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Artwork brings breath of sea air to hospice

A patient's artwork has been given pride of place at Sunderland's St Benedict's Hospice and Centre for Specialist Palliative Care.

The seaside-themed work by Bell (correct) Lancaster, 74, measuring about 9ft by 3ft, is situated in the rooftop garden of the hospice, where it can be enjoyed by patients, and their relatives, and staff.

Using her imagination and all kinds of materials, from shells and fishing net to a yoghurt carton, great-grandmother Mrs Lancaster, who has cancer, made it earlier this year over several weeks, in between radiotherapy sessions.

"It gave me something to focus on when I was undergoing treatment to help me get through the days, says Mrs Lancaster, of Lakeside Village, Sunderland. "I only hope it gives pleasure to others."

It was not her first artistic venture: she took up painting as a hobby when she retired almost 10 years ago from her job as a technical officer at Sunderland Royal Hospital and she discovered she had a real talent for it. Most of her work depicts the sea and the beach, reflecting her life-long love of the coast. She was among a group of amateur artists from St Benedict's day care unit who contributed to an exhibition in 2013, which raised more than £800 for the hospice. Her husband, Ernie, 75, liked one of her paintings of a lighthouse so much that he bought it himself for £100.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust staff provide patients at St Benedict's with end-of-life and specialist palliative care and also support their loved ones. The hospice relocated from Monkwearmouth Hospital to a new, £12 million state-of-the art, purpose-built building at St Benedict's Way, Ryhope, in June, 2013. As well as 14 in-patient beds, there is also a day unit and out-of-hours care and lymphoedema and outpatient services are available, along with an education department.

Joy McDonald, day care manager, said: "Bell's creation is a really wonderful addition to the hospice and it is much appreciated by everyone who sees it. Our rooftop garden is a special place, where people can enjoy some peace, and this artwork adds to the tranquil atmosphere."

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Pictured above: The photograph is Artist Bell Lancaster with St Benedict's Hospice day care patients and staff beside her artwork in the rooftop garden. She is holding her painting for which her husband paid £100 in aid of the hospice

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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