

“The man I love, the man I married, is disappearing. Our whole world has turned upside down.”

In 2014, Bob and Anne enjoyed busy, active lives, and were looking forward to retiring together.

But when Bob was diagnosed with dementia, everything changed. Each new day brought fresh challenges. They struggled to cope, until they first came to Sage House, as Anne explained in November 2018:

“We knew that something wasn’t right, but the diagnosis was still a huge shock. Bob had always been so healthy and active – he was a carpenter, martial arts teacher and an Army Veteran too. The man I love, the man I married, started to disappear. Our whole world turned upside down.

“Bob struggled to come to terms with his condition, especially when his driving licence was revoked.

“Meanwhile I felt utterly bombarded with information, form filling, and taking on responsibility for both our lives.

“As his condition progresses further, daily life is becoming more and more difficult. Going out is a real challenge – even conversation is difficult. It’s a lot to cope with.

“I’ll never forget the first time we came to Sage House. The moment we walked in – everyone looked up and smiled. They understood. In other places, Bob becomes agitated and overwhelmed, but he’s completely comfortable here. Everyone is so friendly.

“That first morning, I broke down in tears. I admitted that I wasn’t coping. I was offered an appointment with the Wayfinding team straight away. I didn’t have to wait. It was such a relief. Jacquie has been my absolute support ever since.

“If there’s something I’m worried about, something I don’t understand, I can talk to Jacquie. If there’s a specific problem or complex form that needs filling in, she works through it with me. It’s heart breaking to see Bob decline, but Sage House is helping us to make the best of each day.

“Bob really enjoys the Veterans’ Group each week. He chats with new friends and enjoys remembering and reminiscing. I get a lot out of the Carer’s Course.

“And we love the cafe too, we chat to others and enjoy having some relaxed ‘time out’



together. We feel supported here, and I know that, as time goes on, we can rely on Sage House to be there for us.”

With the help and support on offer at Sage House, Bob and Ann have found that living well with dementia can become the new ‘norm’.

As Ann says, “We’re just getting on with it now, aren’t we Bob?” And Bob replies, smiling, “Yes, and I hope we always will”.

MAY 2019 UPDATE

As often happens, the change of routine and excitement over Christmas took its toll on Bob. His dementia progressed, and the couple have faced a range of new challenges. Bob would say, ‘I can’t look after you any more’, and Anne would reply, it’s my turn now, you’ve looked after me for over 40 years. It’s my turn.’ But Anne was struggling.



Over the last few months, their Wayfinder Jacquie has helped keep Bob occupied and happy through organising a placement at a carpentry workshop, as Anne explains,

“He feels like he’s working, like he used to. You can see the satisfaction on his face. One day they gave him a vice and a saw, and he just sawed all afternoon. The next day he planed all afternoon. He absolutely loves it and it keeps his brain active.”

Jacquie was also able to help Anne secure funding for Bob’s care, and they now have a carer who comes in to help during the week. Anne said she didn’t need help, she was managing, but as she explains,

“I didn’t realise how much I was doing. Having the carer means I can get ready in the morning without worrying about Bob. He comes into the kitchen looking like a shiny new pin, with a big smile on his face. It’s made a huge difference for both of us.”

Bob also now attends Dementia Day Breaks respite care at Sage House,

“Because of all these things Jacquie has helped put in place, Bob and I can now enjoy quality time together, while we still can. Because I’ve done what I need to do, I don’t get agitated, I’m not stressed. And I think Bob feels the same. He was a wonderful husband, a wonderful dad, and a brilliant grandad. And he still is. We just have to be there to pull him back, and move on with him. Jacquie is so dedicated. She’s helped us so much.”

Thank you to all our supporters for enabling Dementia Support to offer the free Wayfinder Service to people like Anne and Bob.

And thank you to Anne and Bob for sharing their story with us.

For more information, contact the Dementia Support Fundraising Team on 01243 888691, or email fundraising@dementia-support.org.uk.