

## When Your Brain Doesn't Work

How many of us take it for granted that our brain will work well for us from the time we are born until (hopefully) well into our 60s, 70s, and 80s and in some cases our 100s, when it starts to fade a little? How many cars will run for this long without some intervention?

You may not know that young people can develop an early stage of the dementia we know as Alzheimers, which we associate with people in later life.

### We Need a Great Plan

Young dementia, or Frontotemporal Dementia, as in my husband's case, can develop from the age of around 30 to 60 years. There is a lot of research being done and they say they are close to finding answers, but to me it is down to the length of time that we now live. When Steve, my husband, was first diagnosed, I asked the question "How long is his life expectancy?" The books say 2 to 10 years. "This could be a long haul" I said to myself, "We need a great plan to get through this." And we have it, with lots of carers to take my husband out, mainly for coffee and dominoes, but we visit discos, animal parks and we go to the club at Milton to watch football too. All the people there make us very welcome, and on **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August** they are playing a football match to raise funds for Young Dementia UK, based in Witney and Oxford.

So how would you feel if your brain could not help you to do all the day to day things like washing, dressing, cleaning

teeth, shaving, even knowing when to eat and drink? This is all now managed by family carers 24-7.

Steve does not know or understand if he is hurt or unwell; he does not know that he has dementia. Recently we parked in a disabled parking space and he said "We cannot park here." When I asked who he thinks is disabled he said "Is it you?" My answer was "Yes, it's my bad back." Neither does he understand pain, falling, bleeding or putting others in danger. Driving back from Witney with him at the wheel was a scary experience when he crossed Judd's Grave without slowing to look for traffic.

### The Tough Job of Caring

So I am a full-time carer, not yet of pensionable age. I have packed up work to give Steve the life that he deserves. All carers out there will know how tough it is, but helping our loved ones through these years is challenging, tiring and rewarding. With the help of people around us and family and friends who care with us we can get through and manage to have fun. So next time you are enjoying the simple pleasures in life, spare a thought for those who need help to enjoy them too, and if someone is behaving a little strangely it may well be because their brain is out of control. Please check out this very rare dementia on: [www.youngdementiauk.org](http://www.youngdementiauk.org), there are lots of good blogs. It is interesting reading and puts life into perspective.

**Elaine and Steve Biles**

## Wychwood Ladies FC

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

Kick-off 2pm . Milton-under -Wychwood Playing Field  
Ladies vs Men Charity Match in aid of Young Dementia UK