

Leominster Meeting Centre for people affected by dementia: Bob and Jenny's Story



Who we are

Bob and I are 74 and 70 respectively and we have lived in Bodenham for the past 16 years. We moved to our bungalow when he retired from full time work with West Mercia constabulary as communications manager. Previously he had spent 26 very happy years in the REME having joined as an apprentice at the age of 15! He loves to tell anyone who will listen all about his army days and he can remember his service number from nearly 60 years ago! My working life varied from nursing when I left school to working for 20 years in a private school in Malvern and finally working for Herefordshire Headway.

We enjoy village life and join in the various activities going on. We have five children between us and eight grandchildren. Sadly only one of our children lives locally, there's one in America and one in Australia. We have been able to visit over the years but it is becoming increasingly difficult. The son and grandson locally are very good and we have a wide circle of friends and neighbours. We have a little dog so we get out for walks as often as possible but it is becoming more difficult as Bob's mobility is getting worse. Up until two years ago we had a boat on the river Avon where we spent most of our leisure time but it became more and more difficult to manage. We still have a touring caravan that we store on a wonderful campsite in mid-Wales which is where we spend as much time as possible during the summer. Since we moved into this bungalow Bob has built a lovely model railway in the attic, but because of its location sadly he is unable to get up to it!



An outing to Shobdon Arches



Bob still enjoying trains

Bob is dependent on me for most things as he has never been able to cook! Maybe I should have encouraged him to cook in the past. He does not go out on his own; living in a village there is not much scope to walk without being on country lanes. I drive, so transport is not a problem.

How we came to be at the Meeting Centre

We first became concerned about Bob's memory about six years ago when he went to the GP who did the memory tests with him and sent him for a scan, then eventually referred him to the Memory Clinic where more tests were carried out. Alzheimer's was finally diagnosed four years ago. Soon after his diagnosis Bob went on a weekly course at Belmont where we met other couples who were in the same situation as us and we kept in touch. We met for coffee and sometimes had lunch out together, and eventually started attending the Memory Cafe in

Leominster. Sadly numbers dwindled and things changed, so we were encouraged to go and visit the Meeting Centre instead. At first Bob was reluctant to go but after a bit of encouragement we gave it a go and oh I am so glad we did!!!

What we do at the Meeting Centre and how it helps us

What a difference it has made. We started attending in the summer of 2019. At first we only went once a week but now Bob goes three days a week. The staff and volunteers are wonderful. Bob seems to be so much more animated when he goes. He really enjoys it there. The range of activities is excellent, it is amazing how music stimulates memory. I am able to leave him and have some very precious time to myself and also meet the other carers who are all in similar situations. You realise that you are not alone coping with the very cruel condition where you lose your loved one bit by bit. Since we have been attending the Meeting Centre there are times when I get my old Bob back for a little while!

The atmosphere when you enter the Meeting Centre is so welcoming and everyone - staff and members - is so relaxed and happy. We both enjoy the times when we go out as a group on visits to local attractions and bowling, it certainly makes such a difference to our social life. I would recommend anyone who finds themselves in a similar situation as us to go along and give it a try. If you are not keen at first, go back again!



The friendly atmosphere



Party time

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