

Hidden depths

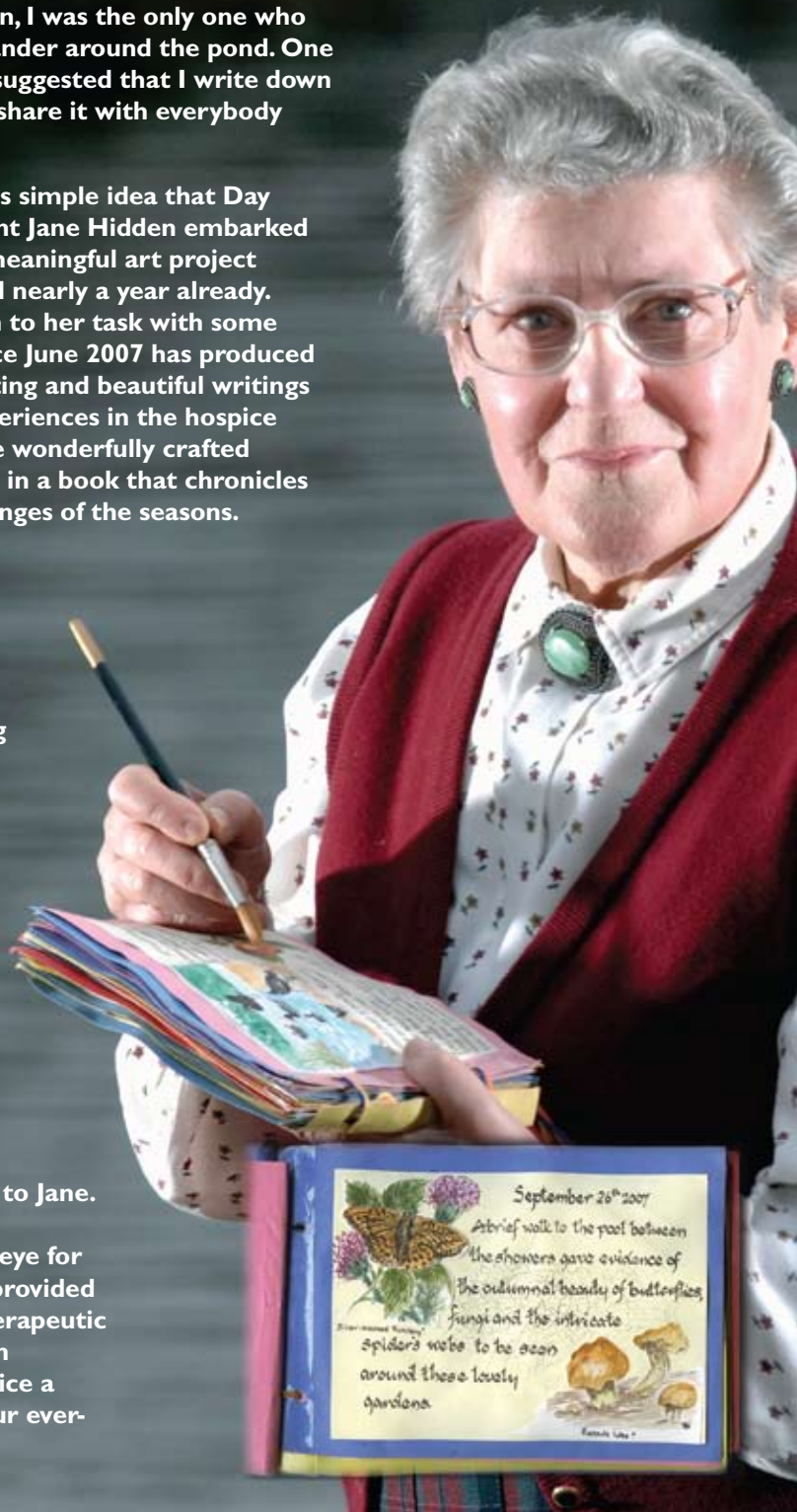
'One afternoon, I was the only one who felt up to a wander around the pond. One of the nurses suggested that I write down what I saw to share it with everybody else...'

It was with this simple idea that Day Hospice patient Jane Hidden embarked on a unique, meaningful art project that has lasted nearly a year already. Jane has taken to her task with some gusto, and since June 2007 has produced a weekly painting and beautiful writings about her experiences in the hospice gardens. These wonderfully crafted pages are now in a book that chronicles the subtle changes of the seasons.

'I find it a very therapeutic thing for me to do,' said Jane, 'But I also like sharing my experiences with the group and they are all very keen on getting out and enjoying the gardens now. One gorgeous afternoon, the entire group was down by the pond, able to see what had been expressed.'

We are very grateful to Jane.

Her artistic flair and eye for detail have not only provided an expressive and therapeutic activity, but also given everyone at the hospice a beautiful record of our ever-changing gardens.



'On such a cold, clear night, the genuinely warm and friendly service allowed us to share with others in remembering our loved ones together.

It was very, very special.'

In 2000 Stuart was diagnosed with a brain tumour and became a hospice patient. He is now a hospice volunteer.

Light up a life

18 venues with 2,000+ attending

It is with a deep sadness that we acknowledge the death of Dave Bryant. Dave died peacefully here at the hospice last October.

Dave's initiatives, Lightquest and Dreamwalk, not only raised our profile and vital funds, but also provided an inspirational creativity that lives on; **thank you DB.**

HELLEN OF TORRINGTON: BUSINESSWOMAN, MAYORESS, AND HOSPICE VOLUNTEER!

Helen Rumbold has been a volunteer in the hospice's Torrington shop for over 7 years. Here she tells us a bit about how she got started and why she would recommend it to anyone.

'After my husband and I had run a successful recruitment company, I knew that there was no way I could simply stop working. I wanted to do something worthwhile for the community and my neighbour told me about the hospice shop. So here I am, 7 years later and loving every minute of my time here. When I was Mayoress of Torrington in 06/07, it was great to be able to buy quality clothes at reasonable prices for all the events I had to attend!

The thing I love most about volunteering is meeting and helping people of all ages, particularly the 'regulars' who come and see you. It's good to catch up on all the local gossip, but most importantly, I value the friendships I've made.

There is a good variety of jobs to do here; there's never a dull moment! I would recommend volunteering to anyone. Come and spend a couple of hours at your local shop and see what you think.

My husband developed bowel cancer last year, and although he made a full recovery, it made me think about what essential and compassionate services the hospice provides to the people of North Devon. The money we raise in the shops plays an important part, which means you get a great deal of satisfaction from it.'



SO HERE I AM.....
AND LOVING
EVERY MINUTE
OF MY TIME HERE.

April 2008 marks a moment of huge significance for us. After an incredible 23 year involvement with the hospice, our Chief Executive, Philip Jewell, hands over the reins to a new CE, Gordon Lester.

Philip reflects on his time within an organisation that has changed dramatically from its humble beginnings.

'In 1985, when I applied for the role of Administrator for what was then Hospice Care Trust (North Devon), I thought it would be a short-term appointment. Twenty-three years later and I am still involved in what has become an essential part of North Devon's health community and has a deservedly wonderful reputation for the care it provides'.

'In those early days the care team consisted of just three community nurses, Wynne Withers, Ross Selwyn and Anne Belchamber. Wynne and Ross have sadly died in the last year, but their determination to get the service off the ground will not be forgotten. At this time the hospice operated from a small terraced house in the centre of Barnstaple, latterly named Richardson House'.

'In 1987 the decision was taken to introduce day care, and the service was significantly expanded following the appointment of Barbara Cecil as Day Care Leader in 1989. That must have been a good year for recruitment because it was then that we acquired the skills of Mary Brooks. She has been working with us as a community nurse ever since and next year will mark her twentieth year with the hospice'.

'Undoubtedly, the highlight of our time at Richardson House was the visit of Princess Diana in 1992. Everyone was struck by her natural charm, her beauty and her genuine interest in the patients she met.

For me, the memory of her visit is especially poignant as my very nervous eight year old daughter, Jemima, had the honour of presenting a posy to the Princess'.

'In September 1990 The Countess of Arran took over the role of Hospice President from Lord Richardson, and from that time until the present day, Lady Arran has worked tirelessly on behalf of the charity. She has generously allowed her wonderful home, Castle Hill, to be used for a number of special events and has used her networking skills on many occasions to bring politicians and other "names" to North Devon in support of the hospice. In the midst of her many other commitments she has always found time to attend hospice functions and we owe her a real debt of gratitude'.



Carnival Day, Bad Hair Day and Turf Cutting Day

'In June 1993 the hospice moved to its current home at Deer Park. The building was extended substantially in 1997 when the Princess Diana Wing was built to accommodate additional day care facilities and extend the range of complementary therapies on offer.'

'From the beginning, the hospice has been warmly embraced by the people of North Devon. This is your hospice. Without your continuing support over the years we would not exist; thank you'.

'It was under the Chairmanship of John Riley, who fulfilled this role with enthusiasm, commitment and courtesy, that the seeds were sown for a bedded unit. In June 2005, that dream became a reality as our 7-bed unit, perhaps the most significant addition to the hospice, was officially opened by HRH Princess Anne'.

What of the future? That will be for others to determine, but my successor, Gordon Lester, takes over an organisation with committed and talented staff, a strong reputation in the community, with referrals on the increase and a sound financial base. So I would suggest the omens are favourable ■

'My time with the hospice has been an immense privilege. I have been frequently touched by the bravery and humour of our patients, the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the wonderful continuing support of our community'.



Meet Gordon



Gordon Lester has risen to many challenges throughout his time, from playing hockey for his county to commanding a naval submarine.

Gordon admits that taking over as Chief Executive of North Devon Hospice is one of his most exciting challenges yet.

Meet the man who will lead us into an exciting new era.

What attracted you to this position in the first place?

I am fascinated by landscapes, having studied Geography at university, and I think North Devon has some of the most spectacular scenery around. I was also keen on a new challenge, having established myself in the not-for-profit sector in London.

How do you feel about joining the hospice?

Really, really excited. When I walked around during my interview, the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff and volunteers shone through. It will be wonderful to promote the hospice's work in such a beautiful part of the country.

What was your first ever job?

I was a skivvy in a kitchen! Getting up at 5:30am to prepare breakfast and lunch for 50 people at a guesthouse in Cumbria. I used my afternoon off to walk the fells before returning to serve dinner and wash up by hand! Happy memories.

If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be and why?

Harry Redknapp: As a Portsmouth fan, I think his ability to motivate players makes him as good a manager as Alex Ferguson or Arsene Wenger. Sir Richard Branson: A consummate risk-taker, his success comes from good judgement and everything he does is with an amazing sense of fun. Darcey Bussell: the most graceful and considered dancer of her generation. I was privileged to see her take her final curtain call at the Royal Opera House.

What is your favourite word?

Persistence. Calvin Coolidge (30th president of the USA) said that neither talent, education nor genius can take the place of persistence.

What is your least favourite word?

No. 'No' is usually the easy answer but, more often than not, a more considered answer after reflection is 'Yes'.

What job, other than your own, would you most like to attempt?

Managing Director, Heathrow Airport. I would be fascinated to run an airport with planes taking off and landing every 30 seconds. What an amazing challenge!

What job would you least like to attempt?

Laboratory technician. To be cooped up in a lab assiduously recording results of experiments does not appeal to me at all.

If you were Prime Minister, what would be the first things you changed?

Make the Monday after Remembrance Sunday a public holiday to recognise the distinctive service and challenges faced by those who served our country. I would also reinvigorate apprenticeships so that every young person could find an outlet for their skills and talents.



'Moving into a professional kitchen has made the world of difference to us. We were working in a cramped, domestic kitchen so this space allows more of us to be cooking and to produce a wider variety of food.'

'When someone is ill, food becomes even more important so we try and prepare meals exactly how the patient likes them.'

Pam Saunders

Last December saw a major landmark in our history as we were delighted to open new kitchen and dining facilities.

This development, made possible by a £480,000 grant from the NHS, will make a big difference to the way patients and visitors enjoy their meals.



The new dining space has been designed to be flexible so it can seat groups as large as 50, or be divided up so that families can eat together more privately.

Here, the Tuesday Day Hospice group are enjoying their afternoon tea overlooking the stunning views of our gardens and the estuary.

So long..



As one of our Complementary Therapists, Helen has made a real difference to many lives during her 8 years with the hospice.



Trevor has been a Specialist Community Nurse for us for over 10 years and is a very caring and popular member of the team.



Kate, as Communications Manager, played a vital role in promoting the work and aspirations of the hospice for nearly 6 years.



Sandy started as a volunteer 20 years ago, and went on to manage our furniture centre in Barnstaple.



Jo has been a Specialist Community Nurse for us for over 10 years and was very loved by patients and families all over North Devon.

The last months of 2007 saw the departure of five long-serving members of the hospice team: Helen Maxwell, Sandy Hoddinott and Jo Cooper are now enjoying retirement whilst Kate Harvey and Trevor Mitten have moved on to new challenges. We wish them all the very best in the next stage of their lives.

..farewell

education matters

'It is great to improve our own standard of care and work closely with the hospice because they really are the local experts.'

Val Smith, Dome Care Agency.



Our education department continues to be busy with key projects such as IT Training for all staff and a new University module in Palliative Care beginning in April. One course we are currently running should prove particularly beneficial to many people in North Devon.

Carers from the family-run Dome Care Agency are currently on a course entitled 'Caring for Dying People'. This will enable them to provide the best possible care at home for people as they come to the end of their lives.