

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2025



The Walking Legend

Incredible Mary walks the entire length of Hadrian's Wall for our charity at age 90!

Perhaps in one of the greatest fundraising efforts we've ever seen, Mary Nicholson, aged 90, took on the phenomenal challenge of walking 97 miles of Hadrian's Wall to raise money for Love Musgrove!

Mary was inspired to hold this fundraiser following the 'outstanding care and treatment' her brother, Peter, has been receiving from the Beacon Centre.

To prepare, Mary trained by walking every day along Burnham Beach and Brean Down, with the sand providing a good resistance to her training. Mary was confident it would be a "piece of cake", which turned out to be famous last words! She admitted there were many times she wanted to give up "because of the physical barriers", but her faith, thoughts of the Beacon Centre, and her brother pushed her on; "it's his enthusiasm for the centre and all the care they have taken of him."

The fiercely determined Mary completed the challenge over eight days, tackling many hills, stones, stony paths, and wooden styles, accompanied by her three daughters, youngest son and grandchildren.

As a retired NHS midwife, Mary knows how crucial and impactful her donation will be, adding even greater personal meaning to her achievement. **"It was really tough going as it was quite hot, and the most difficult part was probably days five or six, as we were told it would be an 11-mile walk, but once we'd reached that milestone, we realised it was actually 15 miles that day! It definitely wasn't what I wanted to see as my legs were aching!"**

Despite the physical difficulties, the heat, the extra unexpected miles, **Mary conquered every mile and raised an astonishing £8,651!**

To honour her trailblazing (pun intended!) achievement, we hosted a special cheque presentation, which was televised on BBC Points West.

We are so immensely proud of Mary and her incredible triumph. If we can achieve even half of her grit, determination, and vitality for life, we think that can be considered a life truly well lived.

Raised an **ASTONISHING**
£8,651

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DEAR SUPPORTERS

Welcome to the Winter 2025 edition of our Newsletter.

I would like to take a moment to personally thank you for the incredible kindness, generosity, and support you have shown over the past year. Whether you've donated, fundraised, or simply helped spread the word, your efforts have been nothing short of inspiring.

From amazing community fundraisers to awe-inspiring personal challenges, your creativity and unwavering commitment has made a profound impact on our patients, staff and community.

As we look ahead to 2026, I'm excited to see what wonderful ideas and events you'll bring to life. However you choose to support us, please know that it is deeply appreciated and continues to make a real difference for our hospital.

With heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes

Graham Hughes

Non-Executive Director and Chair of Charity



TAUNTON ROUND TABLE

Halloween looked a little different this year, as we were invited to attend Taunton Round Table's Annual Charity Gala, held at Taunton School.

As a charitable society, Taunton Round Table chose to host the event in aid of the Beacon Centre this year. Their Chairman, Andy Milsted, sadly lost his sister to cancer, and wanted to give back to the team who cared for her. As demonstrated by a raise of hands, nearly half the guests had in some way been affected by cancer, so the cause held a personal note to many in the room.

The night began by meeting members of the Round Table, the Chairman and his wife, and VIPs including the Taunton Mayor and Mayoress. VIPs were then ushered into the main hall, where they were introduced to some 210 attendees. A heartfelt and emotional welcome was given by Andy, followed by our Community & Events Fundraiser, Rachel, who spoke about how

donations will support the Beacon Centre and the purchase of two Paxman Dual Scalp Cooling Systems.

Over a delicious meal of locally sourced ingredients, guests took part in a silent auction and raffle to assist in the evening's fundraising efforts. The prizes ranged from signed memorabilia and children's toys to a robotic lawnmower, all generously donated by guests and sponsors. We were informed that the raffle alone **raised an incredible £2,000.**

After dinner came the evening's special guest speaker: Nigel Owens, the celebrated Welsh rugby referee. Any rugby fans will be familiar with his favourite catchphrase "This is not soccer!" After opening his speech with some hilariously cheeky banter, the audience was hooked. He regaled us with raucous anecdotes

and stories of his life, starting from his school days up to his retirement, including some of his best refereeing experiences and the worst players to referee. Nigel also kindly donated 10 signed copies of his new book to be included in the main auction.

The night closed with the big auction items, featuring prizes such as tickets to the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta and England vs Fiji halfway line rugby seats, and the guests dug deep into their pockets. It was a genuine honour to be selected as this year's Gala's charity partner, and we were so well looked after. **We achieved a grand total of £14,244,** funding the first Paxman Dual Unit!

Thank you again to all the Round Table gents for hosting such a wonderful evening and inviting us to be part of it. We look forward to joining you again for the Taunton Swimathon in February 2026!



Millie Twitchell

On Saturday 21st June, Millie - joined by her wonderful friends and family - took on an incredible 100km cycling challenge to raise vital funds for the Somerset Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (SNICU), a cause close to their hearts.

Back in April 2021, Mark and Millie welcomed their twins, Ava & Teddy, into the world, born prematurely at just 30 weeks. Due to their early arrival, both babies spent their first 6 weeks in SNICU. Millie shared, "The care they received from each and every member of the team was truly amazing, and this unit will now always hold a very special place in our family's heart."

Determined to give back, Millie rallied a team of 16 cyclists to take on the 100km route. Along the way, a brilliant support crew followed, handing out water and snacks to cheer them on. A well-earned stop at Rich's Cider for a complimentary pint in the sunshine proved to be a highlight of the day!

The team's incredible efforts **raised a phenomenal £3,455 for SNICU!**

This isn't the first time Millie has gone the extra mile for the unit. Back in 2022, she led another successful fundraiser that helped purchase four neonatal resuscitation devices – equipment that continues to make a real difference for SNICU.

We're so grateful to Millie and her amazing team for their dedication and continued support for our tiniest patients and their families.

Betsie

A huge thank you to the amazing Betsie, who has raised an incredible £180 for the Children's Ward!



Betsie showed wonderful creativity and kindness by handcrafting beautiful bracelets and selling them at her school fete. Her hard work and generosity will make a real difference to the children and families we support.

Thank you for your brilliant fundraising, Betsie, and for inspiring others with your creative ideas and thoughtful efforts.

Lydia

We are delighted to welcome Lydia Burton as the newest member of our wonderful team!

Lydia joined us on 29th September and is our Donor Support Officer, providing invaluable support to our amazing fundraisers and serving as the first point of call in our office. Lydia works for us four days a week and works one day for her local church.

With experience working for several local charities, Lydia has a great understanding of the impact fundraising



can have and is excited to bring her own knowledge and creativity to the team! Lydia is a keen traveller, having volunteered for charities in India, Kenya, South Africa, and filling her passport with as many stamps as possible. When she's not exploring new places, you'll find her enjoying great food and a good old British cup of tea!

GODNEY Gathering

Since 2011, The Godney Gathering - a beloved local festival - has brought the community together through incredible music.

Over the years, the festival has grown, hosting some fantastic and famous musicians, all while staying true to its humble beginnings.

Every year, The Godney Gathering proudly supports a variety of local charities and causes – giving back is at the heart of everything they do. This year was no different, choosing The Beacon Centre as their Charity of the Year 2025, an especially meaningful decision for the team.

Sue Daniels, one of the festival's founders, was diagnosed with breast cancer shortly after last year's festival. Since then, Sue has been receiving treatment

at The Beacon Centre, including daily radiotherapy sessions. Sue has shown remarkable resilience, continuing to work tirelessly in the lead up to the festival while undergoing treatment.

In recognition of the outstanding care and compassion Sue has received, The Godney Gathering rallied behind the Beacon Centre, **raising an incredible £1,518.71.**

We are deeply grateful for the festival's generosity and send our heartfelt wishes to Sue for a full and speedy recovery.



Harrison Hull-Lane

A big thank you to Harrison and Leonie Hull-Lane who hosted their fifth Charity Football Match on 24th August, raising an incredible £1,200 in support of the Beacon Centre at Musgrove Park Hospital.

The event, held in loving memory of Harrison's grandad, Richard Hewetson, brought together friends, family, and supporters for a brilliant day of football and fundraising. Harrison shares, "This year was our biggest event yet, the sun was shining, and the vibes were flowing, and I cannot thank everyone enough for the incredible support!"

A huge thank you to Harrison and Leonie for their continued dedication and passion year after year, raising vital funds for the Beacon Centre, supporting those receiving cancer treatment at Musgrove.

Plans are already underway for next year's event, and we can't wait to see what Harrison and his team have in store!

The Kings Arms, TAUNTON

The Kings Arms in Taunton recently hosted a vibrant Caribbean Charity Day to raise vital funds for our Children's Ward.

Guests enjoyed a live Reggae band, delicious food and drinks, an exciting auction, and a raffle draw. Thanks to their incredible efforts, the event **raised a remarkable £2,175.31!**

A huge thank you to Lorraine and Mark for hosting such a fantastic day, and to all the staff and patrons whose energy, generosity, and support made it such a success. Your contributions will make a real difference to the lives of children and families in our care.



JEWELLERY APPEAL

Our jewellery appeal is a new way you can support the Beacon Centre.



By clearing out old, unwanted, or broken jewellery and watches, you can contribute without having to host a fundraiser. One of our volunteers, Maggie, takes the donated items to auction, or if they are not suitable for auction, the beads, chains, or links are transformed into beautiful pieces

of art (pictured above) or trinkets by her friend, Trisha McGarry – the proceeds for both are given to the charity.

If you wish to empty the draws of any jewellery or accessories, especially those that have been inherited, this is a respectful way to honour their sentimentality whilst giving to a charitable cause.

If you wish to donate or hear more details, please contact us on **01823 344437**, or directly to **Maggie on 01963 250108**.

Nicola Fernandez McEwan

When Nicola learned that her friend had been diagnosed with cancer, she made a heartfelt decision - to stop cutting her hair so she could donate it.



To do this, her hair needed to be between 7-12 inches long, so this was no small commitment. For someone who has always felt anxious about cutting her hair, it was a big and brave step. But as Nicola put it, "this is scary for me but not as scary as

the journey my friend has endured...this time I feel there are bigger things to worry about."

In August 2024, when her friend began treatment at the Beacon Centre, Nicola set her sights on supporting the team who had cared for them so compassionately. Her incredible efforts have **raised an amazing £1,322.50** for the Beacon Centre – a truly inspiring act of love, courage, and generosity.

Now sporting a fabulous new look, Nicola reminds us all how bravery can have a big impact. **Thank you, Nicola!**

The Tree of Light

Think of someone special this Christmas

The Tree of Light is returning to Musgrove Park Hospital for a sixth year.

This heartfelt tradition offers a special way to remember and celebrate loved ones who are no longer with us. You can dedicate a beautiful bauble with your personal message or memory, which will be hung on our Christmas Tree in the Concourse, or can be sent to you to put on your tree.

We will once again be asking supporters to donate as they request a bauble, **last year's Tree of Light helped us raise a brilliant £1,675**, an amount that makes a real difference here at Musgrove Park Hospital. **The Tree of Light has raised an incredible £8,390 since 2020.**

For more information, or to request a bauble either to be sent home for you to write your own message, or to have one of our team write a message for you, head to our website www.lovemusgrove.org.uk/tree-of-light or give the Fundraising Team a call on **01823 344437**.

Christmas Campaign



Our Christmas Campaign returns this year to once again support our patients who are sadly stuck in hospital and separated from their family and friends over the holiday period.

www.justgiving.com/campaign/christmas-presents-for-patients2025



Your Impact

Your generosity continues to benefit our patients and colleagues every day. With your support we have been able to continue funding equipment and services throughout the hospital and its associated teams:

- **Endometriosis software package for Radiology** – allows patients access to less invasive and expensive diagnostic techniques and trains the next generation of radiographers.
- **National Deaf CAMHS Team** – a BSL video specifically designed to allow deaf patients access to vital surveys that are used to improve the service.
- **The Seed Library** – bringing green spaces and sustainability to our colleagues by engaging in a swap-based system to grow new plants and supporting their health and wellbeing with a green thumb.

Skydive

We've teamed up with GoSkydive to help our fundraisers reach for the stars! Registration is just £50, and you can support any ward or department of your choice from Musgrove Hospital. Choose from 10,000ft or 15,000ft, with a minimum sponsorship of £350 or £450 respectively.



Golf Day

Our annual Golf Day will return on Friday 15th May 2026 at Cricket St Thomas Golf Club. Keep your eyes peeled for more information, or express your interest at SomersetNHSCharity@SomersetFT.nhs.uk

WHAT'S COMING UP?



Taunton Swimathon

In February 2026, Taunton Round Table are once again supporting Love Musgrove by hosting a swimathon to raise money for our Somerset Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (SNICU) and two other local charities. Open to all ages and abilities and £15 per team, get your friends together and head over to www.taunton-swimathon.co.uk to book yourselves a slot, all to raise money for a wonderful cause!

By leaving us a gift in your Will, you are supporting local people who need our help. Your support makes a difference to everyone that uses the hospital, including those who need lifesaving or specialist treatment, mums and new babies, and of course the elderly members of our community who often rely on NHS services the most.

Leaving us a gift in your Will gives you a chance to make a lasting difference. Just like our doctors and nurses, you will be helping people at a time when they need it the most.

For more information on leaving us a gift in your Will, please contact James.Kirton@SomersetFT.nhs.uk. If you are already thinking about leaving us a gift, Somerset-based law firm Lyons Bowe have agreed to offer a 50% discount to anyone that includes us in their Will.

Gifts in Wills
your gift for future generations

PLEASE DONATE GIVE A GIFT TODAY

One off gift

I am over 16 and my address details are.

Title
First Name
Last Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone
Email

If your donation is in memory of someone please tell us

Their Name
Your relationship with them

We like to keep you up to date with our news, activities and ways to get involved. We'll never sell or swap your details with anybody else.

I am happy to hear from Musgrove by

Email ☐ Post ☐ (Tick all that apply)

Signature
Date

You can unsubscribe or change your preferences at any time by emailing Lovemusgrove@SomersetFT.nhs.uk or contacting us on **01823 344437**.

Love Musgrove always stores your personal details securely. For full details see our privacy policy on our website.

☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ Other amount _____

To the following fund/department:

☐ The Better Everywhere Fund ☐ The Children's Unit

☐ The Beacon Centre ☐ The Maternity Unit

☐ Other _____

☐ I enclose a cheque payable to Love Musgrove
Please debit my Visa/CAF/Maestro/Mastercard
(Circle as appropriate)

Cardholder's name

Card number:

Start date: / Expiry date: /

3 Digit security code:

Signature

Date

Make a Gift Aid declaration

Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In Order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future, or have made in the past 4 years to Love Musgrove

Signature: Date:

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If you would like to make a regular gift via direct debit, please tick this box and we will send you further information on how to sign up ☐