1. FORMULATING THE IDEA

Caring for people who are dying has a long and honourable history in all civilisations. It is a fundamental way for people to show how they honour others.

The word ‘hospice’ is from the same Latin root as both ‘hospitality’ and ‘hospital’. From the earliest Christian times the monastic orders ran places of care where the sick could be cared for and guests received; York still has the ‘Hospitium’ of St Mary’s Abbey in the Museum Gardens. It was in France in 1842 that ‘Hospice’ was first applied specifically to a place set aside for the care of people who were dying. Our Lady’s Hospice opened in Dublin in 1879 and St Joseph’s in the London district of Hackney in 1905. It was at St Joseph’s that the foundations of the modern hospice movement and the principles of palliative care were developed.
The key name in this important development is Cicely Saunders. A nurse with a career in medical social work, her care of a dying patient helped to formulate her ideas that terminally-ill patients need compassionate care that helps relieve their fears and concerns, and finds ways to relieve their physical symptoms – what is today known as palliative care. Dame Cicely, as she eventually became, volunteered at St Luke’s Home for the Dying Poor, then trained as a doctor while continuing to volunteer at St Joseph’s, where she went to work on completion of her training.

In 1967 she opened St Christopher’s Hospice, at Sydenham in South London. At St Christopher’s Dame Cicely and her team laid down what are now recognised as the basic tenets of hospice care – that patients are treated with dignity and compassion, that it is the patient and not the illness that is the focus of care, and that care involves not only alleviating physical symptoms but also caring for the emotional and spiritual aspects of a patient’s life.

Dame Cicely insisted that this philosophy was disseminated as widely as possible through education and publicity. It was extensively discussed in the medical profession, and several hospices soon opened in the United Kingdom and elsewhere as a result; the modern hospice movement was born.

In York, the representatives of the National Society for Cancer Relief (NSCR; now Macmillan Cancer Support), Roger Dixon and Daphne Wood, were aware of the movement, so when the time came in York, they – and many local people – were supportive.
The idea comes to York

Four York nurses, Margaret Ackroyd, Mae Graham, Pat Grigsby and Elizabeth Jewitt, were inspired by the new movement to urge that York had its own hospice. As a result of their prompting, a packed meeting was held at the Tempest Anderson Hall, adjoining the Yorkshire Museum, on 24 October 1978, under the chairmanship of local consultant surgeon Tom Matheson, at which Councillor Jack Wood (who died very soon after) spoke.

As the Hospice’s very first newsletter reported: Many people put their names forward to support the Hospice in various ways, and the immediate object of forming a committee was achieved. Fortunately, experienced people covering all aspects of getting a Hospice off the ground offered themselves and the Committee almost formed itself.

The first meeting of the steering committee took place on 14 November at York District Hospital. As well as the four nurses who first suggested the idea of a Hospice for York, among the ten people around the table was Tom Matheson, who again took the chair. It was reported that Mr Trevor Copley had been approached and he had signified his willingness to accept the chairmanship if the Committee agreed. It did – unanimously – and Trevor remained Chairman, first of the Committee and then of the Hospice Trustees, until October 2001.

At that first committee meeting the possibility of establishing a ‘visiting service’ was discussed. It was seen to be a valuable service but would have to wait to be considered in the future after the Hospice was established. So were the seeds sown for what was eventually launched as ‘Hospice@Home’ in 2009.
TREVOR’S MONDAYS

Trevor Copley was a senior manager at Rowntree Mackintosh and had been on a three-month course at Harvard Business School when the first meeting about the Hospice was held. On his return Sir Donald Barron, Chairman of Rowntree Mackintosh and a supporter of the idea of a Hospice for York, appointed Trevor to head the company’s overseas division – and suggested he should chair the new Hospice committee. Trevor took on the challenge – the monthly Hospice Steering Committee meetings were always scheduled for Mondays when Trevor knew he would be in the city between his overseas visits. The meetings of the Hospice Trustees are still held on Mondays.

WHY ‘ST LEONARD’S’?

The ruins of the medieval St Leonard’s Hospital remain on the edge of York’s Museum Gardens. It was once England’s largest hospital, with 140 beds. It cared for the poor, the ill and the dying of the city between the 12th and the 16th centuries. St Leonard was a French nobleman of the 6th century, a godson of King Clovis. Leonard lived as a hermit. He became famous when by practical help and prayer he saved the life of his godfather’s wife as she went into labour while out hunting. Clovis gave Leonard as much land as he could ride around on a donkey in a night. On this land, at Noblac in the Sarthe valley near Alençon, he founded a famous monastery. Leonard was one of the most popular saints of Western Europe in the late Middle Ages – 177 churches in England were dedicated to him. Although the Hospice is not a religious foundation, the Steering Committee, at its first meeting, felt that the tradition of care that had been established at York’s St Leonard’s Hospital should be honoured and continued.
2. RAISING THE FIRST FUNDS

At its second meeting, on 6 December 1978, at which Trevor Copley took the chair, the Steering Committee was already grappling with the details of fundraising for the new St Leonard’s Hospice. The treasurer reported that they had, at that point, **£147 in the kitty** – though there was more held by the Royal College of Nursing that would be transferred as soon as the Hospice was a registered charity. There was much discussion about the possibility of funds from the NSCR, but concern that they would not be forthcoming if the new Hospice offered care for patients other than those with cancer. There was also discussion of how much help the Hospice might receive from the National Health Service – still a matter for negotiation!

The plan at this stage was for a Hospice with 10 in-patient beds; it was thought that a realistic figure for the construction work would be **£350,000**.

**Timing an Appeal**

The raising of funds was not straightforward. The first Steering Committee meeting of 1979 was warned by Trevor Copley to be realistic. There was a current appeal for victims of York’s severe flooding the previous year, and York District Hospital was about to launch an appeal for a new and expensive body scanner. *We should be appealing for an equally large amount, so it would be wise to delay our appeal for a time,* he said.

Nevertheless, without a great deal of publicity in these early stages, money was beginning to come in; the Hospice’s second newsletter reported that between December 1978 and April 1979 more than **£5,000** had been donated. Plenty of events were planned for 1979, including a flower display in the Guildhall and a Summer Spectacular at the University. By September of that year the Hospice Fund stood at **£13,000**.

But there were difficulties. The newsletter warned of rising costs: *It has become increasingly evident that the capital cost of a custom-built hospice is already in excess of £20,000 per bed with ongoing running costs at the rate of £7,000 to £10,000 per bed per annum. Without the promise of bed support grants from the District Health Authority (and in the present financial climate no promises can be expected) we cannot at present see ourselves being able to put forward a viable proposition for a new building. The plan at that stage, therefore, was to get on and create a continuing care service which can operate in patients’ own homes alongside, and in cooperation with, the existing NHS facilities.*
Clarifying the thinking

The NSCR soon clarified its position; it could not provide capital funds for building the Hospice, nor would it underwrite the running of the Hospice, though it might be able to contribute if the NHS provided the bulk of the running costs. A visit to St Christopher’s Hospice by members of the Committee helped further to clarify thinking; as the Committee minutes put it, We should develop our own ideas as to how best we can get started in this particular community. We may have to start with a Day Centre and then move on; it is a long-term project.

The NSCR and Cicely Saunders were very helpful to St Leonard’s in the early days, ensuring that the plans were wise and feasible and that there was every chance of the new hospice succeeding. In September 1979 it was reported that the NSCR had urged York to begin with a domiciliary service operating from a Day Centre; the newly-set-up Macmillan service would run it, paid for by the NSCR, for the first three years, after which the NHS should take over; the St Leonard’s Steering Committee should look for a big old property that could house the administration and perhaps, if suitably converted, provide some back-up beds; that a Medical Director should be appointed as a top priority – the NSCR would pay the salary; and that St Leonard’s and the NSCR run joint fund-raising.

At its October meeting the Committee had extensive discussions during which it hardened its resolve to continue to aim for the establishment of a Hospice, accepting this could not be achieved overnight, but it was hoped to launch the appeal during 1980.

Searching for a site

None of this prevented the Committee looking for a suitable site for the bricks and mortar of a new hospice. Even at its first meeting it was reported that a site (on Micklegate), had been offered, though it was, with regret, declined; at the next meeting it was noted that the Micklegate site was a derelict, run-down area . . . the outlook was very depressing. Other sites were suggested – New Lane, Shipton Road, behind the County Hospital, at Fairfield (the former TB sanatorium at Skelton), thought to be to rather a long way out.

The site of the former Elizabeth Fry Home for Unmarried Mothers, adjacent to West Bank Park in Acomb, was seriously considered; in April 1979 it was reported that there were problems with trees and the provision of open space on that site, but they could probably be overcome: The Chairman encouraged the Committee to go all out for the Acomb site, while also considering a site on Stockton Lane belonging to the Blue Coat School. It soon became clear that neither of these sites was likely to be available. This may have led to a report in the Yorkshire Evening Press (now The Press) on 23 October under the headline Hospice plan to be shelved; the Committee actively and strenuously refuted the story.

Through the early part of 1980 detailed negotiations were held with The Retreat about siting the new Hospice there; despite much optimism, the plans eventually foundered as The Retreat Management Committee was unable to agree to sell or lease sufficient land.
SUPPORT GROUPS, SPEAKERS AND FRIENDS

As soon as the idea of a Hospice for York was publically launched there was pressure on the Steering Committee to become involved in a wide range of fundraising activities; to help cope with this, Pat Grigsby suggested ‘cells’ be formed in the district to give support in various ways and keep the enthusiasm. She and Brian Wainwright visited many local parishes to commend the idea of fundraising for the Hospice. The idea they planted bore an abundance of fruit over the coming years with the establishment of the many ‘Support Groups’, which raised – and some still continue to raise – thousands of pounds for the Hospice. Roger Dixon, another Steering Committee members, recalled that All of a sudden the people of York seemed to take the concept to themselves. The Hospice’s second newsletter, issued in May 1979 under Roger’s editorship, listed ‘cells’ beavering away in Acomb, Clifton & Bootham, Dringhouses & Woodthorpe, Fulford, Haxby & Wigginton, Heworth, Huntington, Strensall and York District Hospital.

Later newsletters also give information about groups in Huby, Poppleton, Old Earswick, Warthill & Holtby, Heslington, Elvington, Sand Hutton with Claxton & Stamford Bridge, Heworth & Stockton Lane, Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe and Middlesbrough. At one stage there were 23 such groups. There were group representatives on the Steering Committee.

In January 1979 Archdeacon Stanbridge, a member of the Steering Committee, reported that he had been asked to speak about the Hospice but needed notes and slides to help. From this came the idea of a panel of speakers who would go out into the community to spread the word about St Leonard’s. Under the guidance of Tom Matheson and Margaret Ackroyd the speakers were trained and over the next few years gave hundreds of talks to interested groups, raising strong awareness of the project that paid great dividends when the formal Appeal was launched. Another strand was talking to schools about the Hospice; much of this was in the hands of Joan Williams, who also helped with the distribution of collection boxes, an important source of income.

In July 1981 The Friends of St Leonard’s was launched, with a suggested minimum donation of £2.00 and recommended signing up for four years or more so that the Hospice could claim tax back through a covenant – the forerunner of the current Gift Aid scheme. Friends were to receive a copy of the newsletter and notice of meetings. The August Steering Committee meeting heard that 53 members were already signed up. The Hospice still has a number of the original Friends.

Disappointment and excitement

By the end of 1980 the ‘informal fundraising’ had resulted in a balance of more than £65,000. The Support Groups were still hard at work, and there was a great deal of enthusiasm in the area. But the newsletter of December 1980 had to report, in the search for a site, it was with considerable regret and disappointment that after some nine months of exploratory contact with a very promising prospect all those efforts came to nought. A number of other possibilities are being followed up but any new suggestions would be very welcome.
So it was clear that 1980 was not the year to launch an appeal; but the December newsletter bullishly announced that *the Committee is determined to make 1981 ‘The Year of the Hospice’. We are sure we shall succeed*. In December, too, the Committee minutes first suggest that a new site had been found: *the site Committee were very enthusiastic about a site with an existing building, if a fair price could be negotiated.* At the next meeting, in January 1981, it became clear where this site was – *All members of the committee were given an opportunity to see the Wilberforce Home site. The Chairman had made a formal approach by letter which had been favourably received by the Trustees.*

By the next meeting Peter Marshall, local architect and member of the Steering Committee, *had produced plans to show the possibilities of the site* – Roger Dixon said *Peter had the difficult brief of working out something for a not-entirely-straightforward site* – and by the end of March an outline planning application had been submitted; by then there was more than £80,000 in the bank. The March newsletter called this *a very busy and exciting time for us all*, but wasn’t yet in a position to identify the site. Only in July was it time to announce that the Wilberforce Home site on Tadcaster Road *meets all the criteria we set ourselves in the early days – within the York boundary, on a bus route and in pleasant surroundings – and planning permission has been granted for its use as a hospice.*

**Launching the Appeal**

In the meantime the Macmillan Home Care Service was gearing up for its official start in mid-1982. The Macmillan Nurses were working closely with the Hospice promoters and were seen as the first step towards the work of the Hospice in the community. Steering Committee member Daphne Wood, who was also on the committee of the NSRC, was tasked with overseeing their work.

So 1981 ended on an optimistic note; plans were already being discussed in the Steering Committee for the launch of an Appeal, and the Archbishop of York, Dr Stuart Blanch, had agreed to become the Appeal President.
The Appeal launch was set for 19 May 1982, at the Royal Station Hotel (now the Royal York), with a buffet lunch (£4.75 a head – this was paid by an anonymous donor) and two receptions for different groups of supporters and potential donors. Peter Marshall had provided preliminary drawings for the new Hospice buildings, and these were used on the Appeal leaflet, cleverly entitled *hurrah – HELP US RAPIDLY RAISE A HOSPICE*. A scale model of the proposed building was also produced for the event.

The Appeal was for £750,000 – a sum that was to meet the acquisition of the site, the costs of building and equipping the new St Leonard’s Hospice and *go a long way towards meeting the first couple of years’ running costs*. The decision had been taken to have 16 in-patient beds, in a mix of single and four-bedded rooms: *We know this is a modest start, but we’re guessing – and we’re pretty sure we’re right – that those beds will enable us to help 100 patients or so every year . . . we hope you won’t need us, but we’ll be there if you want us.* As the Archbishop said in his introduction to the Appeal leaflet: *For many people this Hospice will feel like the promise of heaven. I hope we can make this promise a reality.*

THE VISION FOR ST LEONARD’S - from the Appeal leaflet, May 1982

*A purpose-built, brand new Hospice in the grounds of the Wilberforce Home on the Tadcaster Road, York. Near enough to the city itself for friends and relatives to find visiting an easy matter. Near enough to the rolling Yorkshire countryside to delight those who will sit in the landscaped gardens. Peace and quiet for those who want it most. A happy place. Somewhere where contentment and ease of mind is renewed with each awakening. A haven, where those who are facing perhaps the most difficult days of their lives can be really helped by doctors and nurses intent on banishing worry and pain. And where there is time to talk .... and time to listen.*
**Building funds**

When the newsletter of September 1982 appeared, the Appeal already stood at almost a quarter of a million pounds and *If you travel along the Tadcaster Road you will, I hope, have noticed our signboards indicating the site of the proposed Hospice building. We are hoping that work will start on renovating the existing building . . . by the end of the year.* The existing building was the former coach house and stable for the large mansion that formerly stood on the site of the Wilberforce Home. It had most recently been used as a doctor’s surgery, and it was now proposed to convert it into a Day Hospice with offices, at a cost of £30,000.

*Trevor Copley, Chairman of the Hospice Steering Committee, shows the Archbishop of York the model of the new Hospice (right)*

**FUNDRAISING IDEAS**

As well as the big decisions over the Hospice site and its funding, the Steering Committee dealt with other fundraising matters, including:

* Mrs Carol Blower from Murton offered her pet deer Elizabeth *as an attraction at any suitable event*
* The parents of a baby called Sarah had run a lottery guessing the date of her arrival.
* A prize of cavity wall insulation was offered for a future event
* The York District Hospital Support Group was looking for *any willing teams of eight men/women* to take part in a Tug of War
* The Acomb Support Group was busy collecting unwanted Coop stamps
* A rugby match was played between York Unicorns and West Park

At the Steering Committee meeting in September 1982 it was reported that, to mark its centenary, the Yorkshire Evening Press had donated £10,000 to the Appeal, that a reception at the Mansion House in aid of St Leonard’s had been well attended, and that the British Rail Christmas Tree that year would be in aid of the Hospice Fund. The Development Committee, charged with practical
arrangements at the new Hospice, had considered beds, whether to have louvred blinds between beds instead of curtaining, methods of disposing of waste etc.

In January 1983 the NSCR contacted the Committee to offer £75,000 to help St Leonard’s acquire the land and buildings; the Committee expressed their thanks and approval. On the construction front, though, matters were largely at a standstill until May that year as the Committee awaited final approval from the Charity Commissioners for the purchase of the site. As soon as that came through, work began on the Day Hospice, and tenders for the new building could be sent out. By September the builders F W Leighton were at work on converting the existing building, and it was announced that the contract for the new building had been let to Shepherd Construction Ltd.
3. BRICKS, MORTAR – AND PEOPLE

Getting the Day Centre open

The Hospice newsletter of September 1983 reported that F W Leighton have started renovating and altering the Tadcaster Road building, which is a continuing hive of activity. Completion of this phase I of the building work is due in November when we shall be able to think in terms of opening our planned Day Centre.

The existence of the former coach house had made it possible for the Steering Committee to plan the opening of the Day Hospice (as it came to be called) even as the main new Hospice building was being constructed.

They entrusted the setting up of this part of the Hospice to two nurses, Rosemary Thompson and Ann Walker. Rosemary had been at the inaugural meeting in 1978 and had been active in running her local fundraising support group, but had from the first wanted to be involved with the care of patients.

Rosemary and Ann were asked by Steering Committee member Daphne Wood to become volunteer ‘sitters’ for patients at home, as part of the Macmillan nurses programme. Once the site for the new Hospice had been found, Rosemary and Ann were approached and interviewed by the Committee to set up the Day Hospice. It was an important and daunting task; as well as ensuring that the new building was suitable to receive patients, they had to satisfy the health, safety and environmental regulations, provide a bathroom (and at the start a bed, as many of the patients they were likely to receive until the new Hospice opened had some complex needs), as well as choosing carpets and furnishings, organising a kitchen and ensuring there were volunteers in place to drive patients to and from the Day Hospice. They were assisted in setting up by Steering Committee Member Brian Wainwright, who completed much of the paperwork.

The new Day Hospice was opened to the first patient on Tuesday 28 February 1984. It opened only on Tuesdays until after the main Hospice was opened, though numbers built up. Patients were referred by, and remained under the care of, their GPs. The aim of the Day Hospice was, and has remained, to allow patients a change of scene and to allow carers time off.

Rosemary Thompson reported in the Hospice newsletter of September 1984: From quiet and tentative beginnings the Day Hospice has, each Tuesday, become a happy, informal ‘home from home’. Patients’ smiles and comments are certainly a great reward for all those who have so willingly given of their time and varied talents to create such an atmosphere . . . We have had surprises galore, lots of laughter and some tears, but to hear “I feel relaxed and secure for the first time in months” and “I look forward to Tuesdays more than I can say” means that St Leonard’s Hospice care is becoming a reality.
Foundations

While the Day Hospice was being prepared to receive its first patients, Shepherd Construction Ltd was already on site for the new building, clearing the area and preparing the footings. It was time for the foundation stone to be laid.

Even before the foundation stone was laid the myriad details of setting up and running had been long in discussion. There had been much consultation with the NSCR, and Steering Committee members had visited many other hospices to see how they did things. Committee member Dr Peter Burnett spent his summer holiday in visiting hospices in the south of England asking for advice and for lessons learned; among the practical advice he was given was never paint the doors; the paint will soon be damaged by moving beds and equipment. St Leonard’s has never had painted doors.

Dr John Habgood, who had succeeded Dr Blanch as Archbishop of York and President of the Hospice 11 days before, laid the Hospice’s foundation stone on 29 November 1983. With the Archbishop are (l to r) Peter Marshall, architect of the new building, Trevor Copley, Chairman of the Hospice Steering Committee and Michael Shepherd of Shepherd Construction Ltd. The inscription on the stone was done by York carver Dick Reid.
In March 1984 Peter Marshall, the architect, reported that building work was running five weeks behind because of the weather (January that year had twice the average annual rainfall). More positively, the money was coming in thick and fast; among the many fundraising efforts were an appeal for Hospice funds recorded by Miss (now Dame) Judi Dench and used on local radio, and a song recital at the University of York by Dame Janet Baker, accompanied by pianist Geoffrey Pratley, which raised more than £5,250. Both Miss Dench and Dame Janet had accepted a role as one of the Vice-

Presidents of St Leonard’s Hospice. By January 1985, a month before the Hospice opened to in-patients, the Treasurer, Ted Stewart, could report to the Steering Committee that the total receipts for the year ending 1984 had been £750,760; the Appeal had already exceeded its £750,000 target.
Matron, Administrator, Director

A new Hospice building would be no use without staff, so the task of recruitment began well before it was complete. It was vital to find someone suitable to head the nursing side of the Hospice, so the post of Matron was advertised early in 1984. Janet Kay, one of the first Macmillan Nurses, was appointed; she spent some time visiting and working with other hospices around the country, and took up her post at the Hospice in September. Among Janet’s many tasks was the appointment of other nursing staff – creating application forms, sifting applications, writing letters. For the first year she had no secretary, and would spend hours writing letters and reports, while at the same time dealing with the immensely-detailed task of setting up the new Hospice – everything from lavatory brushes to beds.

As Janet worked at ensuring the new Hospice was ready to receive patients, two more important appointments were made. Ron Mason, a former RAF Wing Commander who had worked for Rowntrees in York, was recruited as the Hospice’s
first Administrator, working as a volunteer until the Hospice admitted its first in-patient, in February 1985. He set up the initial financial and administrative reporting systems for the Hospice and worked alongside all the staff to ensure the continued development and smooth running of the Hospice.

The other key appointment was that of Dr Sue Collier as Medical Director. A York GP, she was initially involved with fundraising for the Hospice, while at the same time developing her interest in palliative care. She had worked part-time as medical officer at Wheatfields Hospice in Leeds. At the end of 1984 St Leonard’s advertised the post of Medical Director, and Sue was one of four applicants, of whom three were interviewed. The Steering Committee minutes of 7 January 1985 noted: The Interviewing Committee . . . were unanimous in recommending Dr Sue Collier for the post.

That Sue Collier was known as a local GP may have helped to overcome some of the worries about and criticisms of the establishment of a hospice. There was an undertow of opinion among some doctors and consultants that the care they were already offering patients with life-threatening illnesses was as good as possible, and that the Hospice would either duplicate that care or remove it from their control. Some GPs wanted to insist that even if one of their patients was admitted to St Leonard’s, the care would still be under their control.

The Steering Committee and Sue Collier worked hard to dispel these worries by organising meetings for GPs and hospital consultants, and, as the Hospice neared its opening to in-patients, with Open Days for them to see what the Hospice was offering. Sue told one of the meetings that if GPs wanted to be involved in the care of the patients they had referred they should see her when their patient was admitted and she would see what could be worked out. It is a tribute to her excellent communications skills, and the openness that the Hospice has always striven for, that none ever did; such criticism ceased when hospice care in York was seen to work.
4. OPENING THE DOORS

Sue Collier recalls walking round the new building with Janet Kay before it opened: It was very exciting but daunting. The medical and other equipment, the furnishings and fittings, were all in place; the staff had been recruited and had undergone induction. So the opening date was set: 11 February 1985. Although all 16 rooms had been completed, it was decided to open with just eight for the first six months. On the first day just one patient was admitted. We were all really anxious, Sue Collier recalls, but then we thought how much more anxious the patient would be, so we just got on with it! Janet Kay says: It was a great day, but the poor patient must have been confused when ten nurses swooped around! Numbers soon built up, and the ethos of the Hospice was established.

At first there was much multi-tasking: a Hospice volunteer remembered: I used to do the Hospice ironing while I was volunteering on reception, while a Care Assistant recalled that On nights we had to do washing and ironing. We washed the plastic pillowcases, and hung them up on the washing line outside the kitchen. We would sew nametapes on to sheets and towels. And there were plenty of times when the Chairman, Trevor Copley, arrived with his lawnmower to cut the grass in the Hospice grounds.
Contrary to the fears expressed before the doors opened, St Leonard’s was a place of happiness and honesty; Janet Kay says: *People are no different if they’re in bed with a terminal illness;* so there was laughter and practical jokes, with the patients often in on the teasing among the staff. *It’s what normal life is like,* says Janet. *And we could throw the rule book away; we brought in animals – newly-hatched ducks, lambs, dogs, even a horse – in an effort to make the Hospice homely.*

In January 1986 the Newsletter reported that Horace, an 84-year-old in-patient had come with *his closest friends . . . his three pet rabbits, Snowy, Tibsy and Sandy.* They were *installed in their magnificent hutch in a small ante-room opposite Horace’s ward, from which he could go and visit whenever he wished.*

There were more serious matters to deal with – setting a visiting policy, for example. Visiting was open, but Sue Collier and Janet Kay decided that Monday was to be a non-visiting day. It was very hard, says Janet, but it did give relatives permission to have a day off – many of them were run ragged by so much visiting. Eventually the rule was relaxed to allow short visits on Monday evenings.

A problem that needed sorting was whether the Hospice could prescribe drugs under the National Health Service – a problem that had cost implications for the running of St Leonard’s. The problem was solved because Dr Collier was also a GP and could prescribe; until after she left the Hospice, all drugs were on written prescription.

An associated matter caused Janet Kay some head scratching; one inspector, looking at the room where the drugs were kept, insisted on having bars on the window; the Fire Brigade, examining the same room, insisted that it could not possibly have bars.
As Medical Director Sue Collier worked very hard – but she needed cover to allow her time off. In the early days of the Hospice Tom Matheson, the retired consultant who had chaired the Hospice’s inaugural meeting, provided cover for her days off, while out-of-hours calls were dealt with by local GPs, who, when they were on call for their own practices would also be on call for St Leonard’s.

At the beginning the Hospice’s emphasis was on nursing care; some of the patients stayed a considerable time – up to six months in some cases. At first, if patients came from hospital the Hospice was not allowed to have their notes – a policy that was eventually changed, much to advantage of both the Hospice staff and patients.

Looking back on those very early days, Sue Collier paid tribute to Ron Mason who with her and Janet Kay formed the Management Committee of the Hospice: He came from a male culture and had to work with two strong women; we sometimes ran rings round him, but he knew it was always in the cause and was very gracious! Sue also praised Trevor Copley and the Steering Committee (which on opening became the Council of Management and later the Board of Trustees): We never felt that they interfered in any way or told us our jobs. That’s rare, so if anyone is to get plaudits, it’s the background people; without them we’d never have been established.

*It’s official!*

Even before the first in-patent was admitted, there were plans in hand for the official opening. The possibility of HRH The Duchess of Kent’s doing so had already been received favourably by her when it was mentioned to her informally early in 1984, and in September Trevor Copley wrote formally to the Duchess’s Private Secretary, Sir Richard Buckley, with an invitation for her to perform the ceremony in May 1985. After much juggling with diaries – mostly the Duchess’s and that of the Archbishop of York – the date agreed was 1 June.
At much the same time as agreement on a date was reached, Trevor Copley received a letter from a recently-retired TSB executive manager who was looking to help the Hospice. Don Gabbitas was quickly co-opted to manage the many strands that a royal visit entailed – liaison with the Duchess’s office at York House, the Lord Lieutenant’s office, the police, York’s civic party and the Archbishop’s office among others.

Eventually the programme came together; Her Royal Highness would be at the Hospice at 11.28 (timings were very precise) and would leave at 12.40. The rest of her day was to be spent with the Ist Battalion Yorkshire Volunteers. The Hospice planned to invite 132 guests to the Hospice’s reception area to see the Duchess unveil a commemorative plaque and to see the Archbishop dedicate the adjacent chapel. Another 200, including representatives from all the Support Groups, were to be invited to line the Hospice approach to see the Duchess’s arrival and departure, and hear the events on a PA system. Different groups were designated by colour-edged labels – red for Vice-Presidents, blue for the Committee, green for Support Groups, yellow for others.

Trevor Copley welcomed Her Royal Highness to the Hospice, on a very sunny day: He said, Your presence here today gives much pleasure and encouragement to the many people who have made this Hospice a practical proposition. It was an act of faith when we embarked on the acquisition of land and the building of the Hospice, in the expectation that the funds would be there when the time came to pay the bills. Our hopes were fulfilled . . . The efforts and enthusiasm of all of us here, and of all whom we represent, will be revitalised by the graceful compliment of your visit.

The Duchess unveiled the plaque, designed by Peter Marshall and made and donated by local company Cameo Engraving; the Archbishop briefly dedicated the chapel then Her Royal Highness toured the building, meeting all the patients and their families and many of the nursing and other staff, as well as volunteers. Roger Dixon said: You had to pinch yourself that this was really happening.

The newsletter noted that although the Duchess arrived bang on time she left half an hour late, having given generously of her time in talking to everyone. Before she left she handed over a cheque, on behalf of the
National Society for Cancer Relief, of which she was Patron, for £20,000.

In January the following year it was announced that the Duchess of Kent had agreed to become the Patron of St Leonard’s Hospice; in a message for the 1985-86 Hospice Annual Report she wrote: *It is a great honour and pleasure for me to have become Patron of St Leonard’s Hospice. I well remember my first visit in the summer of last year when there was an opportunity for me to appreciate at first hand something of the spirit of caring which even at that early stage had become so firmly established.*

It is pleasing to note that the Hospice Matron, Janet Kay, was able to meet the Duchess of Kent the following year, when Her Royal Highness presented Janet with The Macmillan Gold Medal of the NSRC, awarded to nurses who have made a significant contribution to Macmillan Nursing Services.

5. THE FIRST DECADE

Almost as the curtains that the Duchess of Kent had opened to unveil the commemorative plaque were still swinging, attention was being given to future funding. The Appeal had always been intended to cover both the costs of building and the setting up the Hospice and its initial running costs. By the end of the month of the royal visit the Committee of Management was told that there was a balance of £77,000 available to meet expected outgoings to the end of September. In the September meeting he noted that expenditure was soon to increase as the number of beds in use would increase to the maximum of 16 – that was achieved in the same month. Nurses’ pay was also set to increase, in line with national agreements.

In July 1985 Don Gabbitas produced a *Future Strategy* paper for the Hospice. He pointed out that: *we have moved into a new era of requiring finance each year to continue the operation . . . up to the present time the capital has been raised for the construction and establishment of the Hospice. Raising funds for such a purpose has “glamour”. We now need to raise funds for revenue expenditure; there is little glamour, we have to establish our own target and control expenditure and there is nothing tangible at the end.* He proposed a series of measures to keep the money coming in, most of which were adopted.
Just before the first in-patient was admitted to the Hospice, it was estimated that the running costs for the first year would be £285,000. With the costs of the building already covered, all new money could be used to cover these costs. And the money did continue. The Support Groups did not diminish their efforts – successive Hospice newsletters detail coffee mornings, luncheons, afternoon teas and barbecues, jazz, brass band and choral concerts, demonstrations of flower arranging, antiques evenings, fairs and sales, race nights and bingo sessions – and a host of other imaginative ways of raising Hospice funds.

By May 1986, the newsletter reported, the then 22 Support Groups had substantially increased the amount they raised in the financial year ending the previous March, while the total amount of fundraising had increased by 30 per cent – so there was no evidence of slacking off once the Hospice was open.

**No room for complacency . . .**

A year later the newsletter noted that running costs were £315,000, but Administrator Ron Mason stressed that, with a forthcoming pay rise of 10 per cent to nursing staff, and the gradual reduction of an NHS grant that had helped the Hospice to become established, it was *important to realise that there can be no room for complacency based on past success* – though he said *we are by no mean despondent*. He said that a newly-instigated Capital Fund, which aimed at raising £1 million to provide a resource mainly for future capital expenditure, already stood at £250,000.

In February 1988 a new appeal, for £400,000 for the Capital Fund, was launched. There were alarming headlines in the newspapers, which intensified in May that year, leading Ron Mason to write to the Editor of the Yorkshire Evening Press: *I know that everyone appreciates the support given to the Hospice by your newspaper but feel that the alarmist headlines about closure can cause distress to patients, their families, our own staff and a multitude of supporters . . . It is true that the coming year will be difficult because of the nurses’ pay award and other increases in costs, and also because we have come to the end of a series of grants from the local Health Authority. This does concern us for the future of St Leonard’s but we never think in terms of closure.* The Deputy Editor replied: *I write to give you formal assurance that the Evening Press will continue to give as much editorial help as possible to the marvellous work done by St Leonard’s – a promise that bore particular fruit during the Millennium Appeal.*

By the time the Chairman came to write his annual report for 1989 to 1990 he could announce that the Capital Fund had reached *its first million pounds.*
In its first five years of operation the Hospice income rose from around just over £326,000 in 1985 to more than £919,000 in 1989. In those years there had been almost a doubling of donations, income from the Friends of St Leonard’s and from the Support Groups and from fundraising events. Hospice sales and raffles had increased thirteen-fold, while investment income and legacies saw a ten-fold increase. For 1990 the running costs were estimated at £560,000 – almost twice the total in 1985.

The Day Hospice gradually increased its opening days, first to two and, by May 1987, to three days a week. As well as activities and games in the Day Hospice building, such as painting and printing, bingo and dominoes, and visits from musicians, there had been visits out to local attractions and stately homes.

In the Hospice’s Annual Report for 1985 to 1986 Janet Kay noted that: our original group of 19 nurses was joined in September by 11 care assistants and a ‘Bank’ of 14 nurses and care assistants (staff who can be called on in times of sickness and holiday) – wonderfully elastic nursing ‘Polyfilla’ and a great bunch of people!

In the same Report Dr Sue Collier, noting that by May 1986 the Hospice had admitted its 200th patient, also took up the theme of extended care: While we are talking about numbers it must be remembered that hospice care emphasises care and support for family and friends closest to the patient. So staff have been involved in caring for and supporting many more people than are indicated in the number of admissions.

Volunteers have always been vital to the effective running of the Hospice. From before the opening, Nikki Brown had been very successfully organising the voluntary help; when she left for Australia in 1987 the position of Volunteers Coordinator was taken by Pam Warn, who had been a volunteer herself from the Hospice’s first days. Interviewed for the Newsletter in 1987, Pam said: I have 200 registered volunteers at the present time . . . it is very heartening to be involved with such a wide variety of dedicated people who, working alongside the staff, help to provide the high level of dedicated care for which St Leonard’s Hospice has become well known and of which we are all justly proud.
Increasing the space

By early 1990 it had become increasingly clear that space was at a premium both in the new Hospice building and in the Day Hospice. Extensions to both were needed – four additional rooms and a small store were added to the main Hospice building, while in the Day Hospice what was a single-storey garage was converted to provide more room for occupational therapy, with an additional room above to provide a library and study space for the many training courses that St Leonard’s was now holding, not just for its own staff but as part of its wider education efforts. Staff from new and planned hospices, from existing medical facilities of all kinds, and from all around the world, were being welcomed to St Leonard’s to share the Hospice’s expertise and to compare notes.

The Hospice, with its new extensions at each end, from the air

Transporting patients to and from the Day Hospice (later Daycare) has always relied on volunteer drivers as well as on Hospice staff. In 1992, with the Day Hospice now open four days a week, the Hospice acquired a Metro-Cab, that would accommodate people in wheelchairs, to make it easier for patients to have access to the facilities of the Hospice.

1990 was marked as the fifth anniversary of the Hospice; there was a service of thanksgiving at York Minster. By the end of the year the Hospice had already had more than 1,000 in-patients in its care, with many more Day Hospice patients – not to mention the many hundreds of family members who had also received support. Income, too, had risen, almost tripling between 1985 and 1989, though the Annual Report did not allow any complacency to set in: Even with the prospect of better funding from Government [such optimism has not always been fulfilled] and increased public awareness of the needs of the Hospice, we are having to explore additional sources of income.
In 1991 Janet Kay became General Manager of the Hospice, taking over much of the role fulfilled by Ron Mason until his retirement in 1990. At the same time Sue Spence, who had joined the Hospice in the month it opened to in-patients, became Senior Nurse.

The first decade of the Hospice was one of consolidation and gradual development, though as Janet Kay noted in the Annual Report for 1988-1989: When we first opened I assumed that after a few years we would ‘settle down’ into a fixed and comfortable routine, but I now realise my mistake. This stage is never reached, nor should it be. Resisting change and challenge isn’t what the Hospice movement is about. In a later Annual Report she noted: the past two years or so have seen subtle changes taking place in the nature of Hospice care. Increasingly, and probably appropriately, we are being drawn into the field of palliative, rather than terminal care.

One particular aspect of this changing role of the Hospice was its ever-more prominent place in the training of professionals in both palliative and terminal care. From its earliest days St Leonard’s has welcomed visitors – at first to see how the new venture had been set up and was progressing, but increasingly from visitors from both home and abroad who wanted to tap into its expertise. By 1989 there was a structured learning programme that was used both by Hospice staff and by student nurses from the York School of Nursing at the District Hospital.

**Approaching the 10th anniversary**

As St Leonard’s approached its 10th birthday there were changes in the relationship with the Health Authority. The Hospice became a Service Provider working under a Service Agreement. Despite this, the level of funding it received was considerably lower than that of other hospices. As Janet Kay wrote in 1993: We now seem set fair for a period of consolidation, marred only by anxieties about our future funding. The 50-50 funding long promised by the Government has not materialised – a great disappointment.
With costs inevitably rising, both with inflation and with the increased demands on its services, the foresight of the Council of Management in setting up the capital fund was to prove invaluable in covering costs in the years when income failed to meet expenditure. And St Leonard’s was also able to rely, as it always has, on the generosity of the local community – legacies in particular were to play an increasing part in the Hospice’s funding, alongside the increasing number of shops and a great variety of fundraising.

As the Hospice approached the end of its first decade there were plenty of plans to mark the occasion, but also a time for reflection. As Trevor Copley wrote in the newsletter: *During the last decade the infant born of hope and charity has matured and is widely recognised as a centre for excellence in hospice care . . . let us never forget our purpose and the dedication of the staff who put our aspirations into practice to such good effect.* And Sue Spence, reviewing ten years of nursing at the Hospice on behalf of the nursing staff, praised the commitment and support of all who work for St Leonard’s, paid and voluntary, collectively and individually . . . above all, perhaps, the unstinting support of our own families, which has allowed us to give so much of our time and energy to the work that we love.

The main event of the 10th anniversary year was a service in York Minster on 19 February 1995, at which the preacher was Dr Sheila Cassidy: Dr Cassidy was a former Medical Director of St Luke’s Hospice in Plymouth and an expert in the special care of people who were dying, but was better known to the public because she was imprisoned and tortured by the Pinochet regime in Chile in 1975 for having given medical care to an opponent of the dictatorship.

Later in the year a well-attended Thanksgiving Dinner was held at the National Railway Museum, at which the guest speaker was David Nicholson, the Editor of the local newspaper the Yorkshire Evening Press. Music was provided by the York Railway Institute Intercity Band.
Other events in 1995 included a Flower Festival at Sledmere House, organised by York Flower Club; a concert of 40s swing and show favourites put on at the Grand Opera House by York Light Opera and the Modernaires; a 10th-anniversary-themed Summer Fair (which despite heavy rain raised £8,000); the compilation of a St Leonard’s Hospice cookbook; and ‘Partytime’ – an invitation to everyone to hold a party in March in aid of the Hospice. Parties, under the Let’s Party’ banner, were held again in 2000 for the Millennium Appeal.

Visitors for the Hospice’s 10th Anniversary in 1985 included BBC newsreader Martyn Lewis (left), whose work for Help the Hospices (now Hospice UK) and for other charities helping people with life-threatening illnesses was recognised with his award of the CBE two years later.

Summing up the anniversary, Sue Spence, Senior Nurse, wrote: St Leonard’s Hospice has developed over these years so that it is today an organisation which is well known and thought of in the Hospice Movement, and one of which we are immensely proud. Whatever the next ten years may bring, one thing is sure . . . we shall not rest on our laurels.

SALES AND SHOPS

In the early days of informal fundraising for St Leonard’s, Ann Bortoft, who had links with all the support groups, became a focus for receiving donations of goods that could be useful in raising money. These she stored in her loft until it became too full – at which point she approached a local estate agent to see if the Hospice could use an empty shop for a week to sell the goods she had accumulated. For four years running she organised a week-long shop in different streets in York city centre - Walmgate, Stonegate and Gillygate. Each was staffed by volunteers from the support groups and, said Ann, they were unbelievably well supported. There were also sales at other times – especially three-day events at St Martin-cum-Gregory church in Micklegate.

When the Day Hospice opened in 1984 it was decided that the sales (more and more stuff, said Ann) would be held on the upper floor of the building. This was initially once a month – setting up on Friday, with the sale on Saturday morning. They were so successful, with people queuing long before the doors opened, that they rapidly became fortnightly, raising thousands of pounds. It took over everything, and we had to find places to store all the stuff, Ann said, and it soon got to the point when we had to get proper premises.
After much searching for an empty shop, one was found – with space for warehousing – at The Regent in Acomb, and on 21 June 1991 the first St Leonard’s Hospice shop was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of York. Experienced retailer Pat Addison was appointed as the manager, and a team of very willing volunteers was recruited. At the time Trevor Copley wrote: *Once the Acomb shop has settled down to regular, smooth-running routine we shall take a view on whether we can expand into other localities.* By November, the newsletter reported that *income was well in excess of the initial target figure at which the project could be judged a success.* A year later it was reported that *encouraged by this resounding success . . . we are actively looking for additional sales outlets.* In January 1993 the second shop, at Fourth Avenue, Tang Hall, had opened its doors. By autumn of that year there were two more – in Pocklington and Haxby.

For the next five years there was consolidation, with the four shops producing a steady income and becoming a valued part of their local area. Then in 1998 came a new venture – the Hospice’s first furniture shop, just a few yards from the Acomb shop. In 2003 the next shop, in Scaracroft Road, opened its doors for the first time. In 2006 a shop opened on a short lease in Burton Stone Lane, then in 2010 the Selby shop opened its doors for the first time, followed the next year by the Broadway shop in Fulford. In November 2012 a second furniture shop, in Heworth, was opened, and a third, in Selby, opened on Valentine’s Day 2013. And in June 2014 the latest St Leonard’s Hospice shop opened in Sherburn-in-

**The newsletter announces the Hospice’s first shop**

**The second furniture shop – Ousegate, Selby**

Elmet.

With 11 shops now up and running, the retail arm of the Hospice, led by Retail Manager Helen Moreton, is thriving – and raising plenty of funds for the work of the Hospice. All this is due to the generosity of the donors, the regular support of the shoppers, and the sterling work of the many hundreds of shop volunteers who, under the guidance of the invaluable shop managers, make the shops so special for their local communities.
6. THROUGH THE MILLENNIUM

With the excitement of the 10th anniversary over, the next decade began with the news that the Hospice’s Medical Director, Dr Sue Collier, was leaving her post in August 1996 to train as a priest in the Church of England. She told the Newsletter: *Medicine and religion have always been very strong, intertwined elements in my life . . . you can’t work in a hospice without changing as a person. You often see the very best of people in the very worst of situations . . . this sense of truth, and the hopefulness I have found in the midst of sadness and grief, has contributed to my decision. It is one of the paradoxes that in a hospice you come to learn about living!* Janet Kay said: *Her leaving will be a tremendous loss for the Hospice and a great change for all of us. The reputation and success of St Leonard’s is due in no small measure to Sue Collier.*

Sue Collier noted that, while the Hospice had at first taken only patients with cancer, *we have widened the admissions policy to include any patient with a progressive illness thought to be no longer responsive to curative treatment. This now includes motor neurone disease as well as cancer – in fact, no-one is excluded.* She said that in the early days of the Hospice patients might stay for many weeks, *but the policy is now for patients to stay for up to two weeks unless their condition is clearly changing or they have complicated symptom control or particular nursing needs. We have to make sure beds are available for the most acute cases.*

Janet Kay remembered when the decision was made to accept HIV/AIDS patients into the Hospice: *that was controversial – we had more letters about that than about anything else, and there was coverage in the Evening Press and in the Yorkshire Post. It was mainly fear and prejudice; we’ve come a long way since then.*

The numbers of patients admitted to the Hospice continued to rise, and new services were offered; physiotherapy was already on offer, and the physiotherapist, Rhian Davies, opened a lymphoedema clinic – lymphoedema is an uncomfortable swelling of, usually, an arm or leg, the result of illness or treatment. Patients were shown how to massage the affected part to help manage the condition.

On Sue Collier’s departure the Hospice appointed two new consultants, Dr Sarah Anderson and Dr Anne Garry. Dr Garry shared her role at St Leonard’s with time with the York NHS Trust; eventually she returned to work at York District Hospital, while keeping some sessions at St Leonard’s. She now takes part, along with other consultants, in an on-call rota for the Hospice.
Another significant milestone for the Hospice was reached in 1998 when Janet Kay stepped down from her role as General Manager. She had decided to return to what she had initially been trained to do – nursing. Trevor Copley wrote of her: *There are countless people who have a story to tell of Janet’s personal concern and sensitivity for patients and her instinctive understanding of the feelings of their families. Her daily, living commitment to the principles of the Hospice Movement has long been a yardstick and an inspiration for us all.*

**VOICES FOR HOSPICES**

In 1991 a national movement called Voices for Hospices encouraged hospices around the country to put on simultaneous performances of a choral work in order to raise funds. The work chosen for the inaugural Voices for Hospices was Haydn’s ‘The Creation’. York’s performance took place in the Minster on 5 October 1991 and brought together more than 500 local singers, who rehearsed in the afternoon before the evening’s performance, which also attracted hundreds of audience members. There was a particularly long interval, as the second half of the performance could not start until the Earl of Harewood, President of Voices for Hospices, had arrived by helicopter from Leeds, where he had heard the first part in the Parish Church. The next ‘Voices’ took place in 1994, again in York Minster, with a performance of Handel’s ‘Messiah’ under the baton of John Bryan, who was also in charge of the 1997 performance of the same work. In 2000 ‘Messiah’ was heard again in York Minster. In 2007 singers got together once more to sing ‘Messiah’ – but in a different venue – the giant hangar at the Yorkshire Air Museum in Elvington, with David Bowman directing. The St Leonard’s performances for ‘Voices for Hospices’ were masterminded from the start by volunteer and Hospice Trustee Anne Ellison, with the help of an able committee.
In spring 1996 Dr David Hope, who had succeeded Dr John Habgood as Archbishop of York and as President of St Leonard’s Hospice the previous year, allowed the Hospice to launch its new Corporate Patrons scheme at Bishopthorpe Palace. Among the Corporate Patrons were a number of local solicitors, and it was with their help that St Leonard’s launched its Willing to Help promotion, offering the writing of wills at an attractive fee in return for a legacy to the Hospice. Willing to Help was supported over the years by a number of celebrities, including Sir Cliff Richard. Legacies have always played a vital part in funding the work of St Leonard’s, and the Hospice is very grateful to everyone who has remembered its work in a will.

WWW COMES TO ST LEONARD’S

In 1997 the Hospice entered a new world – the worldwide web. That year St Leonard’s carefully explained in the newsletter: We now have a world wide web page so that anyone with access to the Internet can find out more about St Leonard’s. It is intended to be of use to the medical profession, to schools and to anyone wanting to know more about our work. For example, someone with cancer (or their carer) may want to find out more about palliative care for themselves, or may be concerned about what a hospice is for. Schoolchildren doing a project, or companies interested in local charities, can now instantly learn about us. Since those small beginnings, the Hospice website, at www.stleonardshospice.org.uk, has been redesigned several times and much-increased in size; it now offers a wealth of interactive information about all aspects of St Leonard’s.
A new Appeal – for £2,000,000

It was a magnificent legacy of £333,000 from Iris Willett-Bakke, left to St Leonard’s in gratitude for the care she and her husband had received when he was a patient, that kick-started the next major development of the Hospice.

With the increasing number of specialisms and services that the Hospice was now offering its patients, it was becoming apparent that the building opened in 1985, and already extended, was not large enough. Increasing the number of single rooms would provide more privacy and flexibility – and Daycare would be better integrated into the main building, rather than being separate. To encompass this – and to provide extra working space for everyone – it was decided that a new, substantial extension should be added. Architects Allen Todd were appointed at the end of October 1998; their brief included increasing the number of Hospice beds from 16 to 20. Negotiations for the purchase of about half an acre of land from the Hospice’s neighbour, the Wilberforce Trust, were started. The cost for all this was £2,000,000 – almost three times the cost of the original building. An application to the National Lottery for funding was unsuccessful, so it was left to the local community to raise the funds.

The £2,000,000 Hospice 2000 Millennium Appeal was formally launched by the Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, at Bishopthorpe Palace on 10 May 1999. The event was made more poignant in that the architect of the original building, Peter Marshall, had died the previous day; tribute was paid to his work by Trevor Copley, Hospice Chairman.

Commending the Appeal, Dr Hope wrote: The £2,000,000 Millennium Appeal will provide that vital extra space, and help nursing, medical and support staff to take Hospice care into the next century, confident that they will be able to play their part in the relief of pain and suffering. The Appeal merits the support of everyone.

One of the crucial elements of ensuring the Appeal’s success was having the help of the local paper. Liz Page, the Editor of the Evening Press (now The Press) agreed to support the Hospice – though not without some qualms, as it was then by far the largest appeal the newspaper had ever supported.

The Appeal attracted the backing of a number of Celebrity Friends; Canon Roger Royle, television presenters Peter Snow, Martyn Lewis, Christa Ackroyd, Harry Gratton, Cy Chadwick and Richard Whiteley, florist George Smith, actors Christopher Timothy, Susan Hampshire, Lisa Riley, Peter Sallis, Bill Owen and Berwick Kaler, singers James Bowman and Lynne Dawson, and cricket umpire Dickie Bird.

Petalometer marks the total

In place of the traditional thermometer to mark the amount of money raised, a 20-petalled giant sunflower – the Petalometer – was attached to the wall of the Hospice, near the main entrance. Each petal was coloured yellow each time £100,000 was raised; the Iris Willett-Bakke legacy enabled the first three petals to be coloured immediately.
By Christmas 1999 City of York Council had given unanimous planning approval for the new building, and the next petal was already in place. Early in 2000 the Appeal reached its first £1,000,000, with great celebration. This represented a great deal of very hard fundraising by an incredible range of supporters – toddlers in their nursery school, fitness fanatics in their body-building studios, dancers, tennis players and golfers, walkers, swimmers, canoeists and cyclists, musicians of all sorts, gardeners, party-goers, even oil-rig workers and children staying silent for a whole day . . . Every fundraising success was given publicity by the Evening Press, whose continued support encouraged others to take part, too.

With the petals gradually turning yellow as the £2,000,000 target got ever nearer, work began on site in July 2000. The contractors, Roberts Construction, quickly put in place the base for the new service road, levelled the site and put in the building’s footings – all the time keeping disruption to the work of the Hospice to a minimum. In October Archbishop Hope was invited to lay the foundation stone of the new building – almost exactly 17 years after his predecessor, Dr Habgood, had laid the Hospice’s original stone.

By February 2001 the shape of the building with its circular roof feature, was recognisable; the roof was covered in copper sheeting, and on 14 March 2001 the building was ‘topped out’ with Rosemary Thompson, one of the first staff members to be appointed to the new Hospice in 1984, hammering home the last nail.
In July 2001 the Petalometer received its last petal; the £2,000,000 had been raised – in just over two years. The champagne corks popped, and Liz Page from the Evening Press was there to celebrate; she wrote: *Who wants to be a millionaire? The Evening Press did – twice over. And thanks to our wonderful army of readers, we helped the Hospice reach that £2 million target to build the fabulous new extension . . . the new building will stand as a lasting tribute to the great support of the York community, and the Evening Press is proud to have played its part.* The Archbishop echoed her words, saying: *The Millennium Project will benefit future generations of local people in such an important way, extending and enhancing the care to those who need it most.*
In November 2001 the new building was fitted out and decorated, and patients and staff moved from the original building into the smart new spaces. Work then began on the second phase – the conversion of the ‘old’ Hospice to accommodate Daycare, offering a much bigger activities area, a comfortable lounge (the former chapel) and its own dining room. There was to be space, too, for a new out-patient clinic, and dedicated space for families, including a children’s room. Sue Spence, now Clinical Care Services Manager, said in spring 2002: Very soon the old and new buildings will be joined and a whole new Hospice complex opened up. When everything is in its place, our dream will become a reality. This will truly be a new era for St Leonard’s.

WALKING. . .

Even before the Hospice opened, supporters were putting their best foot forward to raise funds by undertaking sponsored walking. Since then, Hospice supporters have individually undertaken all sorts of challenges, including the Lyke Wake Walk, the Pennine Way and the Coast-to-Coast Walk.

In May 1990 St Leonard’s issued its own challenge, when a group of 40 intrepid walkers set out on the first ST LEONARD’S WAY CHALLENGE WALK – a 20-mile circuit of serious but exhilarating walking that starts out from Haworth and takes in the moorland towards Hebden Bridge and part of the Pennine Way. It seems to have been a low-key, though profitable start (more than £1,400), as neither the Hospice newsletter of that year nor the Annual Report mentions it. But its success was such that it was held the following year – and then every year since, except for 2001, when foot-and-mouth-disease prevented its being held. Numbers gradually increased until an entry limit of 200 had to be put in place. So far the Walk has raised well over £200,000 for the work of the Hospice – thanks to the walkers, the indefatigable support team and the generous sponsors who help feed the hungry hoards on their return.
For those who liked to stroll rather than march with a purpose, the FAMILY ADVENTURE WALK was set up. Originally an offshoot of the Challenge Walk and held around Haworth, it developed in its own right, with the first independent walk taking place in the countryside around Castle Howard in June 1998. Over the following years the route was tweaked – and sometimes the walk was relocated; in the 2001 foot-and-mouth year it took place in Dalby Forest. It was back at Castle Howard for the following three years, had a meander via Husthwaite and Coxwold in 2005, and was last held, again at Castle Howard, in 2007. In the same year there was an Autumn Amble at Allerthorpe.

The first MIDNIGHT WALK was held on 21 June 2008; almost 400 people and eight dogs followed a 6½-mile circuit through the streets of the city, all of them (including the dogs) wearing glow-in-the-dark Lenny-Bear-style ears. That first walk raised more than £25,000; succeeding Midnight Walks have regularly increased the sums raised. In 2012 it became, not without controversy, an all-women’s walk, in common with the practices at some other hospices, and was themed; that year participants dressed as angels and demons; grass-skirts were the dress for the Hawaiian-themed 2013 walk, and for 2014 it was I love the 60s.
Runners, too, have been keen Hospice supporters – or, to put it another way, Hospice supporters have regularly volunteered to test themselves by running.

Between 1982 and 1985 the York Run half-marathon raised more than £28,000 for the Hospice; in 1985 runner Ben Hanrahan, a BBC Radio York DJ, told the newsletter that *for me the most satisfying moment was hearing the cheers at St Leonard’s from supporters waiting in the rain and hail. We all deserved a medal – but I hope those outside St Leonard’s got one, too – they were the reason I finished.*

For some years the Harewood Hop raised funds with a ten-mile Trail Race and a two-mile Fun Run, on the Harewood estate, north of Leeds.

The Hospice has regularly had runners in the Great North Run half-marathon and in the London Marathon – there have even been runners for St Leonard’s in the Washington and Berlin Marathons. More recently the Hospice has had particular links with the York 10K run, Leeds Half Marathon and the Yorkshire Marathon, which takes place in York.

During the excitement of the Millennium Appeal, the work of the Hospice continued – as did fundraising for the running of the Hospice. In 1998 the Fundraising department had moved out of the Hospice to space above the premises that soon became the first Hospice Furniture Shop in Acomb.

Also in 1998 the first of the St Leonard’s *Light up a Life* Christmas trees was put in place on the concourse of York Railway Station. This, along with the Summer and Christmas Fairs, the St Leonard’s Way Challenge Walk and the Family walk, became a regular feature of the Hospice’s calendar. And, of course, patients and families continued to be cared for.
And when the Hospice’s 15th Anniversary arrived in 2000, there was again a service in York Minster, at which Canon Roger Royle, writer, broadcaster and a Hospice Celebrity Friend, was the preacher; he spoke of hospices as places of joy and hope that offer practical care for those in need.

In 2000 St Leonard’s appointed its first artist-in-residence; Adie French, who helped both Daycare and in-patients to discover their artistic sides, remained in the role until 2015.

And on 1 October 2001 the Chairman of the Hospice’s Trustees, Trevor Copley, retired, after 23 years in post. He wrote in the Newsletter: My involvement with St Leonard’s has been a privileged and rewarding experience. With the Millennium target achieved and the new building becoming ready for occupation, I believe it is the right time for me to hand over to a new chairman who will see the Hospice through its next period of development. The Newsletter noted: Trevor has been the Chairman of St Leonard’s right from the very beginning. His commitment, financial skills and leadership have been key factors in the development and success of St Leonard’s. It was fitting that in the summer of that year the University of York awarded him an Honorary Doctorate in recognition of his work with the Hospice; his doctorate was conferred by the University’s Chancellor Dame Janet Baker, appropriately one of the Hospice’s Vice-Presidents. Trevor was succeeded as Chairman by Dr Peter Kennedy.

The affable Duke

The next Hospice milestone was the official opening of the new building. His Royal Highness the Duke of York visited St Leonard’s on 10 July 2002 – a day as sunny as that in 1985 when the Duchess of Kent opened the original building. The Duke toured Daycare in its new home in the refurbished buildings, where he enjoyed jokes with patients and staff, then met staff and guests, including the Editor of the Evening Press, before unveiling a plaque to mark the occasion. After spending private time with in-patients and families, he went outside to greet more than 200 volunteers and supporters who had waited patiently for him by the Hospice’s main entrance. As Janet Morley, Director of Fundraising, said, Everyone is delighted with the new buildings; the visit of the Duke of York was the icing on the cake!
After the completion of the Millennium project and the official opening, the Chief Executive, Steven Harker, who had worked at St Leonard’s for four years, moved on; he was replaced in May 2003 by the current Chief Executive Martyn Callaghan. Martyn said: *St Leonard’s is one of the leading hospices in the region and I am very proud to be joining a place with such an excellent reputation for its standards of care and with such a high profile in the community.*

The high profile continued in July 2002 when the first Great York Dragon Boat Challenge was organised by the Rotary Club of York, with St Leonard’s as the main beneficiary. Thousands of people lined the banks of the River Ouse in York city centre to see the Dragon Boats paddled between Scarborough and Lendal Bridges. More than £40,000 was raised (some for other charities supported by the teams) and the Hospice was able to buy a new van to serve its shops. In subsequent Dragon Boat races the Hospice has entered its own (not very fast!) teams; St Leonard’s was the main beneficiary of the event in its Silver Jubilee year, 2010, as well.

**Fundraising and Education**

In 2003 new fundraising ideas were introduced. One was *Tie a Yellow Ribbon* – people were invited to sponsor yellow ribbons tied to a tree in the Hospice grounds as a way of honouring a loved one or a friend; this was expanded more recently into the *Rainbow of Ribbons*. Another was the introduction of the weekly Prize Draw, in which players pay £1 a week for a unique number, which each week has the chance to win a cash prize. The Prize Draw has over the years proved a valuable way of raising extra funds for the work of St Leonard’s.

The Hospice also continued its educational work; from 1997 a succession of general practitioners has worked at St Leonard’s for six months at a time as Registrar, as part of their vocational training.

*St Leonard’s has had a special link with HMS York. Petty Officers raised funds for the Hospice with a 270-mile bike ride from Portsmouth to York, and in 2000 they visited the Hospice to present the proceeds, £1,750, for the Hospice’s Millennium Appeal.*

After the completion of the Millennium project and the official opening, the Chief Executive, Steven Harker, who had worked at St Leonard’s for four years, moved on; he was replaced in May 2003 by the current Chief Executive Martyn Callaghan. Martyn said: *St Leonard’s is one of the leading hospices in the region and I am very proud to be joining a place with such an excellent reputation for its standards of care and with such a high profile in the community.*
Medical students are also regular visitors, with the students from the Leeds University Medical School spending a day at the Hospice every six weeks as part of their training. From summer 2003 Hospice medical staff have also had input at the Hull and York Medical School.

7. INTO THE THIRD DECADE

In 2005 another Thanksgiving Service was held in York Minster; The Rev’d Dr Sue Collier, the Hospice’s first Medical Director, spoke about the early days of St Leonard’s and the challenges and joys of beginning a new venture in palliative care in York. The other speaker, The Very Rev’d Canon Michael Ryan, took the theme of the value of the Hospice in the local community.

Later that year the Fundraising team moved from Acomb back to the main Hospice site, to space upstairs in the original Day Hospice building; the number of fundraisers has, inevitably, increased over the years and now has team members dedicated to areas such as events, corporate fundraising and the community. Part of the plan was for the ground floor to open as a coffee shop, where patients, visitors and staff could have a relaxing lunch, a good cup of tea or coffee and excellent cakes. ‘The Stables’, as it was named, opened the following year, at first two days a week – since extended – and soon received a glowing review from a reviewer in The Press.

The new Hospice logo was introduced in 2006

In spring 2006 there was a new look for the Hospice; the red YH logo, that had been designed as part of a competition in the early days of fundraising for the proposed Hospice, was felt to have served well for almost 25 years. Although it was well-loved, and there were some grumbles about its disappearance, the decision was taken to revise the look. In came a blue colour, with a sunflower, national symbol of the Hospice Movement, as part of the new design, which was donated by Hospice supporter David Peach of designers Hutton Peach. The cost of implementing the new design on signage and elsewhere was aided by a generous donation from Nixon Homes, the company then developing the site of the former Wilberforce Home, next to the Hospice, as housing development The Square. The new image was used for the spring 2006 newsletter.

Award-winning changes

A major grant from the Department of Health in 2008 for capital works allowed St Leonard’s to make adjustments to the building. As Martyn Callaghan wrote: We have now had more than seven years’ use of our new building, and, as with any building, we have learned how it might be improved. This redevelopment will enable us to give our patients greater privacy, our visitors a better welcome and our staff improved working conditions. The changes included a completely re-designed entrance and reception area, separated by a new wall from the
patient area, to offer better security and prevent noise elsewhere in the Hospice reaching patients’ rooms. A new glass wall provided extra privacy at the nurses’ station, and a new staircase gave access to the upstairs seminar room. The work was completed by June 2009; the following year the new entrance, designed by architect Moray McKay, won a York Design Award in the New Community Building category, with the judges praising the building’s detailing and its garden setting.

Extending the care

Mae Graham, one of the four nurses whose idea of a hospice for York led to the foundation of St Leonard’s, died in the Hospice in 2008. In the newsletter Rosemary Thompson, the Hospice’s Bereavement Care Coordinator and one of its longest-serving staff members, recalled her as an immediate presence, most immaculate in her uniform, not to mention her shoes, which would have passed any military inspection. Mae’s professionalism and care were of immense service to St Leonard’s; she was one of the team that set up the Day Hospice, she interviewed staff and served as both a Hospice Trustee and a volunteer.

One of the aims of the Hospice, and one which Mae Graham was keen to see developed, was extending hospice care into the homes of local people. This had been an ambition from the early days of planning the Hospice, but it was only in 2009 that St Leonard’s was able to open its Hospice@Home service. Initially funded for a year’s trial, the Hospice@Home service had the aims of providing appropriate care, staffing and equipment to allow a patient to leave hospital to be cared for at home, to remain at home in a crisis or emergency or until a hospice bed is available, or to have care provided for a patient who is very close to the end of their life.

The specially-trained Hospice@Home nurses, working under Senior Nurse Julie Pickerell, quickly established themselves as one of the Hospice’s most valuable and appreciated resources. Julie said: The need is for patient choice, and it’s a challenge we are determined to meet; everyone at the Hospice is very much behind Hospice@Home. The team members . . . assess and treat each patient or situation differently, so that we can provide them with the best possible support. The success of the Hospice@Home trial was such that Hospice@Home is now a permanent part of the care offered by St Leonard’s Hospice.

The inauguration of Hospice@Home coincided with a change in the area that St Leonard’s covers. Originally its area was the same as that served by York District Hospital; it came to be defined as an area stretching from Easingwold in the north to Selby in the south, from Tadcaster in the west to
Pocklington in the east. Now, as new NHS structures came into force, the area has been extended to cover Helmsley and parts of Ryedale.

**The Silver Jubilee**

The launch of Hospice@Home came when St Leonard’s was preparing to mark its Silver Jubilee – 25 years of caring for local people. In a Silver Jubilee message the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, wrote: *Hospice care is about providing a good listening friend for the journey. It is help for our fears and feelings of uncertainty. It’s also about addressing our wholeness; we need spiritual, social and medical care. As President, I want to thank the army of volunteers, the doctors, the nurses and all those who share the benefit of their expertise to help alleviate pain and suffering of patients and their families.*

A full programme of events marked this significant milestone, including the Silver Jubilee Sunflower Ball at York Racecourse in April, the 20th St Leonard’s Way Challenge Walk in May, a special Summer Fair and Birthday Party and the Midnight Walk, both in June, and the regular schools’ sunflower display, this time in the National Railway Museum, throughout July. That month also saw the York Rotary Dragon Boat Challenge being contested in support of the Hospice. There was also a show of artwork by Daycare and in-patients at York District Hospital.

This special year was again marked with a well-attended service in York Minster on 6 June 2010. The speakers at the service were Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Professor of Palliative Medicine at Cardiff University School of Medicine, a crossbench member of the House of Lords and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Dying Well; and Dr Peter Kaye, a Consultant in Palliative Medicine. Peter’s mother Gladys Kaye was for many years secretary to the Hospice’s Board of Trustees.

The name of the Hospice was taken further afield in October, when a band of intrepid supporters, including Hospice Chairman Graham Millar (who had succeeded Peter Kennedy) and his wife Margaret, and Director of Fundraising Janet Morley and her husband Phil, undertook a 10-day fundraising trek in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal.
They were all back in York in time to take their places at the Thanksgiving Dinner in November at the National Railway Museum. Hospice Mascot Lenny Bear had his own celebrations during 2010, with a series of Birthday Walks with local schools.

Guests assemble (left) by the locomotive The Duchess of Hamilton in the National Railway Museum for the Silver Jubilee Thanksgiving Dinner.

At Barlow Church of England Primary School (below) Lenny Bear leads a Birthday Walk in the Jubilee Year.
8. CARE CONTINUES

Once the excitement of the Silver Jubilee year was over, the care of the Hospice continued. In 2011 more government-funded work took place, under the Department of Health’s Dignity project, to upgrade specialist bathrooms; in Daycare the assisted bathroom was refurbished and the sitting area improved, while the clinical and therapy rooms were remodelled.

Also in 2011 two long-serving members of staff retired. Rosemary Thompson, who was closely involved in setting up and running the Day Hospice from 1984, had continued her work as staff nurse and later became Bereavement Care Coordinator; it was thanks to her enthusiasm that the Luncheon Club and the Castaways group for recently-bereaved families was such a success. On her retirement Martyn Callaghan said: if you want an example of dedication, Rosemary certainly fits the bill. In December that year Sue Spence retired; she had served for 27 years, first as Senior Sister, eventually becoming Director of Clinical Services. Martyn Callaghan summed up her contribution: She has helped to steer the Hospice from its opening, and we remain a valuable and much-loved part of the local community in no small part due to her determination and ideals.

BEREAVEMENT CARE SOCIAL WORK AND CHAPLAINCY

In autumn 2011 a new Family Support Services team brought together three vital Hospice services – Bereavement Care, Social Work and Chaplaincy.

In the 1986 Annual Report, Janet Kay wrote that the staff had been working with other hospices to plan a bereavement service: We all feel the need to offer support and friendship to the families of patients who die at the Hospice, but this service needs good planning, careful selection of volunteers, thorough training of counsellors and befrienders and the establishment of a professional support group to underpin the whole enterprise.

The Bereavement Service was begun in 1987, with the appointment of retired nurse Margaret Sutton as Bereavement Service coordinator. While the identifying and training of volunteers (initially 12 of them) to go out into the community to offer support and practical help to people who had been bereaved was underway, the St Leonard’s Hospice Luncheon Club was formed as a secure and welcoming group into which others would graduate as they moved onwards at their own pace through the painful process of bereavement, as Janet Kay wrote in the Annual Report. It first met in August 1988 amply nourished by the home cooking of Margaret and her supporters and some donated bottles of sherry, and has not looked back since. Since its launch the Bereavement Service has continued to be a valued part of the service St Leonard’s offers.

The social worker in the Hospice has played a vital role in helping patients and families by giving advice on practical matters like welfare benefits and negotiating with the providers of social services. As a former Hospice social worker, Sandra Pinner, notes in the 1995 Annual Review: The recent demanding developments in community care have important implications for our patients...
The team at the Hospice works together to plan the discharge time for some patients. We have developed good liaison and working relationships with agencies outside the Hospice. Ten years later one of her successors, Viv Blacker, summed up the role as to identify the social, emotional and psychological needs of patients, families and carers.

The original Chapel at St Leonard’s Hospice under construction and complete

Unlike some hospices, and despite its name, St Leonard’s Hospice is not a religious foundation. Nevertheless, it has always been very important that the spiritual side of patient care is always available. The Hospice has always had a chapel, and churches played an important part in early, and continued, fundraising for the Hospice; the then Archdeacon of York, the Ven Leslie Stanbridge, was part of the original Steering Committee, and successive Archbishops of York have been President.

Before the Day Hospice opened in 1984 the Steering Committee considered the question of a chaplain. As Janet Kay later recalled: Questions were asked and a great deal of ferreting around went on by those who had access to the great and the good in the Anglican Church. We were reassured when the message came back that Andrew Girling was the man to go for. This proved to be sound advice. Vicar of St Edward the Confessor, Dringhouses, The Rev’d Andrew Girling quickly developed the role of Hospice Chaplain, and gathered around him a multi-denominational team of ordained and lay chaplains. He supported patients, families and staff, and set the standards by which the Hospice’s Chaplaincy team still operates.

The Rev’d Andrew Girling, the first St Leonard’s Hospice Chaplain

Archbishop Hope with two of the chaplains who succeeded Andrew Girling: The Rev’d Martin Baldock (left) and Fr Tom Mylod
DANCING FOR ST LEONARD’S

There has seldom been a shortage of people willing to dance for St Leonard’s Hospice. In October 1996, at the height of excitement generated by the BBC Pride and Prejudice television series, the Hospice staged a Regency Ball at the 18th-century Assembly Rooms in the centre of York. Ball-goers dressed in appropriate style – empire-line gowns for the ladies, knee-breeches or military uniform for the men – and danced English country dances to the music of a period band. The ball attracted wide media interest – not least because four members of the Pride and Prejudice cast were among the dancers.

The following year there was a Strictly Ballroom dance, also at the Assembly Rooms. In 1997 a repeat of the Pride and Prejudice Ball was held, and a CD of the dances popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, under the title The Pride and Prejudice Collection, was issued by The Pemberley Players, who provided the music for the Ball; this was a sell-out success, with all profits going to St Leonard’s. For a while Line Dancing was another popular way of raising funds.

Meanwhile, another ball – the first of many Sunflower Balls – was organised by a group of energetic supporters at Escrick, chaired by Helen Williams, raising £9,500. The organising committee went from strength to strength, soon moving the Sunflower Ball to York Racecourse. In 2000 the Millennium Sunflower Ball raised £27,000; two years later the Ball (a Masquerade) achieved £34,000. A Midsummer’s Night Sunflower Ball followed in 2004 (£48,600), while in 2006 the theme was Arabian Nights, at which the figure topped £50,000. The 2008 Sunflower Ball hit £70,000; subsequent Balls have continued to raise large sums for the work of St Leonard’s.
Sunflowers, recognised as the symbol of the Hospice Movement, first came to St Leonard’s in June 1994, when supporters were urged to *Spread a little sunshine on Sunflower Day* by buying and wearing a silk sunflower on Midsummer’s Day, 21 June. They returned in 1995, with 9,000 given out that year and more than £5,000 raised from donations.

In 1996 came the first of the special links with schools, with the construction of a giant sunflower on the Eye of York, the circle of grass by the Castle Museum. More than 2,500 children took part, with each of 25 primary schools making and decorating petals 5 metres long before bringing them (fortunately in brilliant sunshine!) to be assembled into a 20-metre-wide sunflower. The following year the giant sunflower moved inside, to the north transept of York Minster, and was made up of thousands of individual 20-centimetre sunflowers, each one coloured and individually decorated by a child.

In 1998 the giant sunflower moved again, this time to the turntable at the National Railway Museum. In 1999 it was back to the Minster, this time with a Field of Sunflowers – each school made a sunflower a metre wide, which was then ‘planted’ in a pot for display.
In 2000 and 2001 the Hospice invited everyone to ‘GO YELLOW’ – and hundreds of people did so, from nursery schools to care homes, with everyone wearing something yellow for the day. And York mime artist Mr Yellow was on hand to visit and amuse as many people as possible for the Go Yellow Days in June. Go Yellow continued for some years.

In 2002 the children’s sunflowers were back, with a display at York Art Gallery called a *Shower of Sunflowers*, which covered a whole wall of the gallery’s entrance. In 2003 York Theatre Royal was the host to the sunflowers, with *Columns of Sunflowers* – individual sunflowers decorating the concrete columns of the theatre’s foyer and café extension. In 2005 the sunflowers were at the Library in Museum Street; celebrities were sent sunflower shapes and asked to decorate them. Colourful sunflowers were returned by the Archbishop of York; Sir Menzies Campbell, leader of the Liberal Democrats; the Lord Mayor of York; The Dean of York; Hugh Bayley, MP for York; and David Cameron, leader of the Conservative Party.

In 2008 and 2009 local children supplied decorated sunflowers for a Sunflower Tree – a real tree that was set up in St Helen’s Square in the centre of York and from which the sunflowers were hung. In 2010 it was back to the National Railway Museum, where the sunflowers decorated the footbridge in the main hall. For 2011 the Minster again played host the giant sunflower, while in 2012 the sunflowers were used to decorate the Hospice’s shops. The most recent sunflower spectacular was again in York Minster in 2014, when, to celebrate the Tour de France’s Yorkshire Grand Départ, the sunflowers were laid out in the shape of a bicycle.
In 2012 there was great excitement when the Olympic Torch relay came past the Hospice: Hospice Mascot Lenny Bear joined Daycare patients outside the building in bright sunshine to cheer the torchbearer as he passed. On the same day former Olympian Steve Cram visited the Hospice to present a work of art inspired by the Paralympics to help fundraising. And to complete what the newsletter described as Our Olympic Summer, the Hospice held its own, gentle Olympics for patients, with gold, silver and bronze medals handed out – and there was another Torch visit, one brought by James Atherton, who had carried it in London; his father had been cared for by St Leonard’s.

There was more excitement that year when the Hospice’s Head Chef, Darren Walker, hit the national newspapers and television. He had created a new range of main meal smoothies – hot meals ‘deconstructed’ so they could be eaten with a spoon or drunk, and re-presented in a glass in an attractive way. Among his smoothie creations were cottage pie, looking like a glass of Guinness, and fish and chips. The idea intrigued the media, and, as well as appearing in the press, Darren was invited to appear on ITV’s This Morning, where the presenters, Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby, tried them out – and were very complimentary.
LENNY BEAR

Lenny Bear has been the mascot of St Leonard’s Hospice since 2002. He has had a very varied career, visiting schools and care homes, enthusing the Dragon Boat crew, enjoying gardens, giving hugs, encouraging spending at the Summer Fair, going to gyms and exercise classes, playing football with other mascots, taking bus rides, attending coffee mornings and afternoon teas, encouraging walkers and runners, promoting Easter eggs, enjoying the snow and generally bringing happiness wherever he goes. With his latest makeover (above) he’s certainly recognisable wherever he goes!

Later in 2012 the former Chairman Dr Peter Kennedy, who had steered the Hospice from 2001 to 2008, died. He served the Hospice with great care and dedication, even while he was receiving treatment for the tumour that had been diagnosed as he took over his Hospice role. St Leonard’s is infinitely richer from having had Peter to lead its Trustees, said the newsletter. And another Hospice stalwart died the same year; 90-year-old Violet Armitage. She had been a volunteer at the Hospice’s Tang Hall shop since it opened in 1993. She was nominated as 2012 Volunteer of the Year in York’s Community Pride Awards; she died just before the winners were announced – and she was the winner. The Award was presented to her proud family.

In May 2013 Dr Sarah Anderson, the Hospice’s Medical Director for 16½ years, retired. Looking back over her time at St Leonard’s, she said: Palliative medicine is now recognised as a speciality in its own right, and with its own training, and there is now more emphasis on medication for symptom control, with more interventions . . . I’ve always firmly believed that the patient is at the centre of everything we do. Martyn Callaghan paid tribute to Dr Anderson’s work: Sarah is a patients’ champion and advocate; she epitomises the skills required to be a palliative care physician. Not just looking after the body and symptoms but the ‘whole patient’ and their carers, including their spiritual and psychological needs.

Dr Sarah Anderson, who retired as Medical Director in 2013
At the beginning of 2014 Barbara Jackson, who had been Daycare Leader for some years, died suddenly, to the great shock and sadness of her colleagues and the many patients she had cared for.

Barbara Jackson with patient Gordon, a former chef, who demonstrated his skills in Daycare.

9. INTO THE FUTURE

By the end of 2013 work had begun to give Daycare a complete makeover, with new thermally-efficient windows and skylights to bring extra light into the building, an eco-friendly and brighter lighting scheme as well as new furniture, and complete redecoration. When that was complete, the Family Area was also upgraded, and an impressive new ceiling was added to the Hospice chapel. The final phase of this sizeable project was the refitting and redecoration, in rotation, of all the patient bedrooms in the in-patient unit. In-patient bathrooms were converted into wet-rooms, making them accessible to all patients. Some of the rooms received new hoists to aid mobility. The work was funded by a grant from NHS England and by generous legacies to the Hospice.

The refurbishment project was overseen by Janet Morley, who retired on its completion at the beginning of 2015. Her Hospice career began as a care assistant, before she transferred her skills first to administration and then to fundraising and publicity; she guided the Hospice nurses Don and Laura with patient Gordon, a former chef, who demonstrated his skills in Daycare.

One of the refurbished rooms
Hospice’s activities in these important areas for more than two decades, retiring as Director of Fundraising. She also worked in several capacities in the national Hospice Movement; her long service was recognised in December 2014 when she was presented with the Norfolk Award for Lifetime Achievement in Fundraising by Hospice UK, formerly ‘Help the Hospices’.

Generosity continues

After 30 years of the care that St Leonard’s Hospice offers – and almost 40 years since the first meeting that set in motion the determination to see it as a reality – the Hospice is, as always, looking to the future. The annual running costs – £285,000 in the first year of its existence – are now upwards of £4,000,000, of which about a quarter comes from Government via the NHS. The rest still needs to be raised through legacies, events and other fundraising, and all that depends on the continued giving of local people. The generosity shown over the years has meant that the Hospice has always been able to maintain its policy of never charging patients or their families for the care it provides.

In February 1984, a year before the Hospice opened to in-patients for the first time, The Chairman of the Steering Committee, Trevor Copley, wrote in the newsletter: With the experience of the last few years we are confident that we can continue with our plans in the knowledge that the funds will continue to grow steadily to meet our commitments. Twenty-six years later, in the Silver Jubilee year of 2010, the Chairman of Trustees, Graham Millar, echoed his words: We are confident that the generous support for St Leonard’s that has always been forthcoming will continue to sustain us as we grow and develop.

With an increased emphasis nationally on providing the best possible End of Life care, but also with debate continuing about the merits of assisted suicide, St Leonard’s Hospice has the expertise and the authority of its last 30 years to bring to such matters, as well as its history of compassion and care. As Mark Latham wrote recently for the Hospice newsletter about the loss of his wife: St Leonard’s allowed Clare, me and our family such dignity and comfort in her final days and the chance to face death with a peaceful and hopeful heart. They are feelings that have been constantly uttered, in different ways, since the first days of the Hospice.