

# Daryl and Ian's Story

Ian was able to continue looking after his wife, Daryl, at home, thanks to the care and support that they received from Farleigh Hospice. He explains the difference that this made to them both.



Daryl and Ian

"I am so grateful to the team at Farleigh Hospice for the care that they gave to my wife, Daryl. They were there for me when I needed them – they were amazing.

Daryl and I got married in 1980 and our daughter, Alice, was born a few years later. We originally lived in Yorkshire but moved to Coggeshall in Essex in 1986. Daryl and I loved to travel and she was a fantastic cook but our real passion was our Otterhound dogs!

Daryl was a very caring and determined person: if she was doing something, she would do it properly. She got a job in local government, working in housing and homelessness. She set up the Braintree Women's Aid and Braintree Women's Refuge and

also a mother and baby unit for teenagers, helping many people in dire straits.

In 2017, Daryl had a mammogram and then a biopsy which revealed that she had breast cancer. She had an operation followed by chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

When she was given the all clear, it was such a relief. I had retired by then, so we had a relaxing family holiday with Alice in the south of France.

Life got back to normal but then, in May 2021, a routine mammogram showed that the cancer had returned. Daryl had both breasts removed in a bilateral mastectomy which went pretty well and then had another operation to remove

part of her liver, leaving her feeling quite frail.

She was then given immunotherapy to help her immune system fight the cancer cells. She didn't take to it – the second dose made her feel very ill. She continued on a lower dose, visiting the hospital for the treatment, one hour every three weeks.

She had another regular scan in November 2022 and we were given the heart-breaking news that the cancer had spread and was now untreatable. We were told in December that Daryl only had weeks or maybe months left.

Her health went downhill after Christmas and she was unconscious, so her doctor contacted Farleigh Hospice. Daryl's mother had spent her last days in Farleigh's inpatient unit in 2008, so we already knew something about Farleigh's care.

They contacted me the next day and one of Farleigh's nurses came to visit. She was wonderful – very caring and considerate. She explained the care that they could provide and arranged for the hospice at home team to visit to help Alice and I look after Daryl. She also gave me the contact number for Farleigh's clinical advice line, so we could call and talk to a nurse practitioner if we needed help.

Farleigh organised a hospital-type bed for Daryl which was installed in our house within a few days.



It is because you care that we can

[www.farleighhospice.org](http://www.farleighhospice.org)   

Registered Charity No. 284670



They also organised her medicine, speaking to the doctor and arranging for it to be ready for us to collect from the pharmacy or be delivered to our home. It was fantastic to have that level of support.

Daryl regained consciousness and, for a while, she was able to get up and sit in the living room. Being fiercely independent and proud, she was reluctant for friends to see her, but it was different with Farleigh, as they were so caring and respected her dignity. She readily accepted their help with her personal care and I could hear them laughing together! She looked forward to their visits and insisted that I left out bottles of water and cereal bars for them.

Farleigh also supported me and Alice - nothing was too much trouble. We had regular visits and calls from the nurse practitioners who continued to check Daryl's medicine and co-ordinate her care. They took away my worries so I was able to go out when I needed to, feeling confident that Farleigh

was there with her so she would be okay.

The nurses and carers always had time for us. When Daryl had a fall, someone from Farleigh was there in 20 minutes. We couldn't move her safely so they arranged for help and stayed with us for two hours until it arrived.

Daryl's health deteriorated and the hospice at home team visited three times a day, as I couldn't physically move her, so that she was comfortable and well looked after - they even made sure her hair was always brushed! Because I could trust them to look after her care, I was able to focus on spending important time with her.

Near the end of her life, Daryl had a fixed look on her face. But in her final hours, her expression changed and she was smiling, so we could see that she was at peace. She died at home, where she wanted to be, on 22 February 2023, aged 71.

Farleigh came to our house the next morning and some of the



**Daryl and Alice**

staff attended the funeral - I was so pleased to see them. Alice and I took some treats to the hospice, including more cereal bars, to say thank you from us and Daryl to the amazing nurses and carers who looked after her.

I know that Farleigh also offers a bereavement service for anyone who has lost a loved one. I haven't contacted them but it's reassuring to know that support is there if I do need it.

It would have been impossible for us to have cared for Daryl without Farleigh Hospice. They held everything together and were always there when we needed them. They gave my wife dignity at the end of her life and she would not have been able to die at home without their amazing care and support. I will always be very grateful.

If anyone is in a similar situation, I would tell them to trust in Farleigh Hospice completely. Every nurse and carer that I met was incredible and they provide first class care - it's exemplary, priceless. I cannot praise Farleigh highly enough."

**You can help Farleigh Hospice to care for more people like Daryl by fundraising for us. For more information visit [farleighhospice.org/events](https://www.farleighhospice.org/events) or call 01245 457411.**

