

Carer Feedback

A Carers History

Mary (and Roy) S: Came to the Project 8 years ago and joined Carers Club and Info Café (best cakes in Suffolk!). When Roy's illness progressed, she joined our TLC peer group, and also has more recently been supported by our Forms and Paperwork (a bit more than that!).

In 2018 my husband Roy was diagnosed with mixed dementia, Vascular and Alzheimer's, we had both been lucky in that neither of us had ever had any experience of this in our families and knew nothing of what a devastating disease this is.

We were advised to contact the Debenham Project by a mental health nurse.

We were welcomed by Lynden and his lovely wife Sue. For quite a few years Roy's decline was slow but during this time we were helped, guided and supported by various project members as to what professional and financial help was available to us.

Move on to the present and Roy's decline has progressed considerably. During this time we have always had access to the many professional and people who have had personal experience of losing their partners to this dreadful disease and who have all made themselves available at the Tuesday afternoon tea and cake meetings to offer advice, lend an ear or just some friendly company.

The Project has also started a group meeting once a month especially for carers. I can't empathize enough what a support this has been. The ladies who run it have all travelled this journey and lost their husbands to the various forms of dementia and they just want to help. They all know firsthand what a lonely and frightening journey this disease is for the carer and of course the sufferer. Our GP has recently told me I need to put a care plan in place for Roy.

I confess I didn't know where to begin. But I mentioned it to Caroline at the project, she mentioned it to two other helpers. The result is this week at the carers meeting one of them will look after Roy while the other two will help me contact the appropriate agencies and put the necessary plans into place.

Without help like this I don't know what we would do. They have taken a tremendous burden off me.

Multiply this by the many people the Debenham Project help and assist and you can see what an amazing organization it is. Long may it continue and continue grow.

Thank you so much, Mary

Summary

Mary and her husband Roy were introduced to the Debenham Project after Roy was diagnosed with mixed dementia (vascular and Alzheimer's) in 2018. Having no previous experience with dementia, they found the diagnosis overwhelming and were advised by a mental health nurse to seek support from the Project.

From the outset, Mary and Roy were warmly welcomed and received guidance on accessing professional, practical, and financial support. As Roy's condition gradually worsened, the Debenham Project continued to provide invaluable help through its social groups, peer support, and access to both professionals and people with lived experience of caring for someone with dementia.

Mary highlights the importance of the Project's carers group, where carers who have themselves lost partners to dementia offer understanding, advice, and companionship. More recently, when Mary was told by her GP to put a care plan in place for Roy, she felt unsure where to start. Through the Project's support network, volunteers arranged practical assistance, including helping her contact relevant agencies while someone else cared for Roy.

Mary says this support has removed a tremendous burden and expresses deep gratitude for the Debenham Project. She describes it as an amazing organisation that provides essential help to many families facing dementia and hopes it will continue to grow and thrive.