

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Open House Centre, Manvers St Baptist Church, Bath BA1 1JW

28th Carers For Each Other

A support group for carers with a learning disability.

2.30pm to 4.30pm

At the Carers' Centre

30th Two's Company

Come along together to Dobbies Garden Centre for Christmas shopping

12 noon to 3.00pm

Dobbies Garden Centre, Mendip Avenue, Shepton Mallet BA4 4PE

DECEMBER

2nd Memory Café

Information and advice for carers of people developing memory problems.

2.00pm to 4.00pm

The Hawthorns, Hawthorns Lane, Keynsham BS31 1EW

3rd Relaxing Families Projects

Fun aqua-swim sessions for disabled children and their families. Times and venue to be confirmed.

8th Indian Head Massage

A fully clothed treatment - any combination of head, shoulders, arms and hands.

10.00am to 1.00pm

12th Carers For Each Other

A support group for carers with a learning disability.

2.30pm to 4.30pm

At the Carers' Centre



19th Bath Carers' Peer Support Group

A peer support group for carers to help each other.

10.30am to 12.15pm

Community Room, Kingsmead Court, Kingsmead North, Bath BA1 1XB

19th Christmas Drop-In

Pop in for mince pies and a festive get-together.

2.00pm to 4.00pm

At the Carers' Centre

30th Memory Café

Information and advice for carers of people developing memory problems.

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Open House Centre, Manvers St Baptist Church, Bath BA1 1JW



Carers' Research Group members Mary Allen and Rosie Cole take a look at the i-phone app at Bath University.

Carers Help With Innovation

The Carers' Centre is helping Bath University's Research and Development team by involving carers in the development of beneficial new product ideas. The Carers' Research Group brought ten carers to the University to listen to presentations and test out new projects.

Lisa Austin, Bath Research and Development Manager said: "The group brings us in direct contact with carers, which is of great benefit to us. By sharing thoughts and hearing real views and experiences, we are able to develop research into the problems faced by carers and create innovative design solutions."

The Carer's Group listened to presentations from the Research Design Service about two new projects:

In Touch by Hazel Boyd, BIME and RICE. This project will evaluate a two-way video system providing a wide view of a room within a home

where a person with dementia could, for example, watch and hear their grandchildren playing.

If-Only i-phone app by Lisa Austin. This app encourages people with disabilities to share the everyday problems they encounter. The app aims to inspire innovative design solutions from the information it gathers.

Carers interested in getting involved can join the Bath University Carers' Research Group online at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/health/researchsupport/brd/ppc-register.html>



The Carers' Centre involves carers in all sorts of ways to help raise awareness of the issues they face to the media, the public, health and social care professionals and funders.

Here is an overview of the latest projects where carers are making a real difference – and helping other carers too. Why don't you get involved?

Current projects

- Somer Valley FM Radio Show featuring carers from the Centre and broadcast to the public.
- Carers deliver training to Social Work students at Bath University to create better understanding.
- Face to Face befriending: parent-carers volunteer to use their unique experience to support others.

Ongoing projects

- Primary Care Trust User Panel where carers help develop NHS services for the better.
- Carers get together to help train Jobcentre Plus teams on the difficulties in finding work if you are a carer.

In the pipeline

- Carers needed to help develop an End Of Life resource for the NHS.
- People with experience of caring for someone who has had a stroke are needed for a new DVD for the Stroke Service.

The Centre would like to thank all carers currently involved in projects: Gary Smith, Mary Allen, Rosie Cole, Iman Salat, Leanne Roberts, Jim Lingard, Elizabeth Hayward, Isabella Spotswood, Audrey Spearing, Lesley Langley, Pippa Hawkins, Annie Carpenter, Helen Church and Ian Dagger.

MONTHLY CARER'S DROP-IN SERVICES for confidential help, support and advice

First Wednesday

2.00pm to 4.00pm

The Atrium, Royal United Hospital,
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG

Second Wednesday

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Paulton Hospital, Salisbury Road,
Paulton, Bristol BS39 7SB

Third Wednesday

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Children's Ward, Royal United
Hospital, Combe Park,
Bath BA1 3NG

Fourth Wednesday

2.00pm to 4.00pm

St Martin's Hospital,
Midford Road, Bath BA2 5RP

First Saturday

10.00am to 12 noon

Oldfield Surgery, 45 Upper
Oldfield Park, Bath BA2 3HT

First Saturday

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Combe Ward, Royal United Hospital,
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG

First Thursday

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Combe Ward, Royal United Hospital,
Combe Park,
Bath BA1 3NG

First and third Tuesday

9.30am to 11.30am

Keynsham Health Centre, St
Clements Road,
Keynsham BS31 1AG

27th October and 1st December 2011

2.00pm to 4.00pm

St Michael's Surgery, Walwyn Close,
Twerton, Bath BA2 1ER

Sonia says...



The autumn has given us the opportunity for reflection. We've had achievements with the influence our carers have been able to make on local services and we've had financial success in winning funding for family work and employment projects for carers.

This year, our Annual General Meeting is on October 27th. We will be celebrating these successes and hope many of you will want to join us. Please contact the Carers' Centre to book your FREE place.

Our successful funding bids are continuing and we have raised over £20,000 in the last 2 months to provide additional support and breaks for carers. We would like to thank: the Frome and District Club and Institute, The Charles Hayward Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Give Us a Break, Chew Stoke Friendship Club, Clevedon Forbes Fund, Rotary Club of Midsomer Norton and Radstock, Princess Royal Trust for Carers Relief Fund, John Albert Trust, Inner Wheel Club of Chelwood Bridge, Souter Charitable Trust, Off the Record, Parent Carers Aiming High and all our individual donors.

Chief Executive

Extra Help For Parent Carers



Carers' Officer
Lorraine Frapwell

Parent-carers can now benefit from a new service from the Carers' Centre. The Parent-Carers' Support Group was set up in response to parents' requests to meet up with others also caring for a disabled child.

Carers' Officer Lorraine Frapwell explained: "We have 148 parent-carers registered at the Centre already, but we are expecting this figure to rise as our links with mainstream school Special Needs Co-ordinators develop. We already work closely with Fosseyway and Three Ways Special Schools, but want to welcome even more parent-carers to our service."

The support group offers a resource library of information and plenty of toys, games, healthy drinks and snacks to keep pre-school children entertained while parents get together.

"We are expecting to run the group at venues throughout the area to encourage parent-carers to come along and offer each other peer support. Sharing thoughts and views with people who understand exactly how it feels to be the parent of a child with additional needs can feel very refreshing." added Lorraine.

If you are interested in coming along to the support group, contact the Carers' Centre.



Left To right: Carers Jim Lingard, Leanne Roberts, Liz Hayward, Mary Allen and Isabella Spotswood.



Theresa Hegarty, Head of Patient Experience at the RUH.

Carers In The Spotlight At RUH

An innovative new training programme at Bath's Royal United Hospital has brought a group of carers into the spotlight to share their experiences of caring with hundreds of key personnel.

'See It My Way' is the brainchild of Theresa Hegarty, Head of Patient Experience at the RUH. "Patients and people who use the hospital are invited to talk about how tough life can be for them," explained Theresa. "Their moving experiences provide a reality-check for everyone in the audience - from directors to doctors, nurses, porters and auxiliary staff."

Working with the Carers' Centre, which already runs drop-in services at the RUH, Theresa invited five carers to speak at See It My Way – Life as a Carer.

Seventeen-year-old Leanne Roberts cares for her father Ray, who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis three years ago. "No-one really

understands how you feel when you are a carer. I wish I could do more to help my Dad. I really wanted to let the RUH staff know that you don't get much of a childhood when you care for a parent."

Carer Mary Allen looks after her disabled husband, Roy. "I've told the staff at the hospital that carers know their patients better than anyone else, and that it is useful involve us; that we need help and comfort and not to make us feel in the way."

Theresa added: "Staff were queueing up to listen to the carers give their talks. It was a wonderful experience for everyone. Feedback proves that as a result of these events, people are making positive changes to the way they work at the hospital."

If you are a carer and would like to get involved in helping to shape local health and social care services, contact the Carers' Centre.

Contact the Carers' Centre



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers
Network Member

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Bath and North East Somerset