

Newsletter

December 2023

COVER STORY: CHRISTMAS TREE DELIGHT IN
PRINCESSHAY, EXETER

FEATURE: JOSH PUBLISHES HIS
FIRST FANTASY BOOK

PHOTOS: FRIGHTFULLY GOOD
HALLOWEEN PHOTOS





Shared Lives South West households, staff and the wider Shared Lives community have been busy showing off their crafty side making decorations for our charity Christmas tree at Princesshay, Exeter.

We are one of 30 organisations/charities who were selected to be part of the annual Christmas Tree Festival.

Staff and households have stopped by to visit the tree to have photos.

We have taken part in the event for many years and it's great to be part of the festival.

A big thank you for making decorations and for stopping by for pictures and sharing them with us.





We couldn't not share these great photos of Wendy out and about with her Shared Lives Carer Sam Robertson doing some Christmas shopping and taking in the festivities!





Gabrielle, who uses Shared Lives services, is seen here with Shared Lives Carer Bex McKnight enjoying a night out. They went to Redruth to see the lantern parade and Christmas light switch on. What a great photo!

Two Shared Lives households came together for a jolly festive night out to see vocal troupe G4 Official at Truro Cathedral recently.

What a lovely setting to see such a show!

We hope you had a great night Dawn, Tracey, Helen and Gillian!



"Sylvia enjoyed her birthday treat at the Chinese buffet," said Shared Lives Carer Caroline Hill. She enjoyed the meal with her sister Catherine and David, who all use our services, as well as Shared Lives Carers Rosemary and Caroline. Happy birthday Sylvia from the Shared Lives team.



Paul enjoyed a short break with Shared Lives Carers John Freeman and Allan Candy and has been getting into the festive spirit! They all enjoyed a Sunday afternoon at Otter Nurseries taking in all the Christmas decorations. It looks a fun afternoon out.





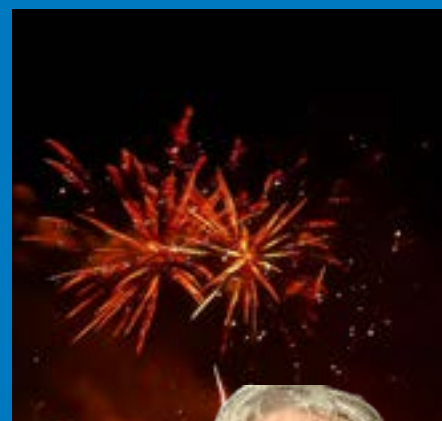
Did you see Shared Lives South West on BBC Spotlight recently?

Shared Lives Carer Teresa Walker was interviewed alongside Roma, Kerry and Stella who she supports.

The features centres around what it's like to be a Shared Lives Carer and what it's like to live in a Shared Lives household.

If you missed it, the video is on our YouTube channel.

What a great night at Buckland Athletic F.C. firework night! Such a brilliant community event for all ages. What a cracking display and so pleased we support this event each year. It was lovely to see some Shared Lives households enjoying it too!



We love all these brilliant Halloween photos sent in from various Shared Lives South West households.

You can see mum Abby, who uses our services, enjoying pumpkin carving with her daughter Isabella and then dressed in fancy dress.

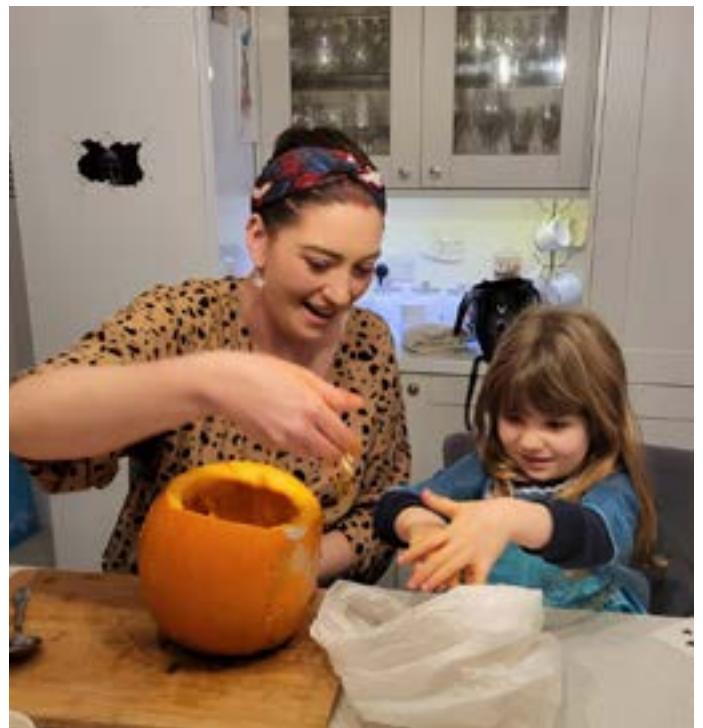
There is also a photo of Emma, who is supported by Shared Lives Carer Mel Brunsdon, dressed for the spooky day!

Hattie is seen out and about enjoying Halloween at Strawberry Fields .

Chanroth, who is also supported by a Shared Lives Carer, dressed up and got into the 'spirit' of things.

We love the pumpkin carving pictures sent in of Gillian and Helen and Lynn too!

Great effort everyone!







Shared Lives Coordinator Charlotte Williams was at Newton Abbot Library recently to chat to people who wanted to learn more about becoming a Shared Lives Carer and informed them about the services we offer.



Shared Lives Carer Melissa Boardman supported Laura and Hattie to get ready for a very special ball recently! Don't they both look fabulous! We hope you had a wonderful night.



"Pam and Tony enjoyed Chinese and then blew out a candle on her birthday cake. Happy birthday Pam," said Maria Wolstencroft, her Shared Lives Carer. Happy 61st birthday Pam from all of us at SLSW.

What a fun weekend!
Shared Lives Carer Lisa
Dougal (and her boyfriend
Mark) took Charlene who
she supports away for the
weekend.

Charlene's boyfriend
Matthew also went.
They stayed in Chertsey
and went to Thorpe Park



Chanroth and Gillian, who use our services, went along to Truro Cathedral to see Luke Jerram's spectacular touring artwork, Gaia.

What an incredible setting to see it too!



Daredevil Paul had a great time at Crewkerne Fair!
It looks like he had a fun time.
He is supported by Shared Lives Carer Teresa Campbell.

John recently enjoyed a short break with Shared Lives Carer Richard Holland.

"He had an 11 day stay and a beach walk had to be done," said Richard.

"Lots of lovely memories."

Richard also supports Neil long term, who is pictured.

Diane, Richard's wife, who is a formal support carer, is also photographed.

It looks like John had a packed stay!



"Happy 37th Birthday Laura, We hope your day has been as special as you are," said Melissa Boardman, Shared Lives Carer, who supports Laura.

It looks like you had a great day celebrating!



Laura, with support from Daniel, navigated an independent day at the Exeter city football grounds. They watched Laura's much loved team.

"Well done Laura we are so proud of your achievement," said Melissa.



In recognition of Black History Month, staff Carers and people supported came together for a Caribbean themed evening at the Somerset office.



We are sharing more photos from the Hill's household on holiday in Cornwall. They have visited Bodmin Railway and Bodmin Jail. The photos were sent in by Shared Lives Carer Caroline Hill and feature Kat, Sylvia (in the Bodmin Jail t-shirt) and David and Caroline's sister Rosemary.

Pictured is Kevin on a recent trip to France. He also saw a vintage truck on the ferry home!

He is supported by Shared Lives Carer Nick Higgins.



Well done to 'Super Troupers' Ann-Mari and Tracy who took part in Helton Carnival and received second and third place awards! "They really enjoyed themselves as ABBA," said Eileen Mcloughlin, their Shared Lives Carer.



"A great holiday in Majorca for Bruce," said Glynis Meloy, his Shared Lives Carer. What wonderful photos, it looks like you had a fantastic time.



Josh is celebrating writing a fantasy book Twisted Valley, which is now available on Amazon.

It took months to come to fruition and he is thrilled it can now be downloaded or printed.

"I used to write books as a child called the Sacred Oak, which were centred around talking animals in a forest and focused on my love of nature," said Josh, who is supported by Shared Lives Carer Diane Hollies in Cornwall.

"Twisted Valley started coming together after I started watching more magical films and incorporated ideas into my book.

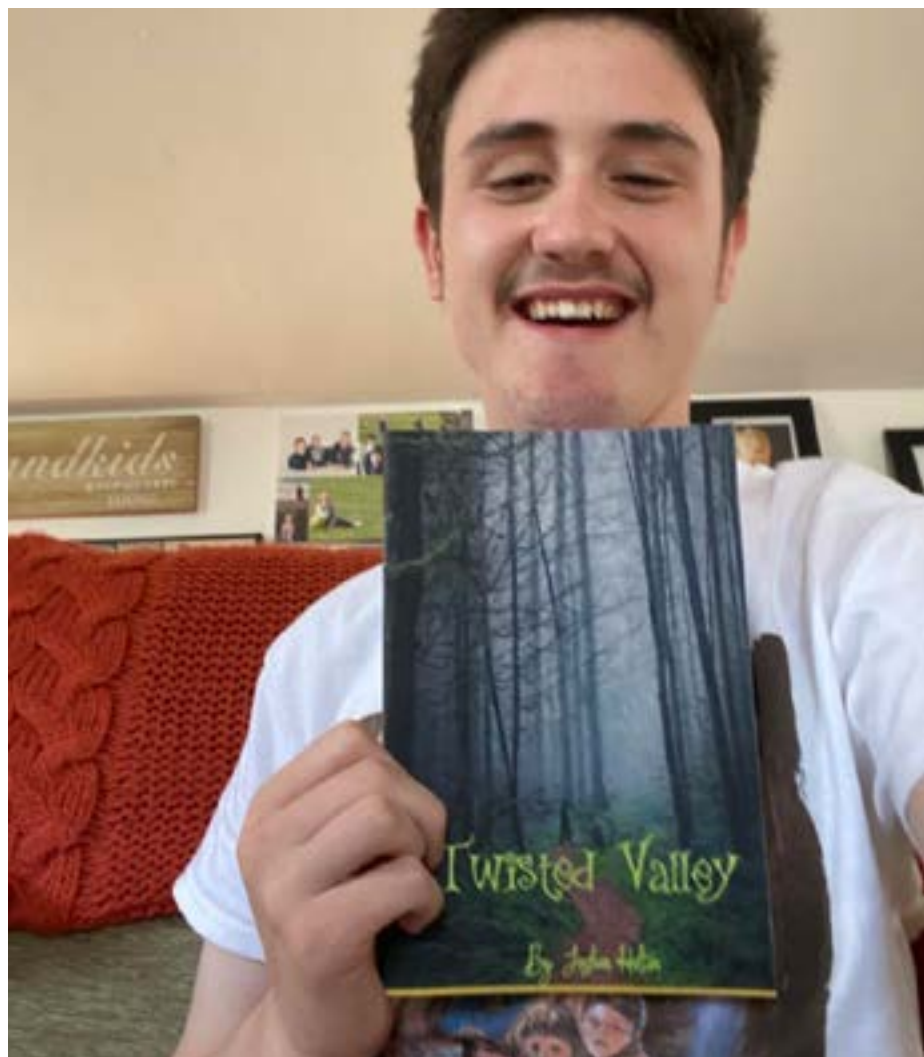
"I wanted to get an agent and publish it, but Di's son suggested using Amazon and that's what I did."

The story follows lonely six-year-old schoolboy Fergus whose life changes when he's forced by mysterious magic to live his life deep in the woods.

This special wood is full of fairytale characters, witches, dragons and evil owl queens.

It's his mission to uncover a mystery that keeps the woodland and the creatures under a powerful curse.

"Fergus learns the forest had a kingdom with a monarch who



was overthrown by another monarch-a snow owl," said Josh enthusiastically.

"Fergus goes on a journey to break the curse on the woods and to restore the old monarch."

Diane is extremely proud of Josh's achievement and said:

"Twisted Valley is Josh's fantasy world, but I can see a lot of Fergus in Josh."

Josh has been living with Diane for over a year and is thriving.

"She helps me with

concentration and life skills like cooking or using different things around the house. Di also provides me with a great support system, which is amazing," he said.

Aside from writing Josh enjoys drawing portraits and characters as well as design work on the computer. He also loves to sing and has recorded a song with his friend Lily called Speechless under the album Studio Bodmin.

He now attends college three days a week, has a busy social

life and enjoys visiting a local gaming café.

"I now want to write a children's picture book called Santa for a Day next," said Josh.

"I wrote it when I was a kid, but lost the original copy, so want to re do it as I think children would love it," said Josh enthusiastically.

"I'd also like to write a sequel to Twisted Valley, as there is a teaser at the end."

"He's totally changed and he didn't used to do anything, now you can't stop him," added Diane.

"He never stops now!"

You can download Josh's book here: <https://www.amazon.in/Twisted-Valley-Joshua-Holten-ebook/dp/B0CG3SYHSH>



A big thank you to two Shared Lives households who we filmed for two new videos for our Youtube channel and to promote Shared Lives South West.

Shared Lives Carer Nick Higgins featured along with John and Kevin, who he supports.

The film focuses on their day to day lives, the work Nick does and how supported Nick and John feel.

We also filmed short break Shared Lives Carers John Freeman and Allan Candy.

They talked about what they enjoy about the role and how they support multiple people at their home.

Visit: <https://www.youtube.com> and search our channel @sharedlivessouthwest556





This year we supported Jeans for Genes Week and we did our bit to raise awareness for the week. Here is a photo of some of the Devon staff team wearing denim to support the cause. Jeans for Genes Week took place from September 18-24 and is an annual fundraising event for the genetic condition community.



Bob and John have had a lovely peaceful day in such a picturesque setting. Shared Lives Carer Caroline O'Sullivan took them to a lake for Bob to enjoy a spot of fishing and John to take in the fabulous surroundings. They were out until 8pm and enjoyed a fish and chip supper too! How fabulous!





Dean and Chloe who are supported by Shared Lives Carer Lynn Fidler had a wonderful time camping during a Bank Holiday. They were joined by Lynn's great niece, who is also pictured. It really shows what Shared Lives is all about!

"Rachel and I had coffee and cake at Alcatraz in Perranporth, which is one of our favourite spots," said Emma Tate, Shared Lives Formal Support Carer. "I think Rachel enjoyed her flapjack! She was so speedy I couldn't snap a pic in time!"



"The lovely thing about Shared Lives is sharing the special times. Wendy came with me and my daughter to watch the scan together as my daughter is pregnant," said Sam Robertson, Wendy's Shared Lives Carer. "She could see the screen and said that's a baby!" What a great photo of Wendy at the scan, she looks super happy to be there!



We had a busy few days at job fairs The UK Careers Fair in Plymouth and Truro. Thanks to all who stopped by to find out more about becoming a Shared Lives Carer! Many found out about Shared Lives for the first time



"Lynn had a lovely time going to Norfolk for a turkey and tinsel break and saw the Thursford Christmas Spectacular show, which was amazing and enjoyed shopping," said her Shared Lives Carer Jo Crocker, who is pictured with Lynn. It looks like you both had a wonderful time!



Photos!

We love seeing your photos and hearing your news.

Don't forget to send photos to:
dgillingwater@sharedlivessw.org.uk



Huge congratulations to Ivor and Carol who got married in Somerset.

Ivor uses our services and Carol is the sister of Ivor's Shared Lives Carer Rachel. Shared Lives South West Team Leader Amanda Maggs and Shared Lives Coordinator Jean Harper were invited to the special day.

We wish Ivor and Carol a lifetime of happiness.

Carol's sister wrote this to sum up the day:

Carol and Ivor's wedding was a joyous occasion. On Saturday, 9th September 2023, my sister Carol (72), the social butterfly, wed Ivor, the perfect gentleman.

The two met at Penrose Special Needs School in 1965. After leaving school, they lost touch for 52 years. After Ivor's father passed away and Ivor came to live at the Blue House with my sister Rachel and Fran, love blossomed between Carol and Ivor.

They make a wonderful pair. Carol brims with social flair and initiative, while Ivor, a man of few words, brings thoughtfulness, calm and an impressive memory.

During Covid, they raised £2000 for Shelter from sales of their art.

The wedding was in the garden of Huntstile Farm - our childhood home. Carol and her four beautiful bridesmaids got



ready in the old oak-paneled bedroom which used to be her childhood bedroom.

Carol walked down the garden path on brother John's arm, with not a dry eye in the garden. The couple had written their own vows. Peter was ring bearer. Lizzie and Nathaniel sang "What a Wonderful World." Harriet Dougherty read the Apache blessing and we all joined in singing a song composed by Henry for the occasion.

After the ceremony, the newlyweds toured Bridgwater

and nearby villages in a decorated Land Rover as people lined the streets with banners and balloons to celebrate their love.

At the reception for 120 guests, Mr. and Mrs. Hill made their entrance into the flower-filled marquee. All the flowers had been grown and arranged by Carmen who also made the delicious cakes. The place names had all been painted by the bride and groom. Eight key people in their lives gave moving micro speeches. For

their first dance, Ivor chose Abba's "Take a Chance on Me." Carol tossed her bouquet from our parents' old bedroom window. Heather did a spectacular dive to catch it! Fran's shanty band performed "The Somerset Hills" - another beautiful song written by Stuart

for the newlyweds. The wedding was a true celebration of love and community. Though different, Carol and Ivor complement each other beautifully. Their commitment to supporting one another and living life to the fullest is truly inspirational.





Members of the SLSW staff team wore red ribbons in support of World AIDS Day on December 1.

World AIDS Day is a global movement to unite people in the fight against HIV and AIDS.



What a great photo!
It was sent in by Shared Lives Carer Caroline O'Sullivan who took the picture of John, who she supports, and her grandson Nelson. They were stood together waiting to catch the bus.



- Debbie is seen here getting into the festive spirit!
- We love the hat and jumper Debbie!
- The photo was sent in by her Shared Lives Carer Michelle Beasor.



It's wonderful to see the fabulous friendships that are formed across Shared Lives households.

- Gillian and Helen, who live in different Shared Lives households, regularly get together to do fun things.
- They recently visited Scorrier Church for an evening of festive crafting!
- We love the decorations they made.



A big well done to Cara!
She is working at Ivybridge Brewing Company with support from Eliveate.

She is doing a mix of activities each week including helping to open the shop by putting out signs, serving customers, labelling bottles and packing up boxes. She has also helped to hand

out flyers.

We've heard she's been a hit with people coming in and the person who runs the brewery said Cara is so upbeat and enthusiastic!

Cara is supported by Shared Lives Carer Sylvia Marsh.

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www.sharedlivessw.org.uk

The deadline for the February newsletter is January 15

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter or any stories you'd like to share with us, please do get in touch - we would love to hear from you!

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