

HospiceMatters

AUTUMN / WINTER 2021

NEWS AND STORIES FROM ROWCROFT HOSPICE

Christmas comfort

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Welcome

Welcome to the autumn/winter edition of *Hospice Matters* magazine, proudly sharing news and stories from Rowcroft Hospice.



Over the last year, the sheer hard work, determination and dedication of our teams have proven that by working together we can

and will move mountains to continue caring for our patients and their loved ones in South Devon.

As we greet the festive season, we know that it's the magical spirit of togetherness that will shine bright through the cold winter nights, and we look forward to once again enjoying our freedom to gather in friendship and love this Christmas.

Togetherness is at the centre of everything we do at Rowcroft. It's about uniting with our community to

gain support that enables us to care for people with life-limiting illnesses. It's about healthcare professionals collaborating to deliver the very best specialist care for our families. It's about patients connecting with their loved ones to make the most of precious moments. And it's about standing together in solidarity with others to remember, honour and celebrate the loved ones we've lost.

“Thank you so much for your support”

You'll see that the theme of togetherness runs throughout this newsletter. It's at the heart of our work, and

we're delighted to be together with you on this journey.

With love and best wishes for a healthy Christmas,

Rebecca Cogger

In Memory Giving and Legacy Manager
rebecca.cogger@rowcrofthospice.org.uk

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Keep in touch  @RowcroftHospice  'Rowcroft Hospice'  @RowcroftHospice
blog: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/blog **email:** info@rowcrofthospice.org.uk

Rowcroft Hospice, Avenue Road, Torquay TQ2 5LS, Registered Charity Number: 282723
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Hospice news

News in brief from around Rowcroft

Open gardens

Would you like to be part of something special? We are looking for local gardens and allotments across South Devon, big or small – with owners who would like to support Rowcroft by opening their garden to local people. You will be supported by our Community Fundraising Team every step of the way. Please call 01803 217450 or visit www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/opengardens



Caring through COVID

Despite the endless challenges caused by the pandemic, our dedicated teams are continuing to deliver care safely in our Inpatient Unit and in patients' homes across South Devon. Our teams have coped through the COVID crisis, through staff shortages (caused by the 'pingdemic'), self-isolation and the temporary suspension of some services such as our music therapy and complementary therapies due to COVID regulations. We're so grateful to our amazing care teams for their incredible hard work, flexibility and professionalism throughout these difficult times. Thankfully all of our services are now fully operational, offering patients and families the very best holistic and expert care.

Devon Farm Kitchen

The launch of Devon Farm Kitchen in April was a huge success, with people across South Devon delighted by the 'deliciously satisfying' frozen meals delivered straight to their door. All profits from the nutritious hand-cooked meals go to support the hospice, and the innovative social enterprise has already sold over 7000 meals to very happy customers from Dawlish to Dartmouth and up onto Dartmoor! To find out more about Devon Farm Kitchen and to tell us



what you'd like to see on the menu, telephone 01803 217477, or visit www.devonfarmkitchen.co.uk to order your delicious meals.



▲ Pilmuir house, built in 1902, now Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit

We're turning 40!

It's the hospice's 40th birthday in May 2022 and we plan to mark this momentous occasion! As part of the celebrations, we're hoping to hold a small exhibition about the history of the hospice so please do get in touch if you have any interesting photographs, objects, stories or artifacts relating to Rowcroft's history. Please email Richard Ward at wardr@rowcrofthospice.org.uk.



Ella Rowcroft, whose generosity made the creation of Rowcroft Hospice possible ▲

Big thanks to our amazing supporters

We'd like to wholeheartedly thank everyone who has continued to support the hospice in so many ways through these incredibly difficult times. Special thanks to our regular givers and lottery players who have been a life-line through the pandemic, and huge congratulations to all the winners of our recent weekly lottery draws! Thanks too to everyone who took part in our previous bumper draw, raising a staggering £51,000.

HOSPICE MATTERS • rowcrofthospice.org.uk

Thanks to Torbay Weekly

We'd like to say a massive thankyou to Torbay Weekly for very generously donating Rowcroft 20p of every newspaper sold, and for collecting and selling books every week at Torquay market! These initiatives have been a huge success in raising much-needed funds for the hospice.



Bringing loved ones together this Christmas

As the festive season approaches, Rowcroft's dedicated nurses and care teams will be continuing to work around the clock, day in day out, caring for people across South Devon and helping to make every day the best day possible.

For patients experiencing their last Christmas, our nurses and healthcare assistants will be working to ensure it's the best it can possibly be, as Senior Nurse for Hospice at Home, Claire Redhead, explains.

"For many of us, Christmas is such a special time of year," says Claire. "But for those experiencing their very last Christmas, this time with their loved ones is even more precious.

"Christmas is often a time for getting together to give and receive; it's about showing our love and appreciation for each other. Through our Hospice at Home service that cares for patients in their last two weeks of life at home, we're able to help families experience that togetherness and loving support

during such a crucial time, and in this way we help to bring much-needed comfort to patients and their families, despite very difficult circumstances.

"This December, as a nurse working for Hospice at Home, I'll be helping patients to make their last Christmas as good as it possibly can be. My role is to assist patients to be as comfortable and pain-free as possible, so they can make the most of last precious moments with their family.

"With the COVID restrictions now lifted, loved ones are once again able to come together – to comfort each other and to share in the warmth and love of the festive spirit. For our families, these memories of a final Christmas with a loved one will often stay with them forever.

"For obvious reasons, this Christmas will be very different for the patients and families we care for. For some families it's important that they carry on with the traditions of Christmas; for their loved one it can be reassuring to hear the voices of their family enjoying the festivities. For other families, there are no celebrations at all. Having our 24/7 support gives reassurance that we are only a phone call away if they need us and takes away the worry of having to meet a patient's medical needs when most just want to be a partner or daughter/son at this time."

Rowcroft's Hospice at Home Appeal was launched earlier this year in response to the increasing demand for end-of-life care in South Devon, caused by the pandemic and the needs of an increasingly ageing local population. Aiming to raise funds to care for more patients at home in their last two weeks of life, the appeal has got off to a tremendous start with donations to date totalling £258,696. Money raised from the appeal will be used to recruit more nurses and healthcare assistants, so that we can



expand our Hospice at Home service to reach an additional 190 patients per year across South Devon.

"For our families, these memories of a final Christmas with a loved one will often stay with them forever."

"Thank you so much to everyone who has kindly donated to our appeal, including all the local groups and businesses who have supported us," says Claire. "It is

because of this incredible generosity that we'll be able to ensure that more families can access the Hospice at Home Service not just at Christmas-time but all year round. Huge thanks also to the building supplies company, Interline, who are generously sponsoring our appeal.

To find out more or make a donation, please visit www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/home or call us on: 01803 210835.

Save the date!

We invite you to join Hospice at Home Manager Karenne Weaver for a webinar on Tuesday 23 November at 4–5pm. This will be your chance to find out why we need to expand the Hospice at Home service and ask any questions. If you would like to attend, please email alison.upton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk or call 01803 210835.

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Treats in store

News from Rowcroft's shops



As we swing into the festive season, Rowcroft's shops across South Devon are buzzing with excitement as customers browse a fabulous range of gifts for Christmas. We're offering a wonderful selection of Christmas cards and sustainable gift ideas including gorgeous bags, scarves and jewellery, as well as homeware, books, DVDs and new goods.

While most of our stock is preloved, we're excited to be selling exclusively new products in our first-ever Christmas pop-up shop (secured rent-free in Courtenay Street, Newton Abbot)! There's something for everyone, from festive gifts through to Christmas decorations, with all profits going to care for our community.

We've also opened 'Ella's Emporium' in Brunel Road, Newton Abbot. Full of quirky finds and 'last chance to buys' at bargain prices, we have an amazing mix of vintage, retro and modern goods. Open Mondays to Fridays, 10am till 3pm.

You can now treat yourself and your friends to tapas and cocktails or mocktails at our newly launched 'Friday Club' at Ella's Café Lounge, Chelston! The Club is running on the first Friday of every month between 5pm–7pm. Please call ahead on 01803 605174. The café is open Mondays to Saturdays for a scrumptious range of snacks, beverages and light lunches.



Vinted

Complementing our online stores at Ebay, Depop and Etsy, we've set up a new Vinted store – Ella's Online – featuring a wide range of exquisite sustainable fashion items with great bargains and bundle discounts! Check out our stores at: www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/shops

Don't forget that our gift vouchers make fantastic Christmas presents, as they can be redeemed in any of our 14 shops and cafés across the region!

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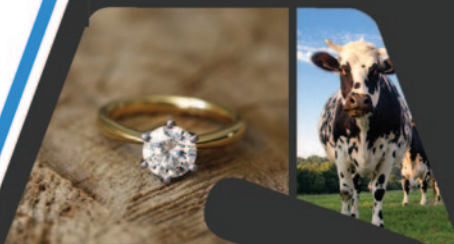
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Nurturing touch

Rowcroft's wonderful complementary therapists care for our patients through a wide range of specialist services – from massage and aromatherapy through to reflexology and reiki. The team also provide therapies to patients' loved ones, helping to soothe stress, ease tension and relax the mind and body.

Here, Tatyana Taylor reflects on how she received this nurturing care and support while her husband was in his final days in Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit, and how the therapy sessions helped to ease her journey through the hardest time of her life.

"My husband was dying, it was such a difficult time," says Tatyana. "I didn't have family around, but I felt part of a family there [at Rowcroft]. I mattered. I knew I was not alone and that somebody really cared.

"I really enjoyed the head massage. It reminded me of my mother stroking my hair as a child and I remembered how soothing that felt.

"The therapist really listened to me, and I could talk during the session, or I could be quiet. I could laugh or I could cry. I always felt calmer



afterwards. I will never forget the kindness. The therapist massaged my feet or back, head and shoulders and I felt relaxed. It helped me to cope with how things were and to accept that things were changing.

"My husband was being cared for, and so was I."



"I was even able to see the therapist on the day that my husband died. I felt safe with her. My life goes on and I will always remember the caring and the kindness shown to me at Rowcroft."

Rowcroft is seeking qualified volunteer therapists who belong to a professional body and have their own insurance. For further information, email julie.milton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk

Coming together to Light up a Life

For many of us, Christmas is a bittersweet time of year. It can be a time of festive warmth and joy, with families and friends getting together to rejoice and celebrate; it can also be a time of great sadness – a time when we miss wholeheartedly our loved ones who are no longer with us.

Light up a Life is a poignant and unique event that's befitting for this time of year, helping us to remember, honour and celebrate the beloved people we hold deep in our hearts. As part of our Light up a Life celebration, we invite you to dedicate a Christmas light in memory of your loved one. Your light will sparkle like a jewel on our beautiful 'Tree of Light' and will help Rowcroft to shine a light for others by providing vital care and support to local families who need us this Christmas-time. If you make your dedication before the end of November, the name of your loved one can also be entered into our online Book of Light, and will appear in a special edition of Torbay Weekly on 16 December.

On Sunday 5 December at 5pm, we'd love you to join us online at www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/light in an online celebration in which the stunning 'Tree of Light' will be illuminated. Listen to poignant readings, moving poems, soothing

music, and enjoy quiet time for reflection.

Please also feel free to visit the fabulous tree in our peaceful hospice grounds, taking time to wander, or to just sit and reflect.

This year, donations raised from Light up a Life will help to fund our Hospice at Home service that cares for people at home in their last two weeks of life.

To find out more about Light up a Life and to make your dedication, please go to www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/light or call 01803 217450.





Megan's last Christmas with mum Annie

Megan King is one of our wonderful Hospice at Home nurses. She was inspired to work for the hospice having witnessed first-hand the specialist care that we provide – when her second mum Annie, who had muscular dystrophy, was cared for by Rowcroft in her last few months at home.

"Annie was transferred home from Derriford Hospital in early December 2013, ready for her favourite time of year," says Megan. "We decorated her room ready for Christmas, in blue and silver. She loved Christmas, as she was very family orientated and we all got together to celebrate, play cards and play sing-star every year.

"In healthier times she would drive around the house in her wheelchair singing Christmas songs at the top of her lungs – her favourite being 'Fairytale of New York'. She was such a fun and happy person, and she made Christmas so magical for all of us.



"The first Christmas without her, we lit up a light for her through Rowcroft's Light up a Life, and we took part in the service. The twinkling lights and soft carols were exactly what we needed. The first Christmas was the worst, but Light up a Life gave us an opportunity to remember her and to feel Christmassy, just as she would want."

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"Whoever invented these meals is a genius," says June Secker of Torquay. At a sprightly 85, June volunteers one day per week in Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit. She tasted her first Devon Farm Kitchen meal in April, and she's been buying the meals each week ever since!

Delighted that every penny of profit goes to support the hospice, June is impressed with the all-round quality of the dishes, the packaging and the service.

"It's just so simple and easy for me!" says June. "All the meals are delivered straight to my kitchen table. From the very first mouthful to the last, the meals are so satisfying. I have the lamb chop and the salmon most weeks. The packaging is really clever too – I've never seen anything like it before. The whole box goes in the oven or

microwave, and it doesn't burn you – it's ingenious!"

The meals come ready to eat on ceramic plates which are then washed and returned to the driver on the next delivery.

"It's lovely to see the friendly driver each week," says June. "He comes in smiling and bringing kindness and we have a little chat – it's these personal touches that make such a difference. At around £5.00 for a main course, it's all very reasonable. And I love that Rowcroft is benefitting – because as far as I'm concerned, Rowcroft is the bees knees!"



Call 01803 217477 for a menu, or visit: www.devonfarmkitchen.co.uk



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Feast on Fantastic Crab!

The Blue Sea Food company presents, a brand-new Restaurant opening on Paignton Harbour... The Crab and Hammer

Open from 7am to 11.30pm serving spectacular local seafood; crab and lobster rolls, seafood feasts and our Crab Bánh Mi, as well as traditional crab sandwiches and crab cocktail. We will also offer our chefs own burger and several delicious vegetarian options!

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Supporting our community nurses

Anna Dunscombe is a community district nurse who visits patients in their own homes in and around Ashburton and Buckfastleigh. Anna works for the NHS, and she relies on Rowcroft for specialist advice, support and training in palliative and end-of-life care.

It is this coming together of healthcare professionals towards a mutual goal of achieving the very best care for local patients that is intrinsic to the way Rowcroft operates. Anna has found the support of Rowcroft's Education Team invaluable in caring for patients in the community.

As a district nurse, Anna and her team visit people at home, administering medicines, helping to manage symptoms, and providing treatment, care and support.

"As well as all the day-to-day care that we provide, we also look after patients who are facing the end of their lives," says Anna. "They have generally either come to the end of their treatment options or have decided that they would like to prioritise their symptom management and comfort. Most of them have chosen to die in their own homes. Together with the GP, our closest colleagues are the Rowcroft Community Team and Rowcroft's Hospice at Home Team.

"Rowcroft's support is absolutely key to helping us manage these patients. As a team, we all feel competent in symptom management but there have been many times when we have felt



"Rowcroft's support is absolutely key"

incredibly grateful to have Rowcroft on the end of the phone for advice."

Over the years Anna has participated in many Rowcroft Education Team study days and courses. As part of this education, Anna completed a video project about communication techniques when wearing face coverings, and Anna has become an 'End-of-Life Ambassador'.

To find out more about Rowcroft's online and face-to-face courses, please see: www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/education



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A legacy of love

Many years have passed since Christmas 1986 when Sylvia Wightman's mum was being cared for in Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit. But the memories haven't faded. The love, warmth and sensitivity along with the incredible support that Sylvia and her mum received from the Rowcroft team inspired Sylvia and her husband Gordon to leave a gift to Rowcroft in their Will.

"Leaving the legacy to Rowcroft was something that came naturally to Gordon and I because we wanted to assist the hospice to plan ahead to provide essential care for more people in the future," says Sylvia. "Rowcroft was there for my mum, my brother-in-law Colin, and for my friend Janet too.

"Through our legacy, we can help Rowcroft to be there for others who need help in years to come."

"The care that Mum received in the Inpatient Unit was wonderful. I remember feeling the love, warmth and the quiet contentment all around. I felt reassured. Mum was treated with respect and gentleness, and I lived in there by her bedside for four days. It was like being at home.

"As it was Christmas, the hospice was full of festive spirit. There was carol singing, and on Christmas Day the nursing staff came round with stockings with little gifts inside. Gordon and I were even treated to a



Christmas lunch. The nurses were so caring and loving. They looked after Mum so well, and they took care of us too. Nothing was too much trouble.

"On Boxing Day, Mum slipped away quietly and peacefully. For a parting, it was as lovely as it possibly could be. And the staff were so helpful and supportive afterwards.

"I'm proud to be supporting Rowcroft through our Will. We are all privileged to have Rowcroft in our location. Our legacies provide a secure future."

For further information about leaving a gift to Rowcroft in your Will, please call Rebecca on 01803 217405 or email rebecca.cogger@rowcrofthospice.org.uk

Get involved

We're delighted to offer the fabulous selection of events listed here, or if you have your own fundraising ideas, then we'd love to hear from you. To get involved or to find out more, please call our Fundraising Team today on 01803 217450 or visit www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk

November

27 November CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Come and be merry at our Christmas Fayre in our Victoria Street shop, Paignton! We have all things Christmassy in store, from stunning Christmas decorations through to gorgeous sustainable gifts. Open 9am to 4.30pm. Please arrive early to avoid disappointment!



December

Throughout December LIGHT UP A LIFE

Light up a Life is open to everyone who wishes to remember the life of a loved one in our community. Visit www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/light for further information and to dedicate a light on the Rowcroft 'Tree of Light' in memory of a loved one during the festive season.



February

23 February JAIL OR BAIL

Whether it's 'crimes against lycra' or 'murder on the dancefloor', local business people will be arrested for their crimes in this fun event. They must raise £1,000 bail for their freedom.

March

12 March THE MALE TRAIL

Rowcroft's event, The Male Trail, is back for 2022 as a physical event! Starting at Torquay Rugby Club, our fabulous fundraising folk will take on an eight-mile walk around Torquay and are welcomed back with a pint and a pasty to watch The Six Nations.





April

Throughout the summer OPEN GARDENS

We are looking for 40 local gardens to celebrate our 40th anniversary with us over summer 2022. If you have a garden – be it big, small, town or country – that you would like to showcase to the local community while raising funds for Rowcroft, get in touch!

May

Throughout May RIDE – YOUR WAY

Join our popular cycling event in your own way throughout May.



Take on our challenging Haytor route or one of your own creation. Ride for a loved one. Ride for your community. Ride for Rowcroft.

Throughout May ROWCROFT'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

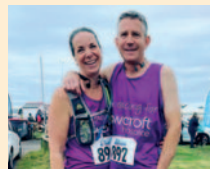
As the hospice reaches its 40th anniversary, we'll be celebrating through a series of events taking place on 4 May and throughout the month.



June

Date TBC TORBAY HALF MARATHON AND 10K

Why not support Rowcroft by claiming your FREE place and run the Torbay Half Marathon or 10K?



July

2 July

THE SLEEP WALK

Join us for a fabulous 'night at the movies' as we sprinkle some Hollywood magic across Torbay in South Devon's biggest night walk. Keep your eyes peeled for early bird discount codes in the new year.

10 July

MEADOW OF MEMORIES

Each year, a beautiful wildflower meadow is sown in the grounds of the hospice to celebrate the lives of those people we loved, and still love dearly. Visit www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/meadow in the new year to dedicate a flower in memory of a loved one.



A massive thankyou to our volunteers



▲ Gilli Pattie,
Volunteering
Coordinator

"As we near the end of yet another challenging year, I would like to say a heartfelt 'thankyou' to all our amazing volunteering teams for standing by us through thick and thin!

"Whatever your role, whether you've been helping in our Inpatient Unit, in the hospice gardens, our bereavement or complementary therapy teams, or in one of our offices, shops or cafés – thank you so much! We simply couldn't do what we do without your sterling support."

Furnished with new skills in Paignton

For over three years, Lyn has been volunteering in Rowcroft's furniture shop in Paignton. While Lyn feels passionate about giving her time to Rowcroft, she's also found that she's been gifted something back – the chance to make new friends, develop her skill-set and increase her confidence.

"I have various roles at the Paignton furniture shop," says Lyn. "This includes working behind the till, helping to sort through donations, arranging displays, helping with customer queries and supporting our Shop Manager, Rob, where needed.

"I love the fantastic atmosphere we have here! We have a serious aim but we perform our work with a smile and laughter. I have made great friends with the staff and customers. No day is the same and we never know what weird



and wonderful items will appear in the shop next!

"I've learned a lot since volunteering here. I've greatly expanded my retail experience and I've improved my ability to deal with customers. It has really helped me to come out of my shell and increased my self-confidence. It's a great opportunity to learn something new and meet new people. And it's also very gratifying to know how much I have helped to make a difference in my community by helping to raise money for Rowcroft."

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