



Hello everyone,

As I write this piece I am looking out of the window at the driving rain and gale force winds and thinking about all those living in the southwest and in the Thames valley. As you read this piece I hope that you will be looking out of the window at blue sky and sunshine and looking forward to the springtime.

When things are dark and gloomy I feel that it is important to be optimistic. When we read the newspapers or watch television it seems that with dementia we are in a dark and gloomy situation – massive numbers of those with the illness, no cure, limited treatment, poor information, inadequate support services, poor diagnostic rates, etc. However, when I compare with how it was just a few years ago when The Debenham Project was started, I am filled with hope. Certainly there is still no cure or really effective treatment but there have been scientific breakthroughs which will play their part in eventually overcoming the illness. Certainly, the level of information and advice could be better but through the efforts of NHS, the local authorities, the Alzheimer’s Society, AgeUK and other major charities, no one should be unable to find out what they need to know about coping with dementia, Certainly, the level of support for family carers and those they care for is still not good, but there are individual communities similar to Debenham who are starting to set up clubs, cafes and activities, the charities are increasing their support and the NHS and Social Services are implementing major changes to way they provide care. Certainly, there is still fear and stigma attached to dementia which prevents or delays people with concerns seeking help but the initiative to encouraged dementia friendliness and dementia friendly communities is seeking to improve public awareness and understanding. So I am confident that step by step the “challenges” will be met. I am also very proud of the leading part that Debenham has already played due to the support and participation of its many volunteers, carers, cared-for, support workers, donors, etc.

Yet again I am pleased to thank our donors – this time, the businesses and individuals who have looked after one of our collection boxes. Over the past year those coppers, silver coins, pounds and even fivers all added up to £202.60. In addition we have received several other private donations.

With best wishes,

Lynden

For more information on The Debenham project please contact the **Project Phone Line:** 01728 862003 or visit our **Website:** www.the-debenham-project.org.uk