

Poetry supports hospice

A GENEROUS poet has donated hundreds of pounds from the sale of her book to support hospice care.

Dr Averil Stedeford, who lives in Hanley Swan, near Malvern, gave £300 to St Richard's Hospice after selling copies of her poetry book *The Long Way Down*.

The 85-year-old's poetry reflects time spent with her husband after he was found to have inoperable cancer, and of her journey through bereavement.

Her poems also draw on her experiences working at the Sir Michael Sobell House hospice in Oxford as a therapist and teacher of palliative care.

"I wrote most of the poems at the same time as they happened which is why they have an immediacy about them," explained Dr Stedeford, who has written poetry throughout her life.

"People use words like 'it is very comforting'.

"They read it over and over and say it's lovely even though it's so sad.

"I think it describes what they have been through and they think: 'Gosh, somebody else has been through this before me'.

"It gives them hope."

The author and humanitarian Terry Waite has commented on Dr Stedeford's book.

He said: "This book is a very personal account of the pathway Averil trod when her husband died.

"The journey describes the agony of separation and leads the reader through to the positive fruits that can emerge from suffering."

Dr Stedeford, who lives in a care home, will donate all the profits from sales of her book to hospice, cancer and bereavement charities.

St Richard's is the first charity she has donated proceeds to, following publication of her book earlier this year.

Alice Brunt, Fundraiser at St Richard's, said: "We are grateful for Averil's generous donation - her support is very much appreciated.

"Her donation will go towards funding our specialist care to patients living with life-limiting illnesses, their loved ones and bereaved people across Worcestershire."

A *Long Way Down* is available to buy from Aspect Design, in Newtown Road, Malvern, and The Lyttleton Well bookshop, in Church Street, Malvern.

St Richard's Hospice pro-

vides free specialist palliative and end of life care for patients living with life-limiting illnesses and supports their loved ones.

Each year the hospice team supports more than 3,000 patients, family members and bereaved people in Worcestershire.

The hospice strives to provide the best medical, practical, emotional and social support they can to help people live life to the fullest, as independently as they can, for as long as they can.

They care for people with a range of illnesses including heart failure, Parkinson's, and motor neurone disease as well as cancer.



Dr Averil Stedeford from Hanley Swan has donated £300 from the proceeds of his poetry book 'The Long Way Down' to St Richard's Hospice