

# willow news



What a  
difference a  
day makes

THE MAGAZINE FROM NATIONAL CHARITY, THE WILLOW FOUNDATION

2011 ISSUE 19



## NEW LEADERSHIP

Meet Gill Edelman, the  
charity's new CEO

PAGE 4

## BOB WILSON SOCCER CYCLE

Bob's challenge of  
a life-time

PAGE 13

# An uplifting day

Read about Stuart's  
special day PAGE 8

Special days for seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds

The Willow Foundation is a charity registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales, number 1106746

 willow  
foundation

# What's new for 2011?

To date, Willow has provided more than 7,000 special days for seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds throughout the UK. In 2011 we aim to provide a further 1,400 special days for those living with conditions such as cancer, motor neurone disease, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy and organ failure. In addition...

- the charity's new Chief Executive, **Gill Edelman**, will lead the charity in a strategic review of its service and activities
- Life President, **Bob Wilson**, will cycle **more than 600 miles**, visiting every Premier League football club in the UK, to raise valuable awareness and much needed funds
- the charity will introduce some **exciting new events** and initiatives to its fundraising calendar, including the **Ian Wright Golf Classic** and **Willow at Loch Lomond**



## OUR ROOTS

The Willow Foundation was founded in 1999 by Bob and Megs Wilson, as a lasting memorial to their daughter, Anna Carey, who died of cancer aged just 31. Anna battled her cancer for five years but it was during these years that she, her family and friends, experienced some of their most memorable moments together. Her self-named 'special days' became a focus for quality of time and quality of life, providing a welcome distraction from hospital treatments and returning some normality back into all their lives. It is this positivity and quality of life that Willow aims to replicate by providing special days for other seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds throughout the UK.

**Bob Wilson OBE is the former Arsenal and Scotland goalkeeper and sports TV presenter.**

**What's  
inside**

**Special day  
stories**  
Pages 8-10

**New  
leadership &  
beneficiaries**  
Pages 4 & 5

**Medical  
focus**  
Pages 6-7

**Fundraisers  
from around  
the UK**  
Pages 11-15

**How you  
can help**  
Page 16

# DAYS WITH IMPACT...

## WHAT DOES THE WILLOW FOUNDATION DO?

The Willow Foundation is a national charity that offers quality of life and quality of time to seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds through the provision of special days. It is the only UK charity offering quality of life experiences to this age range across all life-threatening conditions and in 2010 fulfilled more individual quality of life experiences than any other UK charity. The charity receives no government funding and relies on the generosity of individuals, companies and trusts to fund its work.

## WHAT IS A SPECIAL DAY?

A special day is a quality of life experience aimed at providing beneficiaries and their families with something positive to look forward to after diagnosis and treatment. Special days aim to rebuild lost confidence, return some normality of life and create positive memories of family life.

## WHY IS A SPECIAL DAY IMPORTANT?

For those living with a life-threatening illness every day deserves to be treated as precious. Sadly the stress and hard realities of diagnosis and treatment mean it's all too easy to forget that life is to be lived. Independent research and ongoing evaluation of special days highlight that they have a real and lasting positive impact on young people's lives and those of their families, at the most difficult and emotional of times.



### Susan

is from Lancashire. She is aged 40, living with breast cancer and went to London on her special day.

*"It was a wonderful trip and I'll never forget how special it felt to be treated after a very difficult year."*



### Brett

is from Yorkshire and is aged 28. He has Hodgkin's lymphoma and chose a trip to London Zoo for his special day.

*"A big thank you to everyone for making the weekend happen - it was amazing. The memories are still fresh in my mind."*



### Liam

is 28 and lives in South Humberside. He has organ failure and went to see Manchester United play Tottenham on his special day.

*"Thank you for a truly memorable weekend."*



### Kim

is from County Antrim. She is 40 and has breast cancer. She enjoyed a trip to London on her special day.

*"We had a fabulous time. My family and I thoroughly enjoyed every minute. Thank you for organising my amazing trip."*



### Douglas

is from Manchester and has testicular cancer. He is 37 and chose a driving experience for his special day.

*"I will never forget it and the day brought me much happiness. A perfect ending to my treatment and ongoing recovery."*



### David

is from London and is 24. He is living with leukaemia and went to see a rugby match at Wembley.

*"Thank you for making this day possible. It will keep me going through the next round of treatment."*



# New leadership

In November 2010 **Gill Edelman** was appointed **CEO of the Willow Foundation**. Formerly the CEO of I CAN, the national charity for children with communication difficulties, Gill has more than 15 years' experience in the voluntary sector and more than 20 years in the health service. Her appointment will enable a new phase in Willow's future expansion and service development.

## Why the Willow Foundation?

The cause is an important one and has great personal resonance for me. I started my career as a speech and language therapist working with adults with head and neck cancer, and neurological disorders, including those with motor neurone disease and brain tumours. I also have a number of friends and family members who have experienced the shock of diagnosis and treatment for a serious and life-threatening illness and have seen the impact this can have.

The charity itself attracted me because of: the passion and energy of its founders, Bob and Megs Wilson; what Willow does is so positive and life affirming; and the charity's track record of success in attracting support and delivering a high quality service to young people and their families.

## How have your first few months been?

I've received a warm welcome from everyone. It's been hectic, with so much to learn. There are so many people to get to know; staff, trustees, beneficiaries, our amazing volunteers, donors and other supporters, and other organisations relevant to Willow. I've already experienced some great Willow events: Stars on Canvas, the Christmas Carol Concert and more. I've had meetings with trustees and the charity's senior management team and have agreed our plans for 2011.

## What excites you most about the charity?

I'm excited by the opportunity to work with our young people and their families to better understand their needs, their experience of a Willow special day and about how we might develop our service in the future. I'm interested in the potential to develop the charity further to reach even more young people and to make a positive difference to them and their families. And it's fantastic to have the chance to work with our Life Presidents, trustees, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and donors in making this happen.

**I'm interested in the potential to develop the charity further to reach even more young people and to make a positive difference to them and their families**

## What plans do you have for the future?

We'll be undertaking a major review of Willow this year. This will celebrate our achievements and will demonstrate the impact the charity has on young people and their families through an independent evaluation of our work. The review will explore how we might improve and develop our service and work to support young people and their families at the time they need it most. We will also develop plans to attract more funding and to increase our profile and presence across the UK.

I believe that by working in partnership with all those with an interest in Willow (Life Presidents, trustees, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, donors and other organisations) we'll be more effective at reaching more young people, providing the support they need and attracting funds. We are currently planning how we can involve all these groups in debating the priorities and way forward. We are planning to launch our new strategy later this year. There'll be more to come in due course.

In the meantime, there's an even greater focus of effort this year on generating the funds needed to maintain our service in a tough economic climate. All charities have been hit by the recession and Willow has not been exempt from this. We'll be working even harder to find new donors to generate the funds needed to provide our special days for young people and their families and to develop the charity.



# Inspiring beneficiaries

CLAIRE RICHARDSON, SPECIAL DAY COORDINATOR

I have been a special day coordinator for the charity for three years.

I specialise in organising theatre trips and music related special days. We are extremely fortunate to have the support of promoters and managers who enable us to secure tickets for beneficiaries but it's not always easy. So we are always looking to strengthen our connections and partnerships with West End theatres and the music industry. Thanks to our existing support we have, over the past six months, been able to fulfil special day trips to concerts such as JLS, Rihanna, A-ha, Mumford & Sons, Peter Andre, Pink and Westlife, and West End shows such as Lion King, Mamma Mia, Billy Elliot and Wizard of Oz remain the top choice of theatre trips.

Our beneficiaries live with a broad range of serious illnesses. This includes those with a hereditary condition or a recent diagnosis, through to those within the last few months of their lives. Every special day is of the beneficiary's choosing and, in order to tailor their day to meet their needs, we spend a lot of time getting to know them and their families. So being a Special Day Coordinator means enjoying talking to people, building relationships and having a 'can do' attitude.

**"The two most rewarding parts of my role are hearing the excitement in our beneficiaries' voices**

**when I tell them that we can fulfil their special day and then on their return hearing all about their day. That's when you realise the positive difference just one day can make - right through from the anticipation and planning, to the day itself and then the reflection afterwards."**

Two special days have resonated with me recently; one I organised and the second that was organised by a colleague.

I arranged a theatre break for a lady called Sharon who is living with breast cancer. She, her husband and two young children travelled from their home in Wales to London to see The Lion King at the Lyceum Theatre. Sharon gave very moving feedback. She told me what a huge support her husband and children had been throughout her illness and treatment, and how strong they had all been for her. She had wanted her special day to be as much for them as for her; returning some normality back into all their lives and enabling them to spend quality time together as a family. Since diagnosis Sharon has viewed life very differently, valuing every moment. Her special day was one of those days she will treasure forever.



Nia and Noah

As mentioned this next special day was organised by my colleague and the beneficiary's words had a profound affect on the whole team. Nia is 34 and living with cancer. For her special day she wanted a family photograph with her partner, Dom, and young son, Noah. This was arranged at a studio near their home in Reading. Upon her return Nia wrote:

**"I just wanted to say a huge thank you. We have seen a preview of the piccies and they are absolutely gorgeous. With life so full of uncertainty, it's so comforting that whatever happens to me, my son Noah will have these photos to cherish and will know how special and loved he is and how much he means to us. I thank you so much for these cherished memories."**



Sharon with her family in London

## JOIN OUR BENEFICIARIES' PANEL

Help shape the future of the Willow Foundation. If you (or someone close to you) has benefited from a special day we would welcome your opinions. It is important for us to know what you think and your views will help shape the work of the charity in the future. We have therefore established a Beneficiaries' Panel, the members of which will be surveyed from time to time on relevant subjects, charity initiatives or developments. The surveys will be predominantly online, with questionnaires that are quick and simple to complete. However, for those that do not have access to a computer, we do send surveys out by post.

**To join please email [communications@willowfoundation.org.uk](mailto:communications@willowfoundation.org.uk) or call the communications team on 01707 259777.**

# MEDICAL FOCUS

More than 80 per cent of young people who apply to the **Willow Foundation** find out about the charity from their medical professional, such as a doctor or nurse involved in their care and treatment. The charity is therefore reliant on the expertise and support of medical professionals from throughout the UK to promote and strengthen its service

## Who is eligible?

The Willow Foundation will accept applications from and on behalf of seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds (inclusive) living in the UK. The Willow Foundation defines seriously ill as any medical condition that is life-threatening. All applicants must meet one or more of the following criteria:

### 1. Life-threatening condition:

- receiving active treatment on the date the application is received by the Foundation
- palliative care
- terminal prognosis

### 2. Advanced stages of progressive life-threatening conditions:

- muscle-wasting diseases
- diseases of the nervous system

- autoimmune disorders
- neurological conditions
- chronic organ-specific conditions

While each application will be assessed on its own merit, the applicant's condition must meet at least one of the guidelines as stated. Application forms can be downloaded from the charity's website: [www.willowfoundation.org.uk/specialdays](http://www.willowfoundation.org.uk/specialdays). Alternatively, call the Willow Foundation on 01707 259777 to request application forms by post. Photocopies will be accepted.

## Special day considerations

When recommending our service, please be aware of the following considerations which may influence young people in their choice of special day.

- Our literature contains examples of special days that the charity can offer, but we will always try to accommodate the particular requests of each beneficiary. It is important that the beneficiary has their choice of special day, rather than it being decided for them. If the applicant is unsure what they would like to do, we recommend they indicate any areas of interest. One of our experienced special day coordinators will then discuss ideas and options with them.

- Special day choices should be realistic and about spending time with loved ones. Due to limitations, it may not always be possible for Willow to secure tickets to sold out popular events, in which case the beneficiary will be asked to make a second choice of special day.
- Short breaks to holiday parks are intended for beneficiaries aged 16 to 18 or those beneficiaries wishing to include their children or siblings under the age of 18 on their special day.
- All special days must be taken within a year of application (exceptions will be made for those where there is a medical reason for delay).

## Who funds the days?

Special days are organised and funded by the Willow Foundation to include the beneficiary and a responsible companion (over the age of 18). This includes transport and activity costs. The charity will also fund the cost of including the beneficiary's children, where the beneficiary wishes for them to be part of the special day. Budget depending, additional family or friends can be included.

**If you have any queries, please call 01707 259777 or email [medical@willowfoundation.org.uk](mailto:medical@willowfoundation.org.uk)**

## HELP SHAPE OUR FUTURE

Willow's aim is to help as many seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds as possible. Since 1999 the charity has looked to establish long-term relationships with key referring organisations and medical professionals involved in the treatment and care of young people living with life-threatening illnesses and their families.

These medical relationships will play a key role in the strategic review of the charity's service and activities. We want to capture medical professionals' opinions of our service, understand the wider needs of seriously ill young people and gain a greater understanding of the current pressures on medical provision. These opinions will help shape Willow's future service. If you are interested in getting involved please consider joining our Medical Panel and we will send you a short questionnaire. **Please email 'Medical Panel' to [medical@willowfoundation.org.uk](mailto:medical@willowfoundation.org.uk)**

## In focus

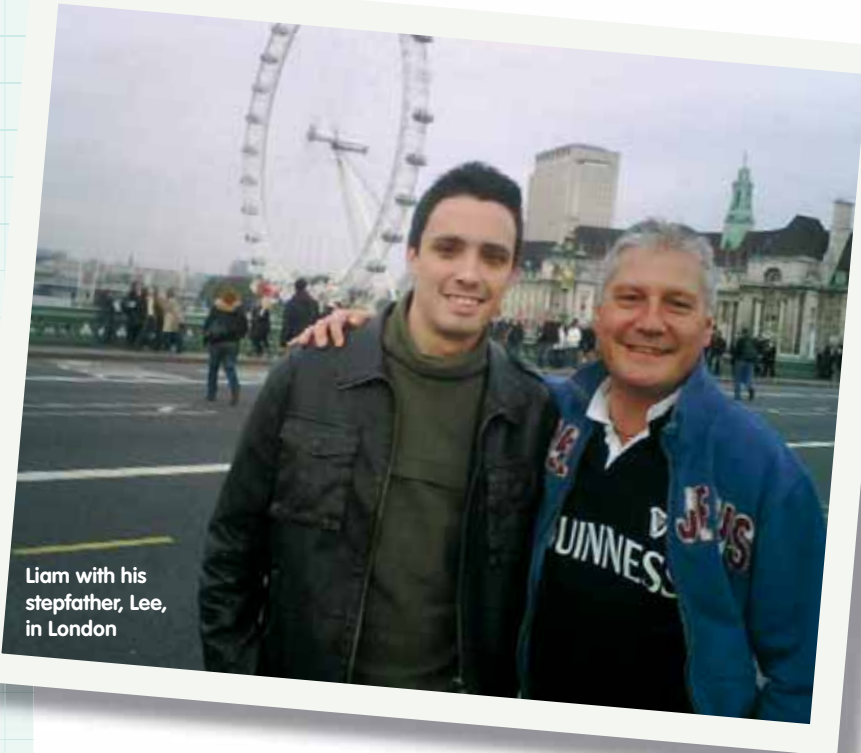
**JULIE CAIN, MACMILLAN CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST FOR TEENAGE AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH CANCER, BEATSON WEST OF SCOTLAND CANCER CENTRE, GARTNAVEL GENERAL HOSPITAL, GLASGOW.**

I provide a supportive care outreach service which includes providing practical and emotional support to young people at all stages of their care. I have referred in excess of 30 patients in less than two years. My young patients always look forward

to their special day. It's very important to them that they can include the family or friends who continue to support them. Many of these young people have undergone extensive treatment, spending long periods of time in hospital and their special days are often taken at the end of this period. For many, their special day signifies the end of a tough journey. The special days provide a real morale-boost, helping them to move on with their lives.

# IN FOCUS: CYSTIC FIBROSIS

IN 2010, 52 YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH CYSTIC FIBROSIS WERE BENEFICIARIES OF SPECIAL DAYS. **LIAM AND HIS MUM, LIZ**, EXPLAIN WHY HIS SPECIAL DAY MADE SUCH A DIFFERENCE



Liam with his stepfather, Lee, in London



## In focus

**LISA MORRISON,**  
CLINICAL SPECIALIST  
PHYSIOTHERAPIST IN  
CYSTIC FIBROSIS (CF), WEST  
OF SCOTLAND ADULT CF UNIT,  
GLASGOW

I lead the small team of physiotherapists looking after the 239 adult patients who have cystic fibrosis from areas in the west of Scotland. This involves in-patient care and continual review of out-patients. We try to optimise the physiotherapy techniques and exercise opportunities that adults with CF use to enable good airway clearance and allow them to lead normal, active, adult lives.

Treatment sessions are often an opportunity to chat to patients about their lives and we can introduce them to organisations such as the Willow Foundation. Although many of our patients with CF now have an increased life expectancy, we still have some who are severely restricted and often oxygen dependent in their early twenties while they wait for organ donation, which may or may not become a reality.

Our team has referred six patients who have had special days. The reports back from patients are always favorable, with comments such as “great to be able to relax and enjoy myself” and “nice to get away/escape for a little”.

Patients often appear more positive about their disease following their special day. For some this positivity starts with the anticipation of the day and often extends beyond the event. All this has an important impact on the individual's health and outlook and frequently gives them the boost they need to continue with the challenges that CF deals them. Sometimes a person needs more than medical help to manage their disease and Willow supports the emotional and psychological well-being of individuals with chronic life-threatening illness. This has a major impact on their determination and coping strategies.

## LIAM'S MUM, LIZ

Liam was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis when he was six weeks old. In many ways this was a blessing as his treatment started so early in his life that he has never known anything different. Initially it was hard to see it that way as a parent, feeling helpless that you couldn't protect your child from his struggle, constantly having physio and medication, visits to the hospital, etc. I felt his life was so fragile, I was afraid that I was going to lose him on many occasions.

Liam has his tough times and it's heartbreaking as a mother to watch him struggle for his breath and coughing uncontrollably when his lungs are infected. But after a couple of weeks in Wythenshawe CF Unit on his IV antibiotics he bounces back and gets on with life. He has a routine each day of tablets and nebulisers and physio, but that helps to keep him well so it's worth it.

Liam's special day was so fantastic and the grin on his face throughout was priceless. We had many a treasured moment when we looked at each other, our hearts lifted and we just smiled.

## LIAM

I chose a theatre trip for my special day and wanted my mum, stepdad and sister by my side. Willow included a bus tour of London, something I've always wanted to do and my sister and I saw the sights for the first time together - an experience neither of us will ever forget. Billy Elliot was also amazing. We laughed a lot and a few of us cried, although I'm not telling who!

**“I will always have those special memories and my scrapbook as a reminder”**

Over the course of my special day I felt really well. The day has continued to make a world of difference. I will always have those special memories and my scrapbook as a reminder. I often take time out to remember my special day and appreciate the kindness and generosity shown by Willow to me and my family. The memories will never be forgotten.

# An uplifting day

Every **Willow special day beneficiary** is living with the difficult realities of a life-threatening illness. The majority of our beneficiaries (around 88% in 2010) have received a cancer diagnosis, including breast cancer, lymphoma, leukaemia, testicular cancer and cancer of the brain. Here we share the stories of two such young people and how their special days made a positive difference to them and their families.



## STUART'S MUM, JOYCE

Stuart was diagnosed with testicular cancer in October 2009 when he was 25. On further examination they found that there was cancer in both lungs. We were told Stuart was Stage 4 and he had the most aggressive form of cancer which spread from the lymph glands in his stomach into his brain and bones. Stuart was in fact a very poorly young man.

Prior to this, Stuart was a fit, healthy, caring young man who loved cycling, walking and who had a passion for classic cars. He was an active member of St John Ambulance and, as a teenager, he belonged to the ATC Air Cadets, where he fuelled his passion for aircraft.

Stuart remained in control of the situation, not once allowing it to get the better of him. It was as if he was telling it: 'Okay you are here in me, you have control of my body but you are not going to have control of me.' And he did, throughout his

illness: he kept in control until he could control it no more. He never once changed from the person he had always been. He still put others first. He thought the nurses' time was wasted on him and that their attention was needed for patients more deserving than himself.

It was during a course of chemotherapy treatment at the Royal Marsden that the nurse spoke to Stuart about the Willow Foundation. She thought it would be great for him to have a special day. Stuart thought long and hard about this and

**"Stuart was quite overwhelmed that he was there with the Red Arrows."**



he decided that a day with the Red Arrows would be what he would like most. Both his dad and I thought this was the most wonderful idea and just perfect for Stuart with his love for planes. We filled out the application form and the nurse sent it off for us.

Kirsty in the special days team called to say the Red Arrows were having a training day in September and asked could we make this day? Well nothing was going to stop us. We were so excited and Stuart was like the cat that got the cream. He continued with his treatment, keeping focused on the date.

The day from beginning to end was ... well, just simply amazing. We met the whole of the team: the pilots, engineers, ground crew, office staff ... everyone. We were there for their pre and post flight briefings. We had a tour of the grounds, looked over the aircraft. They treated us like royalty and **Stuart as a young man, not a patient**. Nothing was too

much trouble. Stuart by now was in a wheelchair but they didn't see the chair; they talked to Stuart, not over him.

We had lunch with the Red Arrows and then we watched a flying display; our very own flying display just for Stuart. I find it very hard indeed to put into words how this made me and his dad feel. Stuart was quite overwhelmed that he was there with the Red Arrows. He came away with a goodie bag, photos and a CD of the Red Arrows. **He also came away with life.**

I took more than 400 photos that day. Such precious photos, which were all printed off and put into two large photo albums for Stuart, which he treasured. He never stopped talking about his special day and the photo albums went everywhere he went. A few weeks later Stuart received a package from the Reds. It was the group photo of us all with them and everyone had signed it for him. This photo was framed and hung pride of place in Stuart's room. He had copies made and framed them to give to family and friends as gifts. He gave one to the nurse at the Marsden who had put him forward to the Willow Foundation, to say thank you to her. She just loved it.

Sadly Stuart deteriorated much sooner than any of us expected. He was admitted to the hospice a week after his 27th birthday. The photo and albums went with him and all the nurses there looked through them and asked him about his special day. He loved to talk about it. He told everyone how great the day had been, how proud and honoured he felt.

Stuart passed away in November 2010. As devastating as this is for his dad and I, when we look at the photos of Stuart's special day, we remember just how happy the day made him. We will always remember just what the Willow Foundation and the Red Arrows did for Stuart and neither of us will ever forget that day; we hold it as close to our hearts as we do Stuart.

**In 2010, the Red Arrows Trust made a generous donation to the charity in support of special days.**

## CATHERINE

I had just started in a new job as deputy head. It felt like a huge achievement to have made deputy at this point in my career, aged 35, and I was loving it. I have to say, my life was going well. I'd married 18 months earlier and the future seemed full of possibilities.

I remember the moment clearly when I discovered the lump. I was home alone as my husband Mark was working that evening. It's strange but I didn't dismiss it and was irrationally upset and called my closest friend. The next few days were the longest ever. It was Easter Saturday so we had to wait until the Tuesday to see the doctor.

The doctor referred me straight away but tried to reassure me. At the end of all the initial screening tests we were taken to speak to the consultant. He said there were two lumps in my left breast. It was confirmed both lumps were cancer so I would have to lose the whole breast. We didn't know what else to expect. The cancer was aggressive and it was the start of a difficult time. The good news came later that it wasn't in my lymph glands and no more immediate operations were needed.

I had surgery in May, ironically on my husband's birthday. But that was the turning point; I woke up feeling strong and determined. It was like a switch had been turned.

It was during my first visit to the chemo suite that my nurse talked to me about the Willow

**"We could forget about the past few months, which seemed to be nothing but hospital visits."**



Foundation. I thought I'm not ill, I don't qualify for this, and filed the application form. During my second round of chemo treatment, my nurse mentioned it again and encouraged me to fill in the form. She talked about how special days had helped other families, returning some normality back into their lives. So I started thinking.

I knew that I wanted it to be for the two of us. Mark had been beside me every step of the way: walking me to the operating theatre; practically carrying me to bed after chemo when I was too woozy to walk; telling me I was beautiful when lumps of hair were falling out after my second treatment. In total I had six bouts of chemotherapy between June and September and then 15 sessions of radiotherapy from November.

I chose a city break in Bath to coincide with our second wedding anniversary in October, which would fall between chemo and radiotherapy. We wanted some time to be a couple.

That's exactly what we got. Every little detail was thought through and arranged. We just had to pack the bag! We felt pampered. The room was beautiful with a big traditional four poster bed. We spent time just wandering around the city, visiting museums and eating good food, not having to worry about doctors appointments or having people (although well meaning) asking how I was all the time. We could forget about the past few months, which seemed to be nothing but hospital visits.

Our anniversary meal at Jamie Oliver's Italian is another memory to cherish. It was a relaxed happy time and it recharged us both before the next round of intensive treatments, which would start when we got back.

It's hard to find the right words to express what the trip meant. The initial phone call to say Willow would grant the day left me with a huge smile on my face, as it was something to focus on and look forward to, knowing it would mean my chemo was finished. As to the difference the day continues to make, it has helped us to realise it's important to cherish the special times and find those special moments in the small things too.

# Red Coats and family fun

Every special day is tailored to the wishes and needs of the beneficiary, making it unique and memorable.



Sarah's favourite red coat

## SARAH'S MUM, TRACEY

Sarah was born with a genetic condition called spinal cerebellar ataxia, which is a degenerative disorder. She also has acute autonomic neuropathy, which means her nervous system is shutting down. Sarah is 22, she's wheelchair bound, fed through a tube, has severe learning disabilities and requires 24-hour care. Plus she has many more conditions; too many to list.

Sarah's brother and sister were born with the same genetic condition and Sarah's sister, Kayleigh, passed away in 2007, just ten days after her 20th birthday. After Kayleigh died, Sarah's health deteriorated rapidly and following several serious operations and long stays in hospital, she is now on more than 40 different drugs each day and has major nursing needs.

When Kayleigh was very ill, we didn't know about the service that Willow provides, so to find that there were people around to help has been a huge boost. My husband heard about Willow when he got chatting to someone who was collecting for the charity at a local supermarket. It was wonderful to hear that there were people who were there to help with the positive things, not just to deal with Sarah's medical needs. By offering Sarah a special day, Willow was treating her like a normal person. The charity was addressing her emotional needs, which can be

overlooked due to the severe learning difficulties that give her the mental age of a young child.

Having had three children with varying levels of disability, our main priority has always been to provide them with quality of life whenever we can. So to know that Willow would include the whole family, not just Sarah, was amazing; as this kind of life-limiting disease affects us all.

When we heard Sarah was eligible for a special day, we decided to do something that would help us forget the day-to-day stresses and provide us with the quality time we crave as a family. So we chose to go to Butlins. Because of Sarah's illness and the difficulties with transporting equipment, medication, etc, a day trip just wouldn't have been possible. The short stay at Butlins gave us all a chance to really wind down. The looks on Sarah and her brother Michael's faces when we arrived were a picture; they were so excited. Because the children were having so much fun, my husband and I were able to relax.

At home Sarah often stays in bed all day because of the pain but the excitement took over and she was out of bed by 8.30am, doing things that she would never normally be comfortable doing. The staff were so great and treated Sarah like a VIP; it made the

**“By offering Sarah a special day, Willow was treating her like a normal person”**

whole experience even more special. We saw a Christmas pantomime during our stay and a Winter Wonderland show. It was really fun packed and kept Sarah distracted from the pain.

Although Sarah was exhausted from the trip, she was just so excited and told everyone all about it. She and Michael came home with toys and all sorts of memorabilia and these remind us all of a very happy trip. Sarah, and all of us, will always remember our happy times at Butlins. We cannot thank Willow enough.



## WHY SUPPORT WILLOW?

We can allocate your donation to fund a specific type of special day and will keep you informed about the positive impact your support has made for the young person and their loved ones.

# Fundraising

In 2011, Willow needs to raise £3 million to provide 1,400 special days for seriously 16 to 40 year olds



## Why Willow needs your support in 2011

Welcome to the fundraising section of *Willow News*. The past few years have been incredibly challenging for Willow and the economic downturn has severely affected the charity's income. Thanks to our loyal supporters, we have never had to turn away an eligible applicant. However, if we are to continue to offer a special day to

all seriously ill young people who meet our criteria, we need your support, now more than ever. To this end, we have developed another exciting programme of fundraising activities for 2011. There really is something for everyone and no matter how much time or resource you have, **YOU REALLY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

## HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**There are so many ways you can support Willow. There really is something to suit everyone. Every pound you raise will help us make a positive difference to the lives of 1,400 seriously ill young people this year, as well as their loved ones.**

### Giving

- Make a single gift
- Make a regular, monthly donation
- Sign up to payroll giving

### Doing

- Sign up for one of Willow's exciting signature or challenge events
- Organise your own fundraiser
- Volunteer your time, in the office, at events or in your community

### Asking

- Help Willow to source auction lots and raffle prizes
- Introduce us to companies who could sponsor special days or Willow events and campaigns

### Introducing

- Tell your employer about Willow and nominate us as your company's Charity of the Year
- Promote Willow events to your family, friends and colleagues

## Giving in tribute

The Willow Foundation has recently launched its new Tribute Funds campaign. It gives supporters the chance to create a lasting tribute to honour the life of a loved one and raise valuable funds for the charity. A Special Days Tribute Fund is a wonderful way to mark a loved one's life and provides an opportunity to bring together friends and family, to donate or fundraise in their memory. All funds raised will be used by Willow to provide special days for seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds.

Family and friends of special day beneficiary, Anna Hall, set up the Anna Hall Special Day Tribute Fund following her death in 2009. With support of those nearest to the couple, her partner, Chris, has organised numerous fundraisers in tribute to Anna and her special day, including a Sportsman's Dinner and a sponsored head shave. Anna's Tribute Fund has to date enabled Willow to fulfil three special days for other beneficiaries.

**If you would like information on how to set up a Special Days Tribute Fund in memory of your loved one, please get in touch with our Special Days Tribute Coordinator, Sarah Austin. Call 01707 259777 or email [sarah.austin@willowfoundation.org.uk](mailto:sarah.austin@willowfoundation.org.uk)**



Anna and Chris' wedding day



On the Orient Express on Anna's special day

# Rising to the challenge

A big thank you to each and every member of 'Team Willow' who has risen to the challenge for the charity over the past year. Whether you have run, walked, swum, cycled or even jumped from a plane, every step you have taken has helped to raise awareness and the valuable funds needed to provide more special days for seriously ill young people.

With an ambitious target to organise even more special days in 2011, we need you to test yourselves and take on a challenge this year. Here are just a few of the national and regional challenges coming up:

- VIRGIN LONDON MARATHON SUNDAY 17 APRIL
- BUPA LONDON 10K MONDAY 30 MAY
- ST ALBANS HALF MARATHON, VERULAMIUM PARK SUNDAY 12 JUNE
- WILLOW WALK, LEE VALLEY PARK, HERTS & ESSEX SUNDAY 19 JUNE
- ASICS BRITISH 10K, LONDON SUNDAY 10 JULY
- VIRGIN LONDON TRIATHLON SATURDAY 30 & SUNDAY 31 JULY
- ADIDAS WOMEN'S 5K, HYDE PARK, LONDON SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER
- GREAT NORTH RUN, SUNDERLAND SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER
- RUN TO THE BEAT, GREENWICH, LONDON SUNDAY 25 SEPTEMBER
- WILLOW10K, HATFIELD HOUSE, HERTFORDSHIRE SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER
- GREAT SOUTH RUN, PORTSMOUTH SUNDAY 23 OCTOBER



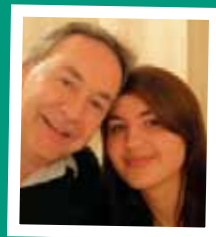
**WHY SUPPORT WILLOW?**  
 Willow organises special days for seriously ill young people throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Wherever in the UK you live, you can be confident that your support will make a difference to someone in your community.

For a full list of opportunities, how to get involved and join Team Willow, please go to:  
[www.willowfoundation.org.uk/fundraising/events/sportingchallenges](http://www.willowfoundation.org.uk/fundraising/events/sportingchallenges)



**High altitude adventures**  
 Chair of the charity's development board, Tony Gibbon, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's highest free-standing mountain, in November. Accompanied by Lee Polisano and Thurstan Guthrie-Brown, the three raised more than £44,000.

In September Neil Caisley and his daughter, Eloise, took part in a challenging seven day trek in the Peruvian Andes mountains. Reaching altitudes of more than 12,000 feet, the intrepid pair trekked across remote valleys and mountains to the lost city of the Incas, Machu Picchu. The funds are still coming in.



## Willow Walk LEE VALLEY PARK HERTS & ESSEX SUNDAY 19 JUNE 2011

Enjoy the fresh air and beautiful surroundings of the Lee Valley Park for the charity's very own 'Willow Walk'. There is a choice of distances to suit every walker: six, five or three miles. It's a great day out for all the family with a free activity sheet for children. What's



more, there's the chance to visit the 2012 Olympics White Water Rafting venue.

## Big achievement in the Big Apple

Every year two million New Yorkers line the city's streets to support the thousands of participants in the New York Marathon. In 2010 one of the runners to experience the Big Apple welcome was Harold Gittelman who ran in aid of the Magic Wand Foundation raising £27,000. The Foundation was set up by Helen Bull and donates funds to Willow to provide special days specifically for those aged 16 to 40 living with cancer.



Harold Gittelman



## willow10K HATFIELD HOUSE HERTFORDSHIRE SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER 2011

The willow10K is back, for the third year running. Once again, you can run or walk the 10k course around the majestic grounds of Hertfordshire's historic Hatfield House. It's a testing course but great fun too, with a fun warm-up, music playing around the park, the Willow team to cheer you on and a hot drink afterwards.



**SIGN UP TODAY!** To sign up to any of the events listed and join Team Willow, or to find out about more opportunities, please go to [www.willowfoundation.org.uk/fundraising/events/sportingchallenges](http://www.willowfoundation.org.uk/fundraising/events/sportingchallenges), call our challenge events team on 01707 259777 or email [challenge@willowfoundation.org.uk](mailto:challenge@willowfoundation.org.uk)

# BOB WILSON SOCCER CYCLE

To celebrate his 70th year, Willow Life President, Bob Wilson, wanted to do something extraordinary to raise valuable funds for Willow. Inspired by his daughter Anna's memory and the lessons learnt from her experience of a life-threatening condition, Bob is determined to help other seriously ill young people throughout the UK.

That's why this spring Bob is taking on the challenge of a lifetime: cycling 500 miles via every Premier League football club in England. Starting at Fulham's Craven Cottage on 18 April and finishing just 11 days later on 28 April at St James' Park in Newcastle, Bob aims to raise in excess of £250,000 to fund hundreds more special days for seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds throughout the UK. Bob will also visit the national stadium, Hampden Park, in his homeland of Scotland. To help raise valuable awareness throughout the ride, he will be joined by old rivals and famous faces from the world of football.



Bob's Greatest Year 1970/71



Bob's latest year - 70th birthday, 71st year

## Support Bob today and help make every mile count

To make a donation, sign up for your own cycle challenge and keep up to speed with Bob's progress, visit [www.bobwilsonsoccercycle.com](http://www.bobwilsonsoccercycle.com)

For details of corporate sponsorship opportunities please call 01707 259777 or email [vicky.gillane@willowfoundation.org.uk](mailto:vicky.gillane@willowfoundation.org.uk)

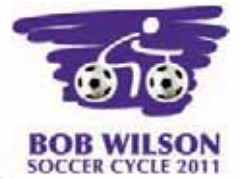
## FEELING INSPIRED?

Are you inspired by Bob's challenge? Could you take on a cycling challenge for Willow yourself?

If you are interested in taking on a sponsored cycle ride, please contact our Challenge Events Manager, Carol Young. Email [challenge@willowfoundation.org.uk](mailto:challenge@willowfoundation.org.uk) or call 01707 259777.



## ROUTE & SCHEDULE



"Turning 70, I wanted to achieve something really special. With every mile of this 500 mile challenge, I will be inspired by young people living with life-threatening conditions and motivated by the Willow Foundation's aim to make a positive difference to their quality of life. I hope I will inspire others to donate to Willow, which will help provide special days for many more young people at a time when they need them most."  
**Bob Wilson OBE**



## AN EVENING OF MAGIC & ILLUSION

On Saturday 12 November 2011 Willow will present **The Spellbound Ball at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, an evening of magic, illusion, music and entertainment.** As our showcase event of the year, our ball is a fantastic opportunity to bring together supporters from across the charity for one terrific evening. Ticket and sponsorship information is available on the Willow website.

### UPDATE FROM 2010 BALL

The 2010 Speakeasy Ball transported guests back to the days of prohibition. A host of first-class auction prizes and generous donations saw the charity

raise a total income of £512,000 on the night. A huge thank you for the support and generosity of everyone involved, with particular thanks to our headline sponsors Pam and Duncan Sinclair of Mountview Estates P.L.C., who will continue with their support in 2011.



### STARS ON CANVAS

In December, Willow held Stars on Canvas 2010, an online auction of artworks by well known faces from the worlds of sport, art and entertainment. In association with artist, Julie-Anne Gilbert, and coupled with an exhibition at the Catto Gallery, Hampstead, the high profile project raised £58,000. Contributing artists included Tracey Emin, Ricky Gervais, Vanessa Feltz, Ian Wright, Bob the Builder illustrator, Keith Chapman, and the Honey Monster.



### AN EVENING WITH RORY BREMNER

One of Britain's best-loved entertainers, Rory Bremner, was the star guest of a Willow fundraiser at Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire. Generously donated to the charity by Danny and Diana Desmond, the evening raised £39,000.

## 2011 Events Calendar

- **CHARITY GOLF DAY - ST PIERRE HOTEL AND COUNTRY CLUB, WALES**  
WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL
- **WILLOW AT LOCH LOMOND - LOCH LOMOND GOLF CLUB**  
SUNDAY 8 - TUESDAY 10 MAY
- **WILLOW FOUNDATION CLAY PIGEON SHOOT -**  
ROYAL BERKSHIRE SHOOTING SCHOOL  
FRIDAY 20 MAY
- **CELEBRITY GOLF DAY - BROCKET HALL, HERTFORDSHIRE**  
MONDAY 23 MAY
- **IAN WRIGHT GOLF CLASSIC - MONTE DA QUINTA RESORT, PORTUGAL**  
22-25 SEPTEMBER
- **THE SPELLBOUND BALL - PARK PLAZA WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, LONDON**  
SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER
- **CHRISTMAS CONCERT - ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL, HERTFORDSHIRE**  
THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER

To reserve your places at any of the events listed, or for further information, please contact Louise Smith, Head of Events. Telephone: 01707 259777 Email: louise.smith@willowfoundation.org.uk

### WHY SUPPORT WILLOW?

We receive applications for special days every day, many of which are urgent due to the medical condition of the applicant. Any funds you raise will be spent straight away, to fund special days that are happening in the coming weeks.

### WILLOW AT LOCH LOMOND



### IAN WRIGHT GOLF CLASSIC



### FUNDRAISING ON THE GREENS

Willow was eager to increase the scope of its golfing offer for 2011. The Celebrity Golf Day at Brocket Hall Golf Club remains a popular event in the charity's calendar but demand for new tournaments remains high. We are therefore proud to introduce two exclusive events.

**Willow at Loch Lomond**, sponsored by ProVision Financial Consultants, will be an intimate event providing a rare opportunity to enjoy Championship golf when the course is at peak condition, luxury accommodation, sumptuous all inclusive food and drinks and high quality entertainment.

**The Ian Wright Golf Classic** will be held at the luxurious Monte Da Quinta Resort in the Algarve. Join Ian and a host of celebrity golfers for an unforgettable weekend of golf and entertainment.

**WHY SUPPORT WILLOW?**

We believe that there is a need to urgently prioritise quality of life for seriously ill young people. That's why our mission is to improve the quality of life of every seriously ill 16 to 40 year old by offering them a special day. The current economic climate has made our mission harder to fulfil, but the need for quality of life hasn't diminished. So we need your support more than ever if we are to continue to make a positive difference to the lives of thousands of young people with life-threatening conditions.



**CHAMPION SUPPORTER**

If you are passionate about Willow and want to make a difference for the charity in your area, why not consider becoming

a Willow Champion? Former special day beneficiary, Katie Sharpe, did just that. Since becoming a Willow Champion, she has taken part in numerous activities to raise valuable funds and awareness of Willow in and around her home town of Pinner, Middlesex, including a bucket collection and bag pack. Increasing the charity's profile in your home town helps Willow increase its reach to seriously ill young people and their families in your neighbourhood, as well as raising valuable funds to provide more special days.

**FANCY TEA**

Matthew Wright was the beneficiary of a special day in 2007. The family business, Abbey Tea Rooms in Pickering, Yorkshire, has since raised almost £2,000, through customer donations, a dress purple day and a circus themed day. Matthew himself has raised a further £1,500.



**Q&A'S**

Tracy Savage and the team at LV Insurance, Hitchin, held a quiz night at a local bar raising a total of £200. The company has since assigned their charitable budget to fund an entire special day. Willow volunteer, Derek Albone (second from left), accepted the cheque on behalf of the charity.

Take time  
FOR  
**TEA**



**MAKE YOUR TEA BREAK COUNT: HELP IMPROVE THE LIVES OF SERIOUSLY ILL YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UK**

THIS JUNE, TURN JUST ONE TEA BREAK INTO A FUNDRAISER FOR THE WILLOW FOUNDATION AND HELP TO PROVIDE SPECIAL DAYS FOR SERIOUSLY ILL 16 TO 40 YEAR OLDS.

WHETHER IT'S SIMPLY TEA AND BISCUITS OR A FULL AFTERNOON TEA PARTY, EVERY CUPPA AND EVERY PENNY REALLY DOES COUNT.

*Time to register!*

REGISTER FOR YOUR FUNDRAISING PACK WITH FREE RECIPES FROM TOP UK CHEF GARY RHODES.

GO TO [WWW.WILLOWFOUNDATION.ORG.UK/TAKETIMEFORTEA](http://WWW.WILLOWFOUNDATION.ORG.UK/TAKETIMEFORTEA) OR EMAIL [TAKETIMEFORTEA@WILLOWFOUNDATION.ORG.UK](mailto:TAKETIMEFORTEA@WILLOWFOUNDATION.ORG.UK)



**Take Time for Tea**

Take Time for Tea is back for 2011. Make your tea break count by turning it into a fundraiser for Willow. For inspiration on how to make your tea break stand out, download the information pack from the Willow website. The campaign proved a big hit in 2010 raising £18,000.



Willow mascot, Mr Benn, takes time out for a cuppa



1st Warley Brownies take time for tea

# What a difference a donation makes

Here are just some examples of how your generosity helps seriously ill 16 to 40 year olds on their special days...



**£10** would fund the hire of a wheelchair for a beneficiary during their stay at a holiday park, so they could make the most of the park's facilities and enjoy a fun and rejuvenating break

**£50** would fund a soothing massage for a beneficiary, helping them to take time out from the stresses of hospital visits and making them feel relaxed and pampered

**£100** would provide tickets for a beneficiary and their young family to a theme park such as Alton Towers, so they can spend quality time together, creating fun, laughter and precious memories

**£500** would fund two weekend tickets to the British Grand Prix for a beneficiary and their best friend, providing an exciting, and adrenalin fuelled experience

**£900** would fund a break for a beneficiary and their partner at a country retreat, including a romantic meal; giving them a chance to enjoy each other's company without the disruption and anxieties of coping with treatment for a life-threatening condition

**£1,225** would fund an entire special day to include chosen activity fees, transport, meals, medical requirements and accommodation (where necessary).



If you are interested in restricting your gift to any of the items above, to a special day taking place in your region of the UK or to a specific type of special day experience, then please do contact us. We'll be happy to comply with your request.



## Donations

I would like to make a donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_  
(please enclose cash or cheque or complete credit card details below)

I would like to commit to a regular donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_  
per month/quarter/year (delete as appropriate). We will send you a form to complete.

I would like someone from Willow to contact me to discuss the other ways in which I can support the charity

My gift is in loving memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Your details will be held on the Willow Foundation's database in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). We will not disclose or share personal information supplied by you with any third party organisation without your consent. We would like to continue to keep you informed about our progress and activities. If you do not wish to receive this information, please tick this box

### Please choose one of the payment methods below:

#### 1. Cash, cheque or CAF cheque

Please enclose cash, cheque or CAF cheque (made payable to 'Willow Foundation') or please tick here  if you wish for us to send a request for payment to release a company cheque.

#### 2. Card payment

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_  
(card must be registered at the address given above)

Card (delete as appropriate): VISA / MASTERCARD / MAESTRO / AMEX

Card no     /     /     /

Start date   /   Expiry date   /

Issue no

Security code

(Last three figures on signature strip, or four figures on front of Amex. Record of your security code will be destroyed when transaction is complete).

#### Gift aid declaration

Please treat all gifts of money that I have made in the past 4 years and all future gifts of money that I make as Gift Aid donations. I understand that I must pay Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax equal to the amount of tax reclaimed by the charity on my donation. By ticking the Gift Aid box, the Willow Foundation will be receive an extra 25p from HMRC for every £1 you donate.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Freepost return address: Freepost RLYY-XLHH-LJHU, Willow Foundation, Willow House, 18 Salisbury Square, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL9 5BE  
T. 01707 259777 F. 01707 259289 E. info@willowfoundation.org.uk W. www.willowfoundation.org.uk