

# **OLDHAM CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE NEWS**

(Issue 18 January 2021)

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## **Message from our Chairman, Cllr Norman Briggs:**



*What is there to say about 2020? Quite a lot that was negative I agree - but such a lot that was positive.*

*The negatives are self-evident to all of us. The isolation, especially for those living alone; not being able (still not able) to have a hug from family and friends; people not being able to work or even losing their jobs; many having financial difficulties; weddings, funerals and church services all adversely affected; and, of course, the constant fear of catching Covid 19.*

*The other side of all this is equally clear, and the biggest plus is the way that people have rallied and worked hard to help each other. The oldest people in our communities say that it is reminiscent of the spirit seen in WW2. Countrywide we have lost count of the number of ways people have found to help each other - and we have seen untold examples in our own local community. Neighbours have baked for those less able (in fact, baking became almost an epidemic!),*

*have collected shopping and prescriptions and have helped with gardening. Others have raised money for charities and particularly for the NHS; some (often those who had lost their jobs in hospitality) have helped to provide meals for those who otherwise wouldn't have had them; the number of people who are working as Volunteers in various fields has shot up; and many of us have started to get to grips with technology - do the phrases 'Zoom meetings/chats', or 'Zoom quizzes' ring any bells?*

*And what can we say about our NHS? Clapping them once a week didn't nearly cover it, but it did at least show our NHS workers how much they were appreciated. How they are still managing to continue helping us exceeds belief, especially now during this winter's second wave. When you see hospital staff being interviewed they look absolutely exhausted - what we owe them is beyond description.*

*At OCSC we have tried to do our bit by staying in touch with each other and with as many of our patients/clients as possible. I have been told about the many different ways our Volunteers have supported each other and others. This makes me very proud.*

*I will close by wishing you all as healthy and happy New Year as possible. Let's hope that the new vaccines will make a big difference to our lives whilst at the same time accepting that our new 'normal' way of living is probably going to have to be different from that which we have grown up with. If so - we'll cope!*

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**Fundraising**

This last year has been very damaging for charities, particularly affecting our ability to raise funds. Back in March we had several events definitely planned including a Quiz Night, a Therapy Day, a fundraising evening at the Playhouse2 Theatre in Shaw, and the Christmas Fair – these all had to be cancelled.

A Clearance Sale of electrical goods did take place at the Centre on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March, just a couple of weeks before the first lockdown. We raised **£313.30**:



We usually have a soft toy tombola stall at the Failsworth Carnival each year, but along with everything else this year's carnival was cancelled. However, Pat Rigby and Colleen Andrew, who worked as Volunteers at our Charity Shop, applied to Failsworth Tesco to hold the stall in their entrance hall. They held the stall in June and made **£255 05**:



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As well as our fundraising events having to be cancelled, our Charity Shop has also been closed for most of the last ten months. We have, therefore, had no regular source of income. And so we have been especially grateful to all those people who have made donations to us in the recent past. We thought that 2021 would bring better things but of course we now find ourselves in another full lockdown situation – roll on Easter!???

**THANK YOU**

- to Margaret and Barry Heap for two generous donations during the past few months and also for donations of items to sell in the shop
- to Peter Heatley for yet another kind donation
- to Joshua Blood – this young man raised an amazing £10 for us by selling his used books
- to Joan and Paul Swindells who made a donation to us instead of being able to take flowers to the funeral of a friend
- to Joyce Hughes for a thoughtful donation
- to Beverley Harrop and family for very generous donations made at her father, Terence's(Terry) funeral. We are very grateful that they thought about us at what must have been a very sad time for them
- to Bernadette Tennant – again for a generous donation
- to Dorothy and Keith Lawson for two donations over the past year. Dorothy is one of our clients and a member of the Patients' Support Group and we've really missed seeing her.
- to Maura Ryan for another generous donation and also for making a Christmas hamper as a free raffle for our Volunteers. Maura has done this for the past few Christmases and we have all been very appreciative. The hamper this year was won by Natalie Lorne (Receptionist), who was delighted

*Christmas poems* – one of these was found in a magazine and one

*was sent to one of our Volunteers in their Christmas card:*

### **Coronavirus Christmas 2020**

Because it has been such a difficult time  
I thought I'd include in my card a short rhyme.  
Perhaps make you smile & hold back a tear  
To help us shine through a very tough year.

Though we've been keeping two metres apart  
Social distance means nothing in each other's heart.  
We sing 'Happy Birthday' - wash hands till they're sore,  
Wear masks, sanitise – we couldn't do more!

Now experts at Zoom, our quiz knowledge has soared.  
We've sorted and cleaned so we wouldn't be bored  
We've come to love rambling and hear the birdsong  
Discover wild flowers – now that can't be wrong.

As new mathematicians we now calculate  
How shifting R numbers change infection rate.  
We have mastered the graphs – why they rise why they fall.  
Algorithms for exams!! – we have covered it all.

Who thought our 'lock-ins' would change to  
'lockdowns'?  
So silent the streets, so deserted the towns.  
We've been banned from singing & can't even shout,  
And they say 'staying in' is the new 'going out'.

This Christmas, we think of loved ones we've lost.  
How to keep people safe? Separation's the cost.  
Folk have struggled on furlough, even lost a career  
Hospitality's in chaos – well, in the third tier!

But as winter approaches we stay cosy inside.  
Look forward to Christmas, take change in our stride.  
We send love and best wishes to those we hold dear,  
For a calm, peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year.



### **My Christmas Address Book**

I have a list of folk I know, all written in a book  
And every year at Christmastime I go and take a look.

And that is when I realise their names are all a part  
Not of the book they're written in but of my very heart.

For each name stands for someone whose path touched mine and then  
Left such a print of friendship that I want to touch again.

And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim  
I really feel I that I'm composed of each and every name.

So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere routine  
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in-between.

For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you  
It's because you're on that list of folks I am indebted to.

And every year when Christmas comes, I realise anew

The biggest gift that life can give is meeting folk like you.

So may the Christmas spirit that each season still outpours

Leave its richest blessing in the hearts of you and yours.

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## **THANK YOU**

To Kat Crean who put in a lot of training to run the London Marathon. This was, like most events in 2020, cancelled. Family and friends, however, still supported Kat's efforts and continued to sponsor her. She raised the magnificent sums of **£300** each for us and for Dr Kershaw's Hospice. Well done Kat – and a big thank you.

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### **Christine Beltran**



unhappily we were unable to attend Chris's funeral. Her family asked that instead, at the time of her funeral, we all wore something pink and raised a glass (or cup!) in her memory.

These are some of the photos which we were then able to pass on to her sons via Suzanne (Chris's niece):

On March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 everyone at OCSC was shocked to learn of Chris's sudden death. Chris had been a Volunteer Receptionist at the Centre for many years, was a member of the Fundraising Committee, regularly helped to run the Therapy Days, helped to run the monthly Patients' Support Group, attended the monthly Relaxation and Meditation Group and supported as many of our fundraising events as she could.



**Ros**

Chris will be missed by us all in so many different ways, not least for her sense of humour. Laughter was always there whenever she was there. She could find the funny side of any situation and was always prepared to laugh at herself.



**Ruth**

She was a very kind person, ready to help anyone who needed it. She was widowed many years ago and had been through cancer twice – but never appeared to feel sorry for herself.

On the day Chris passed away she was due to attend the final session of the Women's DIY Course held at Failsworth Town Hall. This was a course organised for OCSC Volunteers by the Oldham Lifelong Learning Service and funded by Action Together. Chris had found these sessions to be a lot of fun but insisted that her skills in DIY remained lacking!! That final session was certainly very different from the others with most of the group members being in a state of shock and sadness.



**Joan**

Less than two weeks later the country was put into the first lockdown. This meant that



**Anne**



**Linda**



**Shirley & Denis**



**Jean**



**Eileen**



**Pam**



**Anita**



**Ronnie**



**Pat**



**Sheila**



**Anita**



**David**



**Margaret**



**Carole**



**Kathy**

You are missed so much Chris – you will never be forgotten.

I would like to finish by thanking everyone who made a donation to the Centre in Chris's memory.

## Charity Shop Volunteer



The Charity Shop - or as Dickens would have said: The Old Curiosity Shop.

Who would have thought that I would be a Volunteer in a charity shop? Having never even been in one of these establishments before I am now in a state of constant amazement. The place is a regular Aladdin's cave and truly one man's junk is another man's treasure.

I was very dubious at first, especially about sorting the donations, but overall this is really good fun. Some items are really great - and, of course, some are not so great!

For some unknown reason my designated area has become the toys - I don't quite know how or why as I cannot tell one end of a transformer from another.

I dress the window known as the "toy window" and I really enjoy doing this. I feel that a window should be as attractive as possible for the customers so I try to have themes and to make it as eye-catching as possible.

This, of course, depends on whatever the donations are at the time so I was particularly pleased to be able to do a

Star Wars window. The centre piece was a two foot high Darth Vader and on that day the window items sold out within half an hour of the shop opening. Things like this make all the hard work worthwhile.

The shop was successful from day one and the money raised is for the cancer patients/clients who attend the Centre.

At the moment things are very much "stop and start", just like everything else with this pandemic. But we hope to be up and running again as soon as possible.

I would recommend a volunteer job to anyone who has time on their hands. I work with some lovely people and it is so worthwhile to be able to give little bit of something back to society.

*Mags Faulkner*

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## Charity Shop Key Worker

We would like to take this opportunity to thank **Pat Rigby** for all the work she put into helping to set up the shop and helping to run it since its opening.

She worked really hard during the months leading up to the opening of the shop and worked alongside shop manager, Sandra, to ensure that things ran smoothly once opened.

Unfortunately Pat has had to resign from the shop during the pandemic because of underlying health problems. The Volunteers miss her and we all wish her well.

Pat is also a member of the Fundraising Committee and hopes that once we are able to organise events again that she will be able to help.

So we will hopefully still be seeing her.

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## Charity Shop Key Worker

Following Pat's resignation, OCSC appointed **Colleen Andrew** as her replacement as Key Worker. She has settled in well to this new role and we all hope that she continues to enjoy her work at the shop:



I work as a Volunteer at the Oldham Cancer Support Centre Charity Shop on Ashton Road West in Failsworth. I started volunteering as a way of giving something back after the Centre had helped me to come to terms with my newly diagnosed Parkinson's.

Whilst visiting the shop I noticed a sign asking for Volunteers to help. I applied, had an interview and got a job. I started by helping the team which sorts out the donations and keeps the upstairs storage areas tidy - this was on Tuesday mornings. I also worked on Saturday afternoons in the shop.

I enjoyed the camaraderie within the team so much that I offered to increase my hours. Then when the position of Key Worker came up I applied, had an interview and was given the job.

I now do the team's rota plus am happy to stand in at times when we don't have

enough cover. I also help to sell items on Facebook Marketplace which helps to bring in extra money. The shop is one of the main sources of money for OCSC, especially as at the moment we cannot hold any fundraising events.

We receive donations between 11.00 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. on Thursdays. Because of the Coronavirus they are then isolated for three days before being sorted out, cleaned, pressed and checked that everything is in working order. So both Volunteers and customers know that the items for sale are as safe as possible.

Donations come mainly from local people but we also have shops and businesses which donate new and display goods which we are happy to collect.

All of this happens because of the great team of Volunteers which we have at the shop. I now consider them to be friends as well as colleagues.

*Colleen Andrew*

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## A Shop Story:

The Charity Shop relies on the generosity of our supporters and our wonderful, dedicated and extremely hard-working Volunteers. We could tell many stories of lovely things that have happened and about the kind and loyal customers who often come in and buy things they don't really need but who like to contribute towards our work. If there's nothing they want to buy they will put a donation in our bucket instead (even sometimes as well as buying something).

One interesting story I will share with you occurred when one of our supporters gave us the toy contents of her young daughter's bedroom as they were planning to decorate it before Christmas and make room for Santa's delivery of new presents.

As we have to follow strict Covid rules on all donations, all the items which we received on that Thursday had to be quarantined for three days. But on the Saturday morning an extremely distraught Mum and Dad came into the shop to ask if we had sorted through their donations, as she thought that she had inadvertently included her daughter's savings of over £400 in with the toys she had brought in!

We established that the savings were in a small pink make-up bag. I explained that all the items brought in on Thursday would not yet have been touched. I took the lady's telephone number and promised to ring her as soon as we had some news.

The team was now faced with the mammoth task of wading through the enormous amount sacks, bags and boxes of donations in order to try to find one tiny item.

It was a very emotional Volunteer who just one hour later came down to the shop to give me the make-up bag. It seemed only fair that she should be the one to ring the customer with the good news.

The delighted and very relieved lady arrived to collect her daughter's precious savings – she was so pleased that we had found them for her. She then returned with several bags of cakes for the Volunteers as a 'thank you' and insisted on making a very generous donation to OCSC.

It was quite an emotional day for both the family and the Volunteers – a few tears were shed and we were so pleased that there was such a lovely outcome.

*Sandra Abbott*

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## OCSC Annual General Meeting

This should have taken place on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 but because of the pandemic had to be cancelled. It was held instead on line (as agreed by the Charity Commission) in November with the two main proposals being agreed unanimously by those members who voted:-

1 To approve of the Annual Report and Financial Statement

2 To adopt a revised Constitution (written in accordance with the Charity Commission template) to be submitted with an application for conversion to CIO status (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

With the present situation as it is, it is most likely that the next AGM will be organised in the same way during the next few months.

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## Trustees

*Since March the Trustees have remained in regular contact with each other and have held their usual monthly meetings whenever circumstances have allowed. During the summer we met socially distanced in David Heyes's garden or conservatory and from September we were able to meet socially distanced in the large café area at the Centre.*

*We have welcomed Carole Bradbury to the Board this year and we hope that she enjoys working with us.*

*We would like to thank all the Volunteers who have helped us to keep the Centre going during this difficult time and who have found ways to support each other as well as many of our patients/clients.*

*Our thanks also go to the Volunteers at the shop who have worked hard to keep things going under difficult circumstances.*

*Thanks to very careful financial housekeeping, both past and present, we have been able to meet our outgoings during this difficult time and are not yet in the alarming situation in which some charities already find themselves.*



## Golden Wedding

Pam and David Williams celebrated their Golden Wedding on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 and should have held an afternoon tea at the Cotton Rooms in Oldham. Unfortunately, in October, whilst on a cruise, Pam broke her leg when visiting Monaco. This meant that the afternoon tea was postponed and was held instead on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.

Pam and David would like to thank everyone who came and made it so special and who gave donations to the Centre in lieu of gifts. We raised **£300**.



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## New Storage

Also in February it was decided that we would purchase new storage for the corridor outside the Therapy and Counselling Rooms.

Ruth and Pam went to IKEA and the new storage units were delivered a few days later.

Some of our Volunteers were then faced with the task of putting together IKEA's famous 'flat packs' and spent a couple of days doing exactly that. This wasn't exactly how they would have chosen to spend a Saturday and a Monday – and they probably wouldn't care if they never saw a flat pack again!

But the finished units were certainly worth it. Thanks gentlemen.



David and David



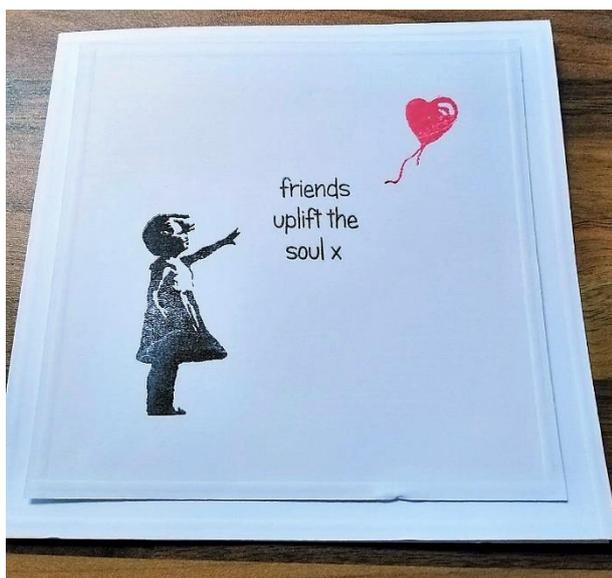
~ vegetarian favouritism! ~



Norman and Paul

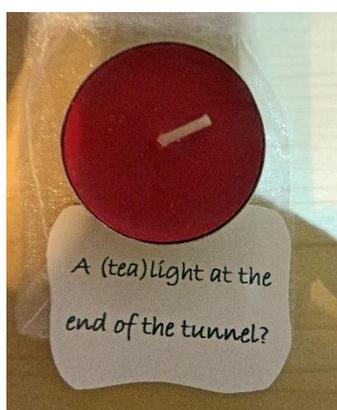
# THANK YOU

To Veronica Crean, one of our Receptionists, who suggested towards the end of the first lockdown that people needed something positive and cheerful in their lives. She suggested that we sent volunteers and patients/clients a special card, and she printed over 140 of them and also supplied the envelopes. Ruth and Pam wrote and addressed the cards and then with the help of Veronica, Carole and Ernie distributed them by hand where possible. Others were sent by post.



The feedback from this gesture was just amazing, with many people saying that the card arrived at "just the right time". It was definitely so worth doing.

In December Ruth suggested that we do a similar thing by sending patients a Christmas card. Again Ruth, Veronica and Pam wrote them and those cards which were delivered by hand had a little extra attached in the form of a tea-light in a small bag. Thanks again to them and to Ernie and Carole for helping deliver them.



## Patients' Support Group

*In February we held the final meeting before lockdown arrived.*

*As usual it was an enjoyable session with Eileen showing us all how to make corner book marks.*



*After lunch we also had a chat with Macmillan nurses.*



*Everyone is so looking forward to these monthly meetings starting again.*

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# THANK YOU

To Rachel and all staff from Blink M C R Ltd in Stretford for their donations of items to be sold in our shop.

These have included bedding, curtains, blinds and rugs as well as personalised items such as dressing gowns, photo frames, clocks and mugs.

On the run up to Christmas they also supplied us with rugs, Christmas trees and assorted gifts – all of which flew off the shelves.

We really appreciate these donations. Many thanks.

## Carers Drop-in Group

Again the members of this group can't wait for their monthly meetings to start again

Some very sad news was received on the final day of 2020 when Shirley and Denis were told that their oldest member had passed away.



Shirley said "This is a loving tribute to a dear friend and long-standing member of the Carers' Group. Annie will be greatly missed."

The photo was taken at a party the group organised for Annie on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018.

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## **THANK YOU**

To Hayley & Simon for very special donations to our Charity Shop

To Jean Berry for a thoughtful donation

To Sharon Williams for another generous donation. Sharon is not only a patient at OCSC but also a long-standing supporter and is considered a very dear friend by many of our Volunteers.

To Linda and other neighbours of Chris Beltran who donated money to buy a new set of hot stones for the Therapy Room in Chris's memory.

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## DIY Course for OCSC Volunteers

A second Women's DIY Course was organised at the beginning of 2020 by Oldham Lifelong Learning for our OCSC Volunteers. We had successfully applied for a grant from Action Together to fund it.

The first course in 2019 covered basic electrics, drilling, filling and painting, but this one concentrated on woodwork, specifically making a garden planter.



Joan



Linda & Anita



Eileen



Ruth & Anita



Kathy's



Kathy, Mary and Shelagh



Anita B's

.....and some of the finished planters:-



Linda's



Ruth's

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## THANK YOU

To Dorothy Lynch for a kind donation in memory of her sister

To Gil and Dave Fearn for a generous donation

To the following supporters who make monthly donations to OCSC:

M Bamber

G L Bamber

G A & A Chadwick

Mrs Betteridge

M D W Heppell

S Heppell

John Austin

To Jenny Cordingly who makes an annual donation to OCSC.

And, as always, a big thank you to everyone who gives regularly via the 'Be a Friend of Oldham Cancer Support Centre'.

## What have we all been doing?

In March it was quite a novel thing to have the time to clean and clear out all our cupboards, drawers and wardrobes and bin bags were filled ready for charity shops when they re-opened.

A lot of DIY was now done that had been waiting, sometimes for years. Gardens became pristine – as one of our Volunteers said, “No weed will now dare show its head in my garden.”

A great deal of baking was done – to the point where shops were running out of flour!

People joined in exercise classes on line and many took advantage of being able to go out for a walk each day.

Old hobbies were taken up again and new hobbies were started - knitting, crocheting, card-making and learning a new language to mention just a few.

Most people were now working from home - easy for some, less so for others.

And it was perhaps even more of a challenge for those who had to undertake home learning with their children.

But the hardest jobs of all belonged to those people who had no option but to go out to work. First and foremost were our NHS and care-home workers – absolute heroes (and still are). But there were also the others who helped to keep things going: school teachers, refuse collectors, postal workers, transport workers and those who kept our food supplies going.



In the window of one of our Volunteers

Our Volunteers have been letting us know about some of the things they have been doing since March:

**JEAN BURNS** has been doing a lot of knitting, making toy mice for a local cat sanctuary and dolls for children:



**SHIRLEY & DENIS RYDER** spent a lot of time in their garden. This is the quiet spot where they sit and read:



**EILEEN GARNER** who is very skilled in crafts has been making cards:



**PAT RIGBY** spent the first part of the first lockdown painting and wallpapering two bedrooms. She then did a garden makeover, putting down artificial grass “on the hottest day of lockdown”.



**JENNY FRETWELL** also did a lot of work in her garden which she found very enjoyable – a less enjoyable job was painting the fence!

**SHIRLEY ROWE** attempted something a bit different: “I learned to play the spoons for a bet. I did succeed after a fashion but was told by my friends that I was pretty bad at it. I’ll get my own back one day!”



**ROS ROYLE** has enjoyed her downtime with lots of reading and walking. And, of course, she has also been doing her home telephone counselling with patients

**CAROLE BRADBURY** has also done lots of walking and has particularly enjoyed meeting up to walk with a group of our Volunteers to walk in the park – socially distanced of course!



**VERONICA CREAM** – has spent a lot of time walking, especially as she now fosters and trains dogs (in addition to having her own dog). Together with her close friend, **MARGARET SMITH**, she also makes cards for us to sell in the Centre, in the shop and at our fairs/coffee mornings. This is one of the amazing cards Veronica made at Christmas:



**JEAN KNIGHT**, one of our Complementary Therapists, has also enjoyed walking – quite often with Ruth and Veronica.

**SANDRA ABBOTT** spent a lot of time cooking and baking, then sharing it with her family. And of course she has also kept OCSC’s finances in order as well as working at the shop whenever possible.

Like a lot of people **PAM WILLIAMS** spent March and April decluttering and cleaning cupboards etc and did more baking than she had done since before their children had left home. She then knitted for the Coronavirus Hearts Scheme for Care Homes, making 60 pairs of hearts for St George's Residential Care Home at Moorside:



She then stole Jean's idea & knitted toy mice:



~ moved on next to octopusses (octopi??)



~ followed by pompom cushions:



~ and baby booties:



Then came blankets and pram covers



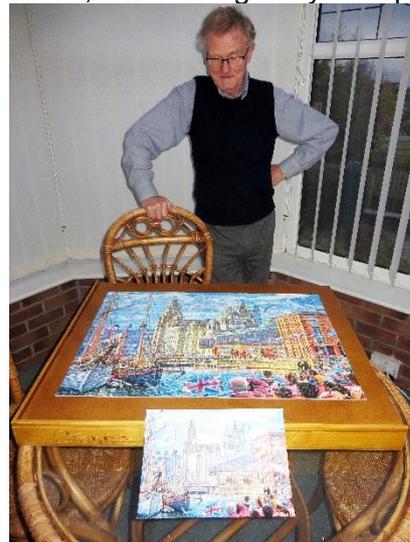
and Christmas tree decorations



Pam's just hoping that at the next Christmas Fair there is someone there who wants to buy knitted items!!

She is busy at the moment knitting hats for the Neo-natal Unit in Oldham.

Meanwhile **DAVID**, as well as being Mr Fixit at home, was doing very complicated jigsaws.



**RUTH ALLINGTON** spent time at the beginning of lockdown “painting anything that didn’t move” including this lovely garden planter:



She then put her talents into making gifts for family and friends and these included perfumed bath salts:



and also making candles. She then made these lovely Trees of Life:



And last but not least here is an example of her baking (a lemon drizzle cake)



**PEGGY HUGHES** tells us that she has been knitting a lot - “It keeps my mind active”.

**JOAN SWINDELLS**, who is a very talented artist, says that she has hardly done any painting at all during the last year but has done quite a lot of knitting and crocheting.



~ lovely top ~



This was sent round by **ANITA BROWN** who always find ways to keep us smiling

## Seenager

I **JUST** discovered my age group! I am a **Seenager** (senior teenager).

I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 55-60 years later. I don't have to go to school or work. I get an allowance every month. I have my own pad. I don't have a curfew. I have a driver's license and my own car.

I have ID that gets me into bars and the wine store. I like the wine store best. The people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant, they aren't scared of anything, they have been blessed to live this long, why be scared? And I don't have acne. Life is Good!

Also, you will feel much more intelligent after reading this, if you are a **Seenager**. Brains of older people are slow because they know so much. People do not decline mentally with age; it just takes them longer to recall facts because they have more information in their brains. Scientists believe this also makes you hard of hearing as it puts pressure on your inner ear.

Also, older people often go to another room to get something and when they get there, they stand there wondering what they came for. It is **NOT** a memory problem; it is nature's way of making older people do more exercise.

### **SO THERE!**

I have more friends I should send this to, but right now I can't remember their names. So please forward this to your friends; they may be my friends, too.

## Transport Volunteer

Hi, my name is Ernie Harrison.



*I do some volunteering work for OCSC in Failsworth. I first learned about the Centre through a friend whilst I was recovering from a prostate cancer operation five years ago. Thankfully I am now 99% clear and just have to attend six-monthly appointments at the hospital.*

*After hearing that they were looking for volunteers I decided to inquire and see if I could do anything to help. As it happens they needed a second driver to help with collecting patients/clients who were unable to get to the Centre and then returning them home after their appointments.*

*I have been doing this now for about two and a half years and I really enjoy it.*

*I also help out with leaflet drops which advertise upcoming events such as table-top sales, coffee mornings, quiz nights etc. All these help to raise funds for the Centre so that they can continue the amazing work they do in supporting the patients/clients.*

*I also took part in one of the 'Back To The Future' programmes run by the Centre – these are an enormous help to the people who attend and whose lives have been adversely affected by cancer.*

*In my spare time I enjoy playing golf, crown green bowling, cycling and plenty of walking. I also enjoy doing DIY (mainly*

*painting and decorating) for family, friends and neighbours.*

*Plus: going on holiday whenever possible is always nice!*

*Hopefully, if things settle down later this year I look forward to continuing my volunteer work for the Centre and it will be great to meet up again with all the other Volunteers when we re-open.*

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### Keeping lines of communication open

We have had several e-mails and phone calls over the past few months thanking us for keeping Volunteers up-to-date – and where possible including patients/clients.

“Thank you for the latest up-date. I am missing the Centre so much. Can't wait for it to re-open.”

“Thank you so much for the 'Friend' card – it came at just the right time as I had been feeling very low. It's made a big difference.”

“I would like to thank you very much for allowing my counselling sessions to continue throughout these difficult months. Don't know how I would have managed without them.”

“Was touched to get the Christmas card and tealight today. I've been very impressed with how you have kept in touch during the pandemic. Now the vaccine is here I hope you will have a bumper year at the Centre to make up for 2020.”

“How lovely to get a Christmas card from OCSC – and what a nice touch the tealight was.”

“It's been great how the Volunteers have kept in touch with each other and it's been lovely knowing that there are people there to help if I need it. I've had plenty of offers of help which has been wonderful.

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# THANK YOU

To Pauline Hurrell for a generous donation in lieu of Christmas presents for Pam and David Williams

To Pam and David for their donation in lieu of a Christmas present for Pauline.

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## Mount Everest Marathon

Who knew there was such a thing? You either climb Everest or you run a Marathon. But to do both combined?? In most people's minds only a mad person would even think about it! Wonderful, amazing, very fit, but nonetheless completely mad.

Fortunately for OCSC we do know of such a person and he has entered the Everest Marathon which will take place on May 29th 2021 and is going to donate all his sponsorship money to our Centre. You can imagine how that feels when we have had a whole year without being able to do any fundraising events.

**Colin Smith** didn't start running seriously until he was fifty. But from that point on, according to his wife Margaret (who supports us by regularly making cards for us to sell) he became "obsessed".

He started to run Marathons and has already completed five of the world's 'Six Majors' i.e New York, London, Chicago, Boston and Berlin. He would have taken part in the sixth one in Tokyo in 2020 but just after he arrived there the race was cancelled because of the pandemic. He is now hoping to do that one next year. In addition to all this he has also completed other Marathons such as the one in Manchester.

So he has now decided to take part in the highest altitude Marathon in the world. This is now an annual event which is held as a tribute to Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's first ascent of Mount Everest on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1953.

It starts from below the ice seracs at Everest Base Camp and finishes in Namche Bazaar, and it is recognised as one of the toughest races in the world.

But before the race even starts the entrants must actually get to Everest Base Camp – a trek of at least eight days.

Understand now why I used the words 'wonderful' 'amazing' 'very fit' - and 'completely mad'?

Because the Centre is closed at the moment we are hoping that each of our Volunteers (and maybe even some of our patients) will take a sponsor form and persuade family and friends to sponsor Colin. Even very small amounts will soon add up.

So Colin – a huge thank you from everyone at OCSC. Good luck with your training and we'll all be cheering you on.



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## OCSC Trustees

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