

# The Bolton News

## **Jim shares dementia pain with TV newsman**

2:00pm Friday 20th February 2009

A FORMER teacher from Bolton and TV newsman John Suchet are supporting each other as they face the heartbreak of their wives' dementia.

Jim Swift was put in touch with Mr Suchet by the charity For Dementia last summer and they are in email contact and have met several times. The pair met through the charity's Uniting Carers programme, which introduces people whose partners are at similar stages of the disease.

Mr Suchet spoke publicly for the first time this week about the pain of seeing his wife, Bonnie, aged 67, gradually deteriorating with the condition.

He and Mr Swift, aged 62, have been sharing their experiences of dementia as they struggle to cope with what it is doing to the women they love.

Janet Swift, aged 65, who is also a former teacher, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2002. The couple have two daughters, Helen and Claire, aged 37 and 33.

Mr Swift, of Hough Fold Way, Harwood, said: "I am living with someone who used to be my wife. All I have left is the fact that she knows she loves me and our children. It is difficult to deal with, it's really the shredding of my wife's abilities."

Mrs Swift first showed signs of dementia in 1996, when she began losing her memory. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2002.

Mr Swift said: "It helps to talk to John, it does not make it easier but it helps to know you are not alone."

He wants to raise awareness of dementia and the help available for carers.

Mr Swift said: "There is help out there but the Government needs to expand the support already available and look at the benefits system for carers."

Other charities supporting him include Admiral Nursing Direct, Crossroads and Creative Support. Mr Swift has set up a support group YOGA, the Young Onset Group Association, which meets at the Brooklyn Pub, Green Lane, Great Lever, on the third Monday of the month at 2pm.

For information on For Dementia visit [fordementia.org.uk](http://fordementia.org.uk) and Admiral Nursing Direct's helpline is 0845 2579406.

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