

Age UK Cornwall & Isles of Scilly

Terry's Story

What is a Volunteer?



In my opinion, I don't believe just anyone can train to become a volunteer, it is either in the genes or in your upbringing.

This is me!

You no doubt know of the International Association of Lions Clubs? Last year they celebrated 100 years, since a certain Melvin Jones, started the first club in America.

There are now over 46,000 Clubs all over the world, making it by far the world's largest Service Organisation, housing 1.2 million volunteers who tirelessly aim to improve the wellbeing of people by taking part in fundraising activities, and then distributing those funds directly to local and national causes.

I joined the Callington Lions Club aged 40, in 1977, spending 36 years enjoyably helping others until retiring 4 years ago. I worked alongside like-minded individuals and made a lot of friends, all of my best friends are or have been Lions.



My voluntary experiences are varied since I became a widower, commencing with my involvement in Macmillan Cancer Support. Easter 2001, my dear wife Gill was diagnosed with aggressive Pancreatic Cancer, and after a hard fought battle, lost the fight in December 2001. I was so indebted to the services of the Macmillan Nurses during those months, that I vowed to repay them however I could.

My Experiences

In September 2002, my 65th birthday fell on a Friday which coincidentally matched that of **THE WORLD'S BIGGEST COFFEE MORNING**. Here was my first big opportunity, so I applied to Macmillan and staged an event in Gill's memory, and raised £1,000, followed the next year with a similar figure.

In 2003, I read in Macmillan's newsletter about their famous Challenges to raise much-needed funds, one such challenge was to trek in the Peruvian Andes, along the Inca Trail to the lost city of Machu Picchu. **This was something Gill and I had planned to do in our retirement, so I didn't take long to apply to enter.** I managed to persuade two dear friends to accompany me and share this journey, together we did the arduous training necessary for climbing at altitude and completed the challenge. **It really was a most wonderful achievement and we raised £15,000.** That was back in 2004, and 2 years later we did a similar trek on unknown stretches of China's Great Wall, again raising £15,000.

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My other love

Two years after Gill's death, I found a New Love.....in the form of a 1950 MG, a car that I could only dream about when I was a young man, but now the 3 kids had flown the nest, I needed something to cherish, and I love her to bits.

I read in the Morning News in 2011, of an event called **THE GRAND TOUR CAPE TO CAPE** which was open to Classic Cars as an endurance rally to raise money for, you've guessed it, **MACMILLAN**. Using my powers of persuasion, I got the ok from another dear friend, to let me borrow her husband Jeff, who would become my navigator and co-driver.



We had a great time competing against 39 other crews driving from Cape Wrath to Cape Cornwall, and were even more thrilled to **receive the top prize by raising the most money, nearly £7,000**. That was 2012, and the following year we started near Lisbon and **again finishing at Cape Cornwall, we amassed nearly £11,000 winning the top trophy**. In 2017 we **finished 2nd after raising another £4,000 for Macmillan**.

So my gifts to Macmillan so far amount to about **£55,000 (with considerable help from 4 very dear friends.)**

About 11 years ago, one of those friends, Sue, suggested I join the Tavistock Walk & Talk group of which she had just become a leader. **This I did, and have been part of that set up, practically every Tuesday since**. This group provides me with a sense of humble pride and satisfaction, knowing that for some, this is the highlight of the week. Sue and I used our experience in assisting a similar group set up in the Tamar Valley, which is still going strong.

Approximately 4 years ago, I was reading the local Callington Newsletter, and there were no less than 3 appeals for Volunteers, all with desperate needs. Firstly, Callington Heritage Centre would have to close if no Volunteers were forthcoming. Secondly, **VOLUNTEER CORNWALL** were looking to recruit helpers for their WELCOME HOME team, who would look after the immediate needs of elderly, lone patients being discharged from hospital. And thirdly, **AGE UK CORNWALL** had launched it's Living Well programme, which is when I first met Diane Newman.

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The Blokes that Brunch

Assisting on a coach outing, as part of Living Well, I got into conversation with an old gent who had heard about a Lunch Club in Saltash run by a Methodist Church, so I agreed to take him along.

After one visit I suggested it would be good if we had something similar near his home at St. Dominick. So five years ago, I negotiated a deal with the Landlord of the Who'd Have Thought It Inn and a group of elderly men have attended every Wednesday lunchtime since, **they are affectionately known as BLOKES THAT BRUNCH.**

Initially, all the men were referred via Health Centres and Social Services, as being isolated and reclusive, many with dementia and other ailments, but I'm pleased to say that with one exception, it only takes one visit for each person to become a regular. **Another plus from this venture is that a lovely lady called Jill Witcomb, who was one of Diane's staff, started a lady's group at the same venue called Ruby Tuesdays, and once a year we have a joint Xmas Lunch. This is also still successfully going strong!**



In the summer months, and for the last 10 years, I have Volunteered at Sterts Amphitheatre, on Bodmin Moor at Upton Cross, and during the Winter I am a member of Sterts Singers. Finally, I spend as much time as I can looking after my Mother-in-law, who until January, was living near me in her bungalow on her own, not bad for a 106 year old eh? **No natural volunteer goes head-first into a challenge expecting a trophy, but when someone recognises your achievements you get the satisfaction of knowing you have done something worthwhile.**

In Recognition

We are so proud to be working alongside Terry, he is a wonderful person and continues to support the the Cornish community & Macmillan. In recognition of his Volunteering & fundraising efforts, Terry has been awarded the following:

2012- CALLINGTON CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

2016- AWARD FOR SUPPORTING ELDERS

2016- CORNWALL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

2018- B.E.M IN NEW YEARS HONOURS LIST