

For supporters and friends of North Devon Hospice

# news



Summer 2016 Issue 45



UK's oldest Skydiver, Verdun Hayes, jumps from 10,000ft to raise money for the hospice



Meet Nigel and Anita



Lynda's Story



What's happening at The Long House

# being there for all the family

# Meet Nigel and Anita



**Nigel and Anita from Bradworthy have been visiting The Long House since it opened in September. It was a pleasure to meet Anita and hear first hand, how having support so close to home has made such a difference to her and Nigel.**

“After Nigel had finished his round of treatment, we were out on a limb but then The Long House opened. My mum went to the open day for The Long House in September. As soon as she got home that night she phoned me straight away and said I really need to go there. She was right, it has been a lifeline for us. It really has.”

**“There have been two things that have kept us going, one is our Grandson and the other is The Long House.”**

“We’ve made friends here and every time we walk in on a Wednesday it’s so nice to be able to meet other people who are in a similar situation to us. I’ve been able to meet the hospice community nurses too, even though

we don’t actually need a hospice nurse right now. So many people get referred to the hospice later, but we’ve been able to access a range of support. I have gone to a Carers’ Pamper Day and Nigel has gone to some Gents’ events. He also has reflexology once a week from the treatment room at The Long House. It has really helped him and makes him feel a lot better.”

“I know that when I need to, I can book a private appointment to speak to one of the counsellors. But on days like today, I can be here and just chat. I end up asking questions and talking about what is happening to us. Mandy and Charlie (hospice counsellors) are there in an informal way and they understand and can relate to us. It’s a real support knowing that I can just speak to them that they completely understand what is happening to us.”

“If I had said to Nigel he was going to the hospice for the day, he would have said no because then, we just associated the hospice

## GREEN INITIATIVE

2 years ago we rolled out a recycling scheme. Not only do we reuse and then recycle cardboard, paper and envelopes, we’ve also reduced our usage by switching from postal mailings to email. It saves us thousands of pounds every year!





At The Long House, Holsworthy

with sadness and death. But it's not like that at all, it's amazing. The Long House is amazing, so comfortable, so welcoming. We've had so much taken away from us, but The Long House, it's ours. It's our discovery, our haven and we have friends here.

**“My mum went to the open day for The Long House. As soon as she got home that night she phoned me straight away and said I really need to go there.”**

“We feel quite positive most of the time and we're focusing on living our lives to the full. There have been two things that have kept us going, one is our Grandson and the other is The Long House.”



## Every patient and family member urged to ask their GP for a referral

**From as soon as someone hears the news, we can be there for them and their family. We are urging all patients and families to ask their GP to make a referral to North Devon Hospice as early as possible.**

A diagnosis can create a storm in people's lives. It is important that patients and their families can access the right care and support from the moment they hear the news and throughout their journey.

We are urging everyone throughout North Devon to ask their GP for a referral to North Devon Hospice as early as possible. Caring for the people in our community is at the heart of what we do. We want to make every effort to ensure our care and support teams are there for people, right from the beginning, enabling them access to a wide range of care and support that can help sustain them during such a difficult time in life.

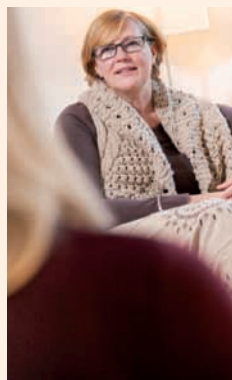


# The Long House is open and busy

In September 2015, we made the most significant leap forward in the care we provide since opening our Bedded Unit more than 10 years ago. The Long House is our first ever outreach centre, and allows people in the vast, rural area of Holsworthy to access more care and support, closer to home.



Since opening last year, the need for such a facility has been obvious. It has opened the door for so many more people to access support from the hospice, and provided a much-needed sanctuary to local people affected by cancer and other life-limiting illnesses.



We have run support groups, one-to-one counselling sessions, complementary therapies, Consultant outpatient appointments and much more from The Long House. A particular highlight has been the 'It's Wednesday' drop-in group, and we welcomed a whole family to have art therapy to make mementos. Thank you to everyone who supported The Long House appeal, and who continues to support the cause. It is only with your help that we can carry on caring in this way.



**To make a donation to The Long House, please contact Ali Hunt on 01271 347206 or email [alihunt@northdevonhospice.org.uk](mailto:alihunt@northdevonhospice.org.uk) or make a donation by visiting [www.northdevonhospice.org.uk](http://www.northdevonhospice.org.uk)**



## Q&A with Sarah

In this newsletter, we hear from Sarah who works as part of the Hospice to Home team, providing round the clock care for patients and their families when they are nearing the end of their life.

**Q. How long have you worked at the hospice?** I have worked at the hospice for just over 7 years. I worked on the Bedded Unit until the Hospice to Home service was set up in March 2012.

**Q. How did you get into this line of work?** I got into this line of work after working for a local nursing home and gaining a passion for palliative care. When I saw a vacancy advertised to join the team on the Bedded Unit, I applied.

**Q. What does your typical day or night look like?** My typical shift will begin with patient visits, visiting people in their own home. I would have had my patient list handed over to me the evening before. Between visits I write up my notes and speak to hospice clinical nurse specialists and district nursing teams. I will then continue with any other visits planned for that day or urgent visits that have been requested throughout the day.

**Q. Is it different providing care during the day to during the night?** It is very different providing care during the night. The main difference is not having as many people around as there is in the day. This can be a very worrying time for families and patients. Any assistance that is needed is carried out by the out of hours district nurses and doctors. This is accessed by any member of the team. The other difference is our whole shift is done in one patient's home so we are there for a much longer period of time.

**Q. How do you like to unwind after work?** I like to unwind after work by walking on the beach with my dog and then putting my feet up.

**Q. If you could give one piece of advice to anyone interested in working at the hospice, what would it be?** The piece of advice I would give for anyone interested in working at the hospice would be to come and have a look around. The hospice is a fantastic asset to North Devon. It is warm, welcoming and full of smiling faces.

All vacancies, both paid and volunteer roles are advertised on the hospice website.



cloths and the wedding cake... amongst many other things! It was a wonderful way to bond with the bride's mum and dad too.

"Times are very different since Martin and I got married 33 years ago. We didn't really do a honeymoon, and we didn't need a fancy wedding car as the reception venue was just round the corner from our first house. So we just walked home hand-in-hand! We've enjoyed some wonderful years together, so it came as a bolt from the blue when Martin was diagnosed with a brain tumour in 2012. It was a traumatic experience, especially when we were told that it was incurable. But since then, we have discovered North Devon Hospice, and that has been an absolute blessing.

"I've attended their Carers' Group for a long time, and that has helped me realise I am not alone in what I'm going through. It's a place where it's OK to cry and say how you really feel, because everyone there understands your fears and feelings. We've had amazing medical support from Keely and the other community nurses who've visited, and a lovely volunteer called Christine comes to sit with Martin once a week so I can have a bit of 'me' time. It's hard to imagine where we'd be without the hospice, and I'm so glad they will be there for me and Martin in the future. The word 'hospice' is one not to be afraid of. For us it means love, life, support, warmth and hope."

## National Story Telling Week

As part of National Storytelling Week, North Devon Hospice ran a series of stories on social media, which allowed our followers to get an insight into some of the people involved in the charity. The most popular was a heart-warming tale from Lynda, who spoke about organising a wedding for her son in just 3 months, while her husband was battling a brain tumour...

"Our son proposed to his girlfriend on Instow beach in July. They were married just three months later! While it was one of the happiest days of our lives, the reason it all happened so quickly was due to my husband Martin's illness. It helped focus our minds and realise there's no point waiting for something you really want, just go out and make it happen. And we certainly did that! The barn they got married in needed to be completely cleared out, which we all did ourselves. We made 150m of bunting, dozens of table

# The 100-Year-Old Skydiver!

There is a lot that Verdun Hayes had achieved in his first 99 years, but he had always wanted to do a parachute jump. So, what better way to celebrate his centenary than with a charity skydive from 10,000ft?...



"It was first class, really beautiful," said Verdun, as he became the UK's oldest ever skydiver, 3 days after his 100th birthday. "It was better than I expected and

I thoroughly enjoyed it. Coming out of the aeroplane and going into freefall was lovely."

If you would like to Skydive for the hospice, please contact Ali Hunt on 01271 347206 or email [alihunt@northdevonhospice.org.uk](mailto:alihunt@northdevonhospice.org.uk).



Verdun's amazing exploits rightly gained the attention of the national media, and the great grandfather from Georgeham became a star overnight. This helped him raise nearly £4,000 for North Devon Hospice.

Chief Executive, Stephen Roberts, went along to give Verdun some moral support on the day, but said the centenarian was completely relaxed. "I've never seen someone look so calm, he is just such an impressive character," he said. "We are so grateful that he chose to do this for North Devon Hospice. He never intended on becoming a record-breaker, he just wanted to do something to raise funds for his local hospice. But what a way to do it!"

## I want great care

Some of your comments about North Devon Hospice's care....

"Just to know that somebody is there to answer delicate questions and the person concerned will be treated with dignity and respect."

A family member

"North Devon is extremely lucky to have this facility. My father was treated with the utmost respect and dignity. The staff are exemplary. On his passing we could not have asked for better treatment both for him and us. Thank you."

A family member

Give your feedback about the care and support you've received at North Devon Hospice at

[iwantgreatcare.org.uk](http://iwantgreatcare.org.uk)

# Volunteering in North Devon Hospice's gardens

## We do it because...



“ I have just completed my first year as part of the volunteer gardening team, or ‘Garden Gang’ as we are sometimes called, at North Devon Hospice. Our team works throughout the year and we often ask each other “Would we be out in our own garden in weather like this?” and often the answer is “NO!” So why do we turn up every Monday in shorts/tee shirts, full waterproofs or 3 layers of thermals?

We do it because we want the grounds to look tidy, colourful and welcoming. First impressions are important and we want people to know that this is a cared for environment and that they and their loved ones will be cared for in this place.

We do it because we want the grounds to be a place of beauty and sanctuary for all who use the hospice.

We do it because we want to create comfortable and private places for patients and their friends and family to sit in peace and quiet at difficult times.

We do it so that staff can walk past trees and

flowers on their way to work, can look out from their offices at a lovely vista or sit and eat their lunch on a lawn surrounded by trees and flowers.

We do it so that patients and their visitors are able to stroll around the grounds, turn a corner and come across a colourful flower bed, a burgeoning vegetable garden, a beautiful tree or a tranquil lake with a moorhen swimming around on it.

We do it so that children visiting the hospice can have a place to run around or can play hide and seek in the orchard making as much noise as they want whilst they play.

We do it so that the kitchen has a supply of fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs to use in the Terrace Cafe and for Day Hospice and Bedded Unit patients. So that a very poorly patient can have a few delicious strawberries or raspberries because that is what they really fancy.

We do it so there are always flowers and greenery to be picked to fill vases of flowers for reception, the Day Hospice lounge or for a small vase of flowers to go on the meal tray of a seriously ill patient on the Bedded Unit. Whilst I was working in the garden recently





# 'A Way to Remember'

There are many ways we remember someone close who is no longer with us. 'A Way To Remember' is a unique oak structure at North Devon Hospice with glass panels upon which are written words of comfort. In return for a donation, there is the opportunity to have the name of someone you love etched in the glass as a lasting tribute to them. **To find out more, please contact Robyn on 01271 347233 or email [robynthegaskes@northdevonhospice.org.uk](mailto:robynthegaskes@northdevonhospice.org.uk).**

a gentleman spoke to me about his mother who was very poorly in the Bedded Unit. She was unaware of much that was going on around her but she still had a sense of smell and apparently had always loved roses. Together he and I went to pick some highly scented roses so that she could have them beside her bed.

We do it so that we can open the garden for others to see. On a glorious day in June this year hundreds of people visited the hospice for an Open Garden Event. For many it was their first visit to the hospice and they discovered what a beautiful and calm place it is and also that it is a place of much laughter. They learnt that it is not a place to be feared but a place of comfort and care.

We do it because we enjoy being part of a team that tries to use their wide range of skills to enhance the environment of this beautiful place. So in the sun, rain, wind or frost we'll be there on Monday mornings because together we want to continue to help and try to make a difference, and to create a beautiful, calm place for all those that use the very special place that is North Devon Hospice. ”

*Anne Bennett*



# Nominate someone for: Sheppard's 'Feel Good Fridays'

North Devon Hospice has been running Sheppard's Cafe in Barnstaple for almost two years, with all proceeds going to help us provide care and support to local people.

Sheppard's has gained a reputation for producing platters for business lunches, events, weddings and more. To help spread the word about our delicious platters, we have been working with The Voice radio to introduce 'Feel Good Fridays.'

This is where we deliver a fresh sandwich platter to a deserving employee at work every Friday morning. Nominations are made via The Voice website, and when we turn up to surprise the lucky recipient, their reactions have been priceless!

The whole thing happens live on air, so if you know someone who deserves a special 'Feel Good Friday' at work, please nominate them at [www.thevoicefm.co.uk](http://www.thevoicefm.co.uk).



## GREEN INITIATIVE

In 2011 we fitted solar panels on the roof of the Bedded Unit. On average, they have brought in an income of £XXX per year. We've also installed solar panels on our new outreach centre, The Long House. Within just a few months, they are being just as fruitful.

# Syringe driver bags on the Bedded Unit

When a patient on our Bedded Unit needs a syringe driver, to deliver medication or pain relief in a more efficient way, it can sometimes be awkward to permanently be attached to a piece of equipment. That is where Carol Langdon, one of our nurses, comes in. She has desinged and sewn dozens of bags which patients can wear in order to hold their syringe driver box. This makes it much more convenient when moving around, and means there is no risk of the box falling out of bed in the night and beng damaged.

Carol said: "I've lost count of the number of bags I've made, I just enjoy doing it. I've made them out of all sorts of material, even recycling one of my husband's shirts! It just adds another bit of comfort and dignity for



our patients, and that is what our job is all about. So I'm happy to help out in this way."

The bags are now being used by patients not just on the Bedded Unit, but at home as well. Carol favours bright colours and pretty patterns, because even though the bags are functional, she says there's no reason they can't be stylish too!

## Throwback Thursday

We take a look back to the time TITO JACKSON visited North Devon Hospice, way back in the spring of 2007...

It was a blustery day, but not enough to disturb the trademark bowler hat which sat upon the head of the oldest member of the Jackson 5. Tito spent time on the Bedded Unit and in Day Hospice, happily chatting away with all who he met. He also spent time with Charlotte Long-Howell, who had lost her father the previous year at the age of just 59.

There are still plenty of staff and volunteers still with the hospice who remember this visit fondly. They all recall a modest and gentle man who cared a great deal about those he met.



June 2007

# floating bye

Please join us on  
**INSTOW BEACH**  
Sunday 3rd July from 5pm

Floating bye is a moving and supportive evening in remembrance of our loved ones.

An orange gerbera flower carries individual messages in memory, with each flower being placed on a specially made wicker and bamboo raft. With gentle background music and some words of poetry, we stand together watching the raft of flowers being taken out to sea.



[www.floatingbye.co.uk](http://www.floatingbye.co.uk)



## 'A Way to Remember'

There are many ways we remember someone close who is no longer with us. 'A Way To Remember' is a unique oak structure at North Devon Hospice with glass panels upon which are written words of comfort. In return for a donation, there is the opportunity to have the name of someone you love etched in the glass as a lasting tribute to them.

**To find out more, please contact Robyn on 01271 347233 or email [robynthregaskes@northdevonhospice.org.uk](mailto:robynthregaskes@northdevonhospice.org.uk).**



North Devon Hospice, Deer Park, Barnstaple,  
EX32 0HU Tel: 01271 344248

[info@northdevonhospice.org.uk](mailto:info@northdevonhospice.org.uk)

registered charity number 286554

This newsletter, along with all of our publications, is available online.

[www.northdevonhospice.org.uk](http://www.northdevonhospice.org.uk)