

Steve Kirk Moves On

A Tribute from Professor Gerald Richards, Chairman of the Board of Management

It must have come as a great surprise to everyone to learn that, in November, Steve Kirk is leaving St. Gemma's to become Chief Executive at St. Luke's Hospice, Sheffield. He says he wants another challenge! In many respects it will be similar to the task facing him when he came to St. Gemma's nearly eight years ago. In that time, Steve has achieved so much; we thank him most sincerely and wish him well in his new role.

Steve's background in nursing, along with clinical and managerial experience in the NHS and hospice world, fitted him ideally for the post of Chief Executive and Director of Nursing of St. Gemma's. He soon established himself as an innovative, imaginative and competent leader, with an open, participative style of management. He has kept in touch with patient care by working on the wards whenever possible; indeed he has exemplified the ethos of St. Gemma's in putting patients and their relatives at the very heart of the organisation. By involvement in NHS committees, he has influenced the development of palliative care in Leeds and beyond and has brought the role of St. Gemma's and hospices generally to the attention of the city's NHS Trusts. As a result, he has become widely respected and a formidable advocate for the financial needs of St. Gemma's.

One of the greatest challenges of recent years has been the need to refurbish the Hospice following twenty years of heavy use. Steve played a major part, along with the Board, staff and a successful fundraising campaign, to bring the £5.2 million development to a much admired conclusion. Among the other major achievements of Steve's 'reign' has been the development of team nursing and staff training, publication of two strategic plans, links with hospices in Bosnia and last year's successful 25th Anniversary celebrations.

At Board of Management meetings, Steve has provided clear, detailed accounts of the issues under discussion, with well considered solutions. The Board



is particularly grateful for his careful oversight of the Hospice's finances.

These many achievements have contributed to making St. Gemma's one of Britain's leading hospices, recognised by several prestigious awards, including the Queen's Award for Enterprise, 2002 UK Charity of the Year, Investor in People and Best Patient Environment (Department of Health) as well as glowing reports from the Charity Commission and the Health Quality Service.

Steve's immense energy has not been restricted to work at St. Gemma's. While here he has obtained the MBA degree from Leeds University. His family, house refurbishing, football, running, sheep rearing and dry stone walling all play an important part in his life. We hope his new post will allow him to continue being such a rounded person.

Steve has earned the respect of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion (who founded the Hospice), the Board of Management, staff, volunteers and many beyond our borders. Thank you, Steve, for all you have achieved. We wish you and Zoe much happiness and success in the years ahead.

A Personal Message

Dear Colleagues, Supporters and Friends,

Many of you will now know that I have accepted a new job as Chief Executive at St. Luke's Hospice in Sheffield and will start my new job in November. I could not leave St. Gemma's without saying what a wonderful place it is to work in. I have been made to feel so welcome here, and the achievements we have made are a testament to everyone's commitment to make St. Gemma's the best Hospice in the country – and I have no doubt that it is! When I walk around the Hospice and see the lovely environment throughout the building and the grounds, which look absolutely fantastic, I feel very proud to have been involved with the team at St. Gemma's.

The philosophy and culture is the most caring I have ever experienced and I hope everybody sees this as the main underpinning reason for our success. Although I will leave with a heavy heart, as I will miss the many friends I have made, I am sure that all of you will continue the good work that we do every day for the most important people at the Hospice – our patients and their carers.

I will not have the opportunity to say a proper goodbye to each and every one of you and so thank you very much for the opportunity of working at St. Gemma's over the last seven and a half years.

Steve Kirk
Chief Executive & Director for
Excellence in Nursing



Volunteer Vacancies

Do you have a spare couple of hours per week or even a day? Would you be interested in joining our valued team of volunteers? If you would, please take a look at the vacancies below.

Bereavement Service

Could you help at our monthly Bereavement Support Meeting? Are you a good listener and would you like to work in a supportive team? Applications from men particularly welcome. Support and some training is given. Contact: Pippa Bonner on 0113 218 5500.

Bistro

Our busy Bistro caters for visitors and staff. Could you spare two hours to operate the till? We need people from 12 noon until around 2.00 p.m, Monday to Friday. Please consider helping us one day per week. Contact: Angela Perkins on 0113 218 5532.

Day Hospice

Drivers required to transport patients to and from the Hospice, particularly for the Wetherby area. Also, general volunteers to work one day a week and those with hairdressing or manicuring skills. Contact: Mary Curl on 0113 218 5549

Day Hospice Art Room

Art volunteers with good, practical experience in multimedia art and craft work. Knowledge about New Media / Digital Technology / Editing would be very useful, though not essential to the role. Contact: Claire Thompson on 0113 218 5549.

Finance

Help required within the Finance department – must be computer literate. Contact: Diane Coulson on 0113 218 5522.

Fundraising

Will you stand with **collection boxes** at shops and supermarkets or help with collections at events? Contact: Joyce Milne on 0113 218 5565.

There are vacancies in most of our **shops**. Contact: Vicki Burnett on 0113 218 5558.

Hospice Gift Shop – Tuesday 1-4 p.m. and 4-6 p.m, Wednesday 4-6 p.m, Thursday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Friday 1 to 4 p.m. Contact: Sarah Wood on 0113 218 5555.

Reception

General reception duties in the main reception area. Contact: Sue Nixon on 0113 218 5525.

Ward Reception

To assist the Ward Secretary with general administration. An office background would be advantageous. Contact Sue Nixon on 0113 218 5525.

For application forms for these vacancies please contact Mavis Davison on 0113 218 5529

Summer Roundup



YORKSHIRE DALES CHALLENGE WALK – RUGGER RAMBLE

Many thanks go to all those who walked and ran through the Yorkshire Dales in aid of St. Gemma's Hospice and Wharfedale Rugby Club. An enjoyable day was had by all and so far we have raised over £3,000 for the Hospice. We are very grateful to Wharfedale Rugby Club for a great event and for their kind hospitality.

WINDERMERE ROW 2004

Once again, the sun shone and the heavens opened for our rowers out on Lake Windermere during the 23rd Annual Row. Everyone enjoyed themselves despite changeable weather and yet again, we hope to raise over £50,000 so thank you very much to everyone involved!

WEAR YELLOW SPONSORED WALK

Over 500 Year 6 children from local schools braved torrential rain to help St. Gemma's in June. Thirteen schools participated in a sponsored walk around Roundhay Park organised to raise funds for St. Gemma's and Martin House. None of the children complained about the weather and the event will raise over £5,000 for both Hospices. Thank you to everyone who took part and helped on the day!

GARDEN PARTY 2004

The wet weather plan came into play but this didn't stop supporters coming out in their droves to pick up a bargain, grab a burger and have some fun at this year's Garden Party. Hundreds of people dodged the heavy showers and queued to get in to have a go on the tombola and enjoy a cream tea. We raised nearly £9,000 on the day. So thanks to our stallholders, volunteers and of course everyone who came along to support us.

FOURTH ANNUAL ARTS EXHIBITION

Opened by Hospice supporter, Kay Mellor, this year's Arts Exhibition was the best ever. Almost 2,000 people visited the event in July and it is anticipated that the event will raise £14,000 for St. Gemma's. The Hospice would like to thank the North Leeds Friends for organising the event and all the artists, visitors and sponsors who participated.

ONE GIANT LEAP

Eight thrill-seeking supporters joined us at an airfield in Bridlington to jump out of a plane at 10,000 feet. Our first group parachute jump was enjoyed by all and we hope to raise over £3,000 for St. Gemma's. If you are interested in taking part in a parachute jump, please contact Laura on 0113 218 5505.

GRAND SUMMER PRIZE DRAW

Thanks to everyone who has bought or sold raffle tickets for us. We have raised nearly £18,000 for the Hospice which is tremendous. At the time of going to press the raffle has not yet been drawn. We will contact you if you have a winning ticket but if you would like a list of winning numbers, please contact Laura on 0113 218 5505.

Corporate and Personalised Christmas Cards

In partnership with **Kingsmead Publications** we are pleased to be able to offer a range of high quality Christmas cards personalised for yourself or your company.

Call Pauline Storey on 0113 218 5555 for further details and a brochure.

Every purchase will result in a donation to St. Gemma's Hospice.

Christmas is Coming!

This year's St. Gemma's Christmas cards will be available from the 1st of September. We have an even bigger and better range than before and we are sure there is something for everyone. Cards are being sold through our Gift Shop in reception (open 7 days a week) in our 10 Charity Shops and via our mail order catalogue. You can also pick them up at any of our fairs – especially the **Annual Christmas Gift Sale** which is held at the Hospice between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th of November. Put it in your diary so you don't miss out!

These boots were made for walking



This summer an intrepid Hospice supporter set off to Iceland, to take part in a challenging trek in aid of St. Gemma's.

Jennifer Walshaw spent four days walking, clambering and climbing across the different landscapes of Iceland; past geysers and fjords and up and down hills and volcanoes.

The going was tough but Jennifer thought it was worth it! "It was somebody else doing it, not me," said Jennifer, "I've never done anything like this before but it was just incredible. Every time you turned a corner the landscape was something different and there was something new to see."



"It was truly worthwhile," said Jennifer who is already planning her next holiday to Iceland. Not only did she have an experience of a lifetime, she will also raise vital funds for the Hospice by completing the trek, so our very grateful thanks go to Jennifer.

The Long Weekend Iceland Trek is just one of many Charity Challenges that you can take part in to raise money for St. Gemma's. Some of the trips on offer in 2005 include:

Great Wall of China Trek	Apr/May/Sep
Patagonia Glacier Trek	Feb/Nov
Grand Canyon Adventure	Sep
Sardinia Coast to Coast Bike Ride	Sep
Thailand Jungle Trek	Feb/June/Nov
Mongolian Horse Riding Challenge	Jun/Oct

If you are interested in any of these trips or want to know what other overseas challenges are available, contact Laura on 0113 218 5505 or email laurar@st-gemma.co.uk

The first three days of the trek were spent navigating sometimes tricky terrain across the volcanic region. Nights were spent under canvas resting aching limbs. "The fourth day was like a holiday though," commented Jennifer. On the final night they were treated to a meal in a restaurant,

a night in a guesthouse, "Where you didn't have to put your bed up before you got in it or take it down when you got up," and then a morning looking round the city's capital, Reykjavik, and some time in a thermal spa before hopping on the plane home.

Row, row, row the boat...



It is seven years now since Jean and I took an urgent telephone call from Jackie Oates, (the then Volunteer Organiser), pleading for us to help out at the annual 'Lake Windermere Row' in aid of the Hospice, because of a last minute staffing problem. Little did we know what a labour of love we, and the other volunteers who so bravely answered the call, were letting ourselves in for.

Such is the comradeship and the commitment to this event that we now actually look forward to yet another two weekends of whatever the Lake District can, and does, throw at us in the way of just about every kind of weather. Our commitment is also to the 1,000 or so stalwart (some might say foolhardy!) souls who come to the Ambleside Rugby Club early on the Saturday and Sunday mornings to register for either the half-row of about 10 miles to Bowness and back, or for the full row of some 21 miles all the way to Fellfoot at the other end of the lake and back!

The 'work' starts on Friday evening when the Rugby Club car park area is festooned with bunting by volunteers Christine and Stephen Booth, (who also man the car park during the weekends), and a café is set up inside the Clubhouse. This is ably run by volunteers Mavis Hickling and Iris Bellamy who dispense a never-ending supply of refreshments to rowers, supporters, visitors, staff and volunteers alike.

Saturday and Sunday mornings start at the crack of dawn with a hurried breakfast and then down to the Clubhouse to prepare and set up refreshments in anticipation for the hundreds of rowers. At the same time another team go to the shore at Lakehead to bale out water from the 50 or so boats, especially if it's been raining. The boats then have to be tagged accurately, according to their size, (we have boats for teams of between 2 and 8 people).

By 8 a.m. rowers have begun registering and are ready to embark on their strenuous journeys. At Bowness, (the half-way checkpoint), volunteers Nigel and Elaine Rodgers welcome them in and send them out again to either return 'home' or to continue to the Fellfoot checkpoint at the far end of the lake, where my wife Jean and I look after them. At Fellfoot we supply hot and cold drinks, sandwiches and chocolate bars to the rowers. Thanks to the National Trust, who allow us to use their jetty, the rowers also have access to proper toilet and shower facilities. They need all this after their 11 mile row and the prospect of the long haul home back to Ambleside, via Bowness.

The days end for staff and volunteers only after the boat has been welcomed back at Lakehead, the rowers presented with their medals and the last well earned drinks have been served.

The overall feeling of being a volunteer at these weekends is of a very busy time, sometimes under less than pleasant weather conditions, but with a good comradeship amongst all. Above all, though, is the feeling that it is a privilege to support the rowers, some of whom have done the 'Row' almost every one of the 23 years it has been staged. It is a unique event, as well as being the Hospice's biggest fund raising event, with £50,000 being raised in 2003.

Raymond Dixon

Ed: Raymond and Jean are regular volunteers, helping drive the van for shops' deliveries on Wednesdays and long-serving members of the Newsletter 'Super Stuffers' team.

Foreign Coin Collection

Just come back from your holidays and have a few excess Euros or remaining Rupees? Why not donate them to St. Gemma's, we can convert them into vital funds.

Recycling

St. Gemma's will recycle used printer cartridges, mobile phones, used stamps and old gold jewellery and change it all into money for the Hospice.

If you would like more information about either of the above please contact Laura on 0113 218 5505 or e-mail: laurar@st-gemma.co.uk.

Hospice Shop Celebrates 20 Years of Trading



St. Gemma's Hospice Charity Shop on Harehills Lane celebrated 20 years of trading on Friday August 6th. The shop welcomed customers old and new to join them in their celebrations. Activities included a raffle, tombola, bran tub, buffet (including delicious strawberries and cream) and all the usual bargains.

The Harehills Lane shop was the very first St. Gemma's Charity shop to open back in 1984 and has always been a firm favourite with Hospice supporters. The shop is an integral part of the community in Harehills, just as much as it is in raising over £85,000 each year for the Hospice. This is an incredible amount and could not have been achieved without the support of the local community.

Shop Manager, Kathleen Speight, who has worked at the shop for the whole 20 years says, "The local community have always supported the shop and I think it is testament to them, along with all our hard-working volunteers, that we are now celebrating our 20th year."

Since the Harehills shop opened in 1984, the Hospice has opened a further nine shops across Leeds and the surrounding area. Combined these bring in a significant contribution towards the running costs of St. Gemma's.

Bereaved Children's Day



Recently a day for bereaved children called, 'A Day to Remember' was held at the Hospice. St. Gemma's, Sue Ryder Care Wheatfields and the Barnardo's Castle Project (which works with families facing a life threatening illness and afterwards) all combined to run the day. In total twelve 6 to 12 year olds came to the day. A mixture of activities was held in order to let the children have fun, let off steam and encourage them to share memories and talk about the parent or grandparent who had died. One of the most helpful events for the children was a 'Question and Answer Session,' sensitively facilitated by one of our consultants.

The Day Hospice was transformed for the day and the team of staff and volunteers was kept busy in the Hospice and the garden! The kitchen came up with child friendly food and the Hospice soft toys were well cuddled! Many of the staff worked behind the scenes to help the day along. Special thanks go to the children who came for the day and had fun but also were willing to share their grief and be sensitive to each others' sadness. We are planning a follow up session with the children and plan to hold regular days between the three organisations.

The Hospice Bereavement Service work with individual bereaved children but this is, we believe, an additional helpful group venture for the children, and a useful one in which the Hospices and Barnardo's can combine their experience and resources to provide fun and bereavement support for more children. *Pippa Bonner, Bereavement Service Coordinator.*

Local Charity Shop Wins National Award

St. Gemma's Otley shop is celebrating after being named, 'Charity Shop Team of the Year' at a recent awards ceremony.

The awards are held annually by the Association of Charity Shops – a national organisation that exists to support charity retailers. The Otley Shop team was chosen due to the extra energy and efforts they have put in since the shop moved over to selling clearance stock last year.

Senior Shops' Fundraiser at St. Gemma's, Vicki Burnett said, "We are all absolutely delighted that the Otley shop team have been honoured in this way. They have had a tremendous year and have shown such amazing energy, good will, good humour and commitment – they really deserve to be acknowledged in this way. They are truly a credit to the Hospice – we are all very proud of the team and what they have achieved."

Not only did the Otley Shop receive this award, but all St. Gemma's ten shops were named as having the highest average volunteer hour contribution. Vicki added, "This second award demonstrates the commitment shown by all our volunteers – and that our shops are great places to work!"

Flag Day Appeal

Our annual Leeds Flag Day takes place on Saturday, 2 October.

We have permission to collect all over Leeds and we need lots of willing collectors to make the day a success. We have traditionally received support from local churches who provide teams of collectors but we always need more people – individuals and groups.

If you have a spare 1 to 2 hours, you can collect at a shopping centre close to your home or you can come into the city centre to help. This year we will have a base on Central Square in the city centre where we will be providing entertainment all day and we would also love to hear from anyone who would like to do a little public performance!

If you want to raise money for St. Gemma's, please contact Joyce on 0113 218 5565.



Bloomin' Marvellous!

On Tuesday 6th July, the officials from the Yorkshire in Bloom competition again visited St. Gemma's to judge our gardens for the 2004 awards. Last September we won the award for our category and are hoping to do so again this year.

However, prior to the judging a lot of hard work has been put in by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers. Added to this, the 2004 judging took place just two days after our annual Summer Garden Party, so extra work was needed to remove bunting and all other traces of this event from the grounds!

Denis Hainsworth, our Hospice Gardener, and his regular volunteers, Valerie Bell, Bob Cooper, Marian Whyte and Tony Goode have been propagating, planning and planting out for months. They have been ably assisted by an enthusiastic team of six volunteers from the Halifax Building Society who come once a month for a day to help out.

One major concern we had was that the pump in our wonderful water feature rill had broken down and could not be replaced in time for the judging. Eugene Lee, one of our Maintenance Staff Team, removed the pump, stripped it down and managed to repair it, so that when the judges arrived, the water was once again gently gurgling and flowing through the rill. Well done Eugene!

We won't know until the beginning of September how we have done this year, but will let you know in the November Newsletter.

If anyone is a keen gardener and would be interested in giving a few hours a week or month to helping Denis and the team, please do get in touch via Linda Shuttleworth on 0113 218 5561. Experience shows that those who get involved come away with just as much as they give, simply from working alongside Denis and listening to his horticultural wisdom!

Can you get the sparks flying?

Are you a qualified electrician? Do you have experience of working with electrical items? Are you retired or have time on your hands?

We receive thousands of pounds worth of electrical items into our charity shops each year but every item we sell has to be checked for electrical safety. We are looking for volunteers to test these items in our Harehills shop. We will send you on a one day course to show you how to use our equipment and you will, of course, receive all the same benefits as our other volunteers, including expenses and the chance to make a real contribution to St. Gemma's. If you are interested, please contact Vicki Burnett on 0113 218 5558.

Light up a life

a personal experience told by Beverley Fletcher



Beverley Fletcher with her mum, Joyce

I had heard about Light up a Life from people who had been before, but had never really thought about going myself. Then my Dad died suddenly at the end of September, Christmas was dreaded. My Mum suggested sponsoring a light for him, on one of the trees at St. Gemma's. My initial reaction was, "But he didn't have cancer and wasn't in the hospice." My Mum explained to me how that didn't matter, anyone can sponsor a light for someone they love and want to remember and feel close to at Christmas.

We went to the Light up a Life service one Sunday afternoon in December, singing carols as we watched the trees become a mass of twinkling lights. We were sad that Dad wasn't with us, but we felt close to him – as if he was there and it made us feel more positive about facing Christmas.

One year later, fate had surprised us again and, as the Light up a Life service was celebrated, I cuddled up to my Mum, who was now in St. Gemma's. She was dying. She had gone into the Hospice in November, into the caring arms of some very special people. Always a positive and determined individual, my Mum wasn't prepared, on that crisply cold Sunday afternoon, to listen to everyone sing whilst she lay in bed – she wanted to be out on the balcony. With the help

of a couple of the nurses, we wrapped Mum up in such a collection of shawls, scarves and blankets that she looked like she was commencing an Antarctic expedition. She watched much of the Light up a Life celebration that afternoon from her wheelchair, surrounded by her family and a best friend. Amidst the Christmas carols and the many flickering candles there was a tangible atmosphere of love and togetherness, the living with those who couldn't be there.

Mum died peacefully in St. Gemma's in the New Year. There was no doubt for me that we would be sponsoring lights the following Christmas for her and Dad and other loved ones who couldn't be with us anymore. It would be our way of sending our love to them at Christmas. When I went to that next Light up a Life service with my husband and two children I felt that Mum and Dad were with us we were ALL TOGETHER, they were close and we could look forward to Christmas safe in this thought.

You should have received a leaflet about how you can become involved with Light up a Life this Christmas.

If you have not, or have any queries, please contact Pauline Storey on 0113 218 5555

“Whatever your beliefs may be, I can't think of a more special way to start Christmas than to share it with and feel the love of those we can't see anymore.

Light up a Life – a perfect start to Christmas.”

Forthcoming Events



My Will be done

TEA AT TWO

One way to lift spirits in autumn is to visit St. Gemma's warming Tea at Two. Held in the Hospice Conference Centre, the event has some of the best bargain buys in North Leeds. In addition to Jewellery, visitors can also buy floral goods and bric-a-brac before enjoying a great cup of tea and slice of cake. Starting at 2 p.m. the next Tea at Twos take place on 5th October and 9th November.

COFFEE MORNINGS

St. Gemma's are holding coffee mornings in Garforth Miners Welfare Hall on Saturday 2nd October and St. Mary's Church Hall, Beeston on Saturday 6th November. Your support would be welcome at both and if you would like more details, please call Giles on 0113 218 5559.

HAREWOOD HIKE – SUNDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER

Join us for our fourth annual Harewood Hike, a sponsored walk around the Harewood Estate and surrounding countryside. There are the usual five and ten mile routes to choose from as well as a new addition this year; the one and a half mile Mini Hike. Each participant will get free entry into Harewood's grounds and Bird Garden so it's a great day out for all the family. For more information and to register please call Laura on 0113 218 5505 or visit our website at www.st-gemma.co.uk.

GREAT NORTH RUN – SUNDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER

We have a team of 85 taking part in this year's BUPA Great North Run all raising money for St. Gemma's. If you would like to sponsor any of them or if you have your own place and would like to use it to support St. Gemma's Hospice, please contact Laura on 0113 218 5505 or email laurar@st-gemma.co.uk.

ROUNDHAY RUN – SATURDAY 2ND OCTOBER

Our fifth annual Roundhay Run, organised in conjunction with St. Theresa's AC, will be an accurately timed and measured race through Roundhay Park. It is suitable for fun-runners and anyone trying to achieve a personal best. For more information and for an entry form please contact Laura on 0113 218 5505 or email laurar@st-gemma.co.uk.

AUTUMN FAIR – SATURDAY 16TH OCTOBER

Join us for our annual Autumn Fair and pick up a bargain or two! This year we would like to hold a fresh produce stall. If you or anyone you know has an allotment or vegetable garden and would be happy to donate any excess produce to our fair, please contact Laura on 0113 218 5505 or email laurar@st-gemma.co.uk.

BONFIRE COLLECTION

Remember; remember the 5th of November if you would like to help St. Gemma's. The Hospice will be collecting once again at the Roundhay Park Bonfire Spectacular. If you are free to take part before or after the show, please ring Joyce on 0113 218 5565.

CHARITY BALL – SATURDAY 6TH NOVEMBER

A Winter Ball will be held at the Hanover International Hotel in Bradford on November 6th. The event, organised by Hospice supporter Malcolm Moss, will include a four course dinner followed by entertainments. For more details please call Malcolm on 0113 217 9777.

LIGHT UP A LIFE – SUNDAY 5TH DECEMBER

Christmas is always a time for thinking of family and friends, whether they are near or far. Our annual Light up a Life celebration is a wonderful opportunity to remember a loved one from whom you are separated this Christmas. If you would like to sponsor a light on our Christmas tree, which will be illuminated at our Carol Service on Sunday 5th December, please see the enclosed leaflet for details or call 0113 218 5555.

LONDON MARATHON 2005

It may seem a long way off but plans are afoot for next year's London Marathon. We have a very limited number of golden bond places available but if you are interested in pounding the streets of the capital in aid of St. Gemma's, please contact Laura on 0113 218 5505 or e-mail laurar@st-gemma.co.uk

Graham Richards, our Senior Fundraiser responsible for the Hospice's legacy income, recently had a conversation with Val Wheeler, one of the volunteers at St. Gemma's, about her thoughts on the importance of writing a Will.

Graham: Val, how did you come to be involved at St. Gemma's?

Val: After my dear husband Geoff passed away in St. Gemma's in 2002, I felt that I wanted to do something for the Hospice. One of the ways I am involved is as a member of the team of 'Super Stuffers' who collate and stuff the Newsletter. I also support the Hospice in other ways, for example. I have organised a memorial golf tournament at Geoff's golf club.

Graham: You have told me that you believe it is important for people to have made a Will. When did you make your first Will and what motivated you?

Val: I guess it was about 25 years ago. My parents always told me it was important to have a Will, so others would know what my wishes were if anything ever happened to me. I was also aware of the problems and difficulties that can arise where no Will is written.

Graham: Is it enough to write your Will and then forget about it?

Val: No, certainly not! I have reviewed and revised my Will from time to time, whenever my circumstances have changed. I suppose the most significant changes were made after my husband Geoff passed away. Our lives are always changing and our wishes about what happens after we are no longer around change as well.

Graham: You told me that you had included a gift in your Will to St. Gemma's. Could say a little more about this?

Val: About nine months ago I was thinking about my Will. I have always wanted to make sure that my son is secure, but I kept reflecting on how much St. Gemma's had come to mean to both of us. When Geoff was admitted to the Hospice, my son and I were overwhelmed at the care and attention he received. I knew that St. Gemma's relied on legacies for a significant part of its income. I decided, therefore, to add a charitable gift to my Will, knowing that it will go to St. Gemma's and be used to meet the needs of people who are facing terminal illness.

Graham: Thank you Val for sharing with us.

If you wish to know more about leaving a gift in your Will, or would like our legacy pack, please contact Graham Richards on 0113 218 5506 or e-mail him at: grahamr@st-gemma.co.uk