

House & Home

The Birtley House Group Newsletter

Spring 2013

Someone once said that an optimist is the human personification of Springtime, and after enduring the long, cold, wet winter a bit of optimism about any forthcoming warmer weather will be very gratefully received, I'm sure!

Typically unpredictable British weather notwithstanding, at Birtley House one of the most noticeable qualities that so many of our residents seem to display, very soon after arriving, is a new-found optimism about life. Sometimes this can be put down to simply getting some good old-fashioned TLC (something we feel we can provide in abundance!) but usually it is because our staff have a genuine passion for providing the best possible nursing care. The sense of security about their future, no matter what physical problems may befall them, taken in conjunction with a truly inspiring and thoughtful social activities' programme, has given many of our residents a new-found positivity.

For our residents' families and friends, too, optimism about the future is also something that they quickly discover after their relative or friend has arrived here. It's wonderful to hear that they have had a chance to really talk, something that, with the gradually increasing problems and concerns they faced prior to coming here, they might not have been able to do for some time.

Many visitors comment on the peaceful, calm atmosphere that Birtley House exudes. We believe that this comes from it being a happy family home for so many years. This is reflected in the quality of life and the positive and welcoming interactions of everyone here. We believe in always looking forward, not back.

Optimism is infectious – I hope we can all catch it!

Frank Whalley



As this is the 25th edition of *House & Home* it seemed about time we had a new format for the newsletter, which we hope you like.

For future editions, we are working towards producing an e-newsletter for those of you who would prefer to receive information via email. As always, the newsletter is also available to download from our website:

www.birtleyhouse.co.uk

We plan to start including articles which involve the local community, of which Birtley House is an integral part. Please let us know if you have any ideas for any other future articles.

Wishing all our readers a Very Happy Easter.

*Janet Hall
& Carolina Castro*

Social Activities ...

Art

Inspired by Chinese New Year and it being the year of the snake, we decided to decorate our board with decorations for this occasion using various different techniques of painting or colouring, and bravely experimenting with blow painting which proved to be most effective.



Cooking

This usually has a mixed response but for those who still miss their kitchens we offer a cooking session once a month and delicacies produced this year have been sweet and savoury scones, apple cake and soda bread. We are very grateful to Kim Edwards (Sister in Charge) and Lynne Cawkwell (Foot Health Therapist) for their involvement from time to time in our cooking afternoons. They are both keen cake makers with a talent for very creative icing so their inspiration and enthusiasm is infectious!



Our New Year activities began by welcoming **Tina Bell** to our team and Carol and I are sure that she will be a great asset to this department. Always varied and with the aim that there is "something for everyone to enjoy" we have had a very busy few months. Music is probably the most popular attraction and we have already enjoyed several different performers this year. Early in January, **Margaret Watson**, a Harpist, entertained us most beautifully on her Victorian harp which suited the ambience and furniture of the drawing room where 34 residents plus staff had



gathered to listen to this recital. We were all enthralled with Margaret's performance and it was much appreciated by our residents that during tea, she went around chatting to almost everyone.

The following month we were treated to the talented musicians, **Mervyn Mewis & Kathryn Young** who played on instruments made entirely themselves, using English timber.



We were introduced to the melodic sounds of ancient instruments which was a new experience for most of us. **Kevin Jacot** recently gave a recital in the drawing room on his keyboard. Kevin is always a popular performer at Birtley House with his versatility in what he plays and sings. **Alan Poulton** another talented pianist gave our residents a musical treat during their afternoon of flower arranging, which certainly inspired some beautiful creations! We gave Alan the difficult task of judging these arrangements, a tough task, but in the end he awarded first prize to Mrs Jean Stevens from Birtley Mews.



Hannah Greenfield who has been coming to Birtley for several years now, is giving a recital of her Handbell ringing before Easter and her performances never fail to give pleasure.



There are always keen gardeners amongst us, and the bulbs that had been planted in November were ready to come indoors in February and have given a great deal of pleasure both in public areas and to the individuals who were delighted to have the cheerfulness of the narcissi in their rooms.

Not only do we encourage exercising the mind but also the body! Our Gentle exercises to music held twice a month, has become extremely popular, as has the T'ai Chi class, run by **Charles Townsend**, once a month. Anyone who has not yet been to one of these classes, should definitely give it a try!

For those who are unable to attend Church, we have regular monthly Communion services and are very grateful to our Chaplain, the Reverend Tricia Hislop for taking these services and for her regular visits. Our thanks also to Father David Osborne, who takes Mass once a month, with the help of Deacon Roy and it is good to see some visitors attending these services as well.

Various quizzes keep the residents' minds stimulated and these are organized at least once or twice a month and are always surprisingly well attended! We also had several special occasions and Saints' days to celebrate during the early part of the year, including Burns' Night, Chinese New Year, St. David's Day, St. Patrick's Day, St. George's Day (shortly) and a very enjoyable Shrove Tuesday with some excellent pancake tossing!

I would like to add that visitors are always very welcome to join us in our weekly activities or time your visits to coincide with teatime! Thank you to everyone for their enthusiasm and participation in Activities and to my colleagues, Carol, Tina, and Ann at the weekends, for implementing all the various ideas we come up with to keep everyone entertained and active!

*Caroline Whalley
Director & Head of Social Activities*

Pets As Therapy

PAT Dog Theo, our cocker spaniel visitor, was rather unwell for a while and therefore unable to visit but I am pleased to report that he and his owner Claire Jenkinson are now back to their regular twice a month visits which are much enjoyed by our many dog lovers.

Introducing Qweenie



As from April, we shall be introducing a PAT Cat as well, though not on the same day as Theo!

Sue Collingwood will be bringing her Burmese cat Qweenie to Birtley and we are sure that this new attraction will be well received by our cat lovers.

Birtley House Book Club

Knitting Group

This is now known as the "Knit and Natter Group" and they wasted no time at all in getting started with their project for the 2013 Shoebox Appeal. This dedicated group of ladies from both Birtley Mews and the Nursing Home, meet twice a month to knit, chat and enjoy afternoon tea together.



Saturday Cinema

Films continue to be popular, especially the full length feature films organized by Ann Enticknap once a month. This year "South Pacific" was well attended and brought some sunshine during the dreary winter days! "Born Free" is the Easter weekend film and as well as these films, a wide variety of interesting documentaries are also shown.

Bridge & Rummikub

These are regularly played and greatly encouraged.

If anyone would like to join a Bridge group, please do let one of the activities organisers know and we can help to arrange a game.

The Book Club is a wonderful mix of avid readers and those who may not read very much themselves now, but enjoy hearing about books that others have enjoyed. Ann Enticknap, who started the Club, has provided a great range of books for discussion on each chosen topic, both from Public Libraries and also from her own private, extensive (and still growing) collection. She also spent much time researching the authors' background, and found out what led them to write their stories, which gave a richer understanding of the books for discussion.

When Ann sadly resigned last Christmas, I welcomed the opportunity to take on her role, as facilitator of the Book Club, and have greatly enjoyed getting to know the members of the group, and sharing the lively discussions about the books and the authors. We still meet once a month on a Friday, and have a different topic each month. So far this year we have had topics such as, "A Place in the Sun", looking at authors who had a dream to go to some foreign country and make wine, or restore castles, or grow flowers. Some members of the group had interesting stories of their own, similar experiences to share.



Last month our topic was "Animals, Our Companions and Helpers", and looked at some extraordinary stories about the role animals have played in bringing enrichment to the lives of their owners, or comfort and rehabilitation to their owners after an illness or tragedy.

For March our topic is "Readers Choice", and everyone is welcome to bring along a book that they have read recently or long ago, that they have enjoyed and would like to share with the group.

*Jeni Gait-Smith
Birtley Mews Warden*

The Elizabeth Nurse Initiative

Over the past several years the diversity and complexity of the health and social care needs of older people in care homes has continued to increase. They now include acute and chronic illness, dementia, intermediate care, re-enablement, palliative and end of life care.

At the same time evidence indicates that the specialist nursing knowledge and the behaviours and skills required of lead nurses and the provision of effective leadership and development for nurses and carers in their teams, remains seriously underdeveloped and in need of urgent attention.

Birtley House has joined an informal consortium of care homes, Surrey University and a lead consultancy (360° Forward) to develop a pilot project to demonstrate the real advantages of specialist training in this area.

These advantages may be summarised as follows:

1. Improved delivery of care to the standard required individually by each resident and his/her family.
2. Prevention of those experiences that unsettle residents and their relatives about care homes.
3. Driving continuing improvements in practice to ensure better outcomes and improved standards for each client group in the Home.
4. Demonstrating measurable improvements in reputation.
5. Offering nurses and carers a career path towards attainment of specialist nursing qualifications in older people care that equates to the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC) 'Specialist Practitioner: Adult Nursing' (which is a recordable qualification) for nurses and a Level 3 or 4 equivalent qualification for carers with a pathway to higher qualification if desired.
6. Demonstrating efficiency savings, less reliance on agency staffing, lower sickness/absence, high staff motivation, and reduced staff turnover.

Piloting the Proposal



Brokered and initiated by 360° Forward, a small number of pioneering care home owner/managers (including Birtley House) are looking to map out how the first Elizabeth Nurse/Carer Programme could be funded and piloted. The competencies required of the Elizabeth Nurse/Carer are being clarified and a proposed curriculum is evolving. Identified pilot learning centre homes would work within a set of agreed principles and operational criteria undertaking work based learning for candidates undergoing the Elizabeth Nurse programme accredited by the NMC approved Education Provider partner.

This would promote collaborative multidisciplinary team working within and beyond the confines of each Home including contacts with the NHS. In this way learning centre care homes would become 'hubs' for continuing learning. We are keen for Birtley House to be an active participant in this programme and are currently well-placed to take a key role in establishing this exciting new initiative.



This initiative by the English Community Care Association (ECCA) aims to encourage communities to go into their local care homes and to connect residents and communities together.

Community outreach is already an integral part of the Birtley ethos - both inside the Care Sector (e.g. ECCA, where Simon is a Board member) and in the charity field locally (including the Community Foundation for Surrey where Simon is a Trustee). The events we hold at Birtley attract thousands of visitors each year making it a living part of the community and giving a sense of pride and 'belonging' for our residents. So, you could say that Birtley lead the way in Community involvement, which for most Homes is a new and rather novel idea!

Plans for our Open Day on June 21st are still in their infancy but will be communicated to you as soon as possible.

From Matron's Desk ...

It's been a busy time for the home through Christmas and New Year, and we are still waiting for spring to arrive. Our workforce is growing and we have some new staff with new roles who we hope will enhance the team and your lives.

Alicia Manduca who has joined us as a Nutritionist; she will be looking at everyone's dietary needs and supporting all departments involved in delivering food to you. She will be coming to meet you shortly and will be asking you to complete a short survey for us so we can look at improving this service to you.

We have also taken on some extra help in the care department Gina Simbajon has joined us as a Care Assistant and Fausitina (Tina) Mubaiwa as a Senior Carer. During March and April there will be a few more new faces within the care and nursing team: Gill Madgewick (Lead Carer), Lesley Beardmore (Care Assistant), Katie Cowey (Care Assistant) and Bea Du Plessis (Senior Staff Nurse). So, as you can see a lot of new people to get to know.

We have employed Amber Turnell who has many years of experience in supporting people during times of trouble including bereavement and family difficulties. She also has supervision skills which the nurses will be tapping into. You will see her on a regular basis around the home at present on a Thursday; she will be introducing herself to you all individually over the coming weeks and also introduces herself on the next page of this newsletter. Amber is in integral part of the team, shown below, working with me towards our Gold Standard Framework (GSF) accreditation along with Kim Edwards and Sarah Carroll.



Finally, we are looking forward to being involved in an open day for the nursing home organised by ECCA, more on this to follow.

Introducing Amber Turnell

Amber Turnell has joined Birtley House Nursing home as Counsellor/ Supervision Officer and will be working alongside the nursing team supporting residents, and their families, nursing and care staff in their duties.



I am pleased to be joining the team at Birtley House in providing psychological and practical support to residents, their families and staff. I aim to meet with you soon as time allows to introduce myself to you all.

My experience to date includes private practise, short and long term work within the health care sector with a background Palliative Care working in two sites for Hospices in Surrey and Sussex, as a staff supervisor. I have 7 years' experience supporting patients and families as a counsellor helping people cope better and come to terms with changes in life and circumstances.

I am a member of British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, have obtained an Hons Degree in Counselling and Diploma in Supervision amongst other courses. I aim to continue with my own personal and professional development to be able to keep up with research and therefore continue to advance the support I provide.

Confidentiality and professional conduct are important and part of my core principles. I have worked in teams for many years working in the past for Kent Police as a Briefing Officer, alongside Senior Officers in the Intelligence Unit, and now I am looking forward to working with the Birtley House Staff.

I live locally and work in a variety of roles which I find exciting, challenging and stimulating. I try and maintain a balance with life enhancing things, my passion for the sea, (I have a beach hut on the south coast where I spend quiet, reflective hours). Holidays, friends, cooking (and eating!) and the theatre are all areas of my life that are important to me. I am also blessed with having two granddaughters (both under 2) with whom I spend many joyous times.

We can all make a difference to each other and I hope to add to the positive forward thinking ethos of Birtley House. I am passionate about people, life and making the most of our days. I keep in mind this saying :

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." – Mahatma Gandhi



Aiming to achieve the best quality of life for residents particularly towards the end of life.

Along with many care homes across the country, Birtley House is working with residents, families and colleagues to develop improvements in the quality and organisation of care for people approaching the end of their lives.

As a part of this process, Birtley has joined the National Gold Standards Framework in Care Homes Programme, supported by local facilitators, the National GSF team and other colleagues. This entails the home being part of a training programme, with the GSF Leads attending workshops and training events, implementing the learning with all staff, residents and families to optimise care for all residents. There is an independent quality assurance process, which recognises those homes that have undertaken the GSF Care Homes Training programme and demonstrates full integration of the work into their home.

View from the Gardens



Spring has sprung. Well, for two days at least but as I write this with the rain teaming down I'm left wondering if we'll see the sun again this year !

Despite such a wet summer followed by a cold winter things are looking remarkably under control in the gardens. The first mow has been done and all lawn edges have been clipped. The mulching regime is under way, with only a few areas left to do. This is an important, if labour intensive job, providing essential nutrients for the plants and also suppressing annual weeds and retaining moisture in our mostly free draining sandy soil.

Having worked through some very challenging conditions, David is nearing completion on phase one of rebuilding the wall in the mini orchard. Reusing the original stone he has completely rebuilt the middle section and also built in a set of steps which provide access to the highest point in the garden. This area has been re-landscaped



and once the seeded lawn has established a small grove of fruit trees will provide dappled shade to a seating area that offers fantastic views across the top of the garden toward the woodland and on to the lake.

The cider orchard is now entering its third growing season and despite a few losses and some rabbit damage, everything is looking positive. Taking advantage of the few sunny days, an early spray has been completed on the weeds and with the help of Oakleaf Enterprises the ploughing ruts and rabbit holes have started to be filled in. A rabbit proof fence is being erected in the following weeks to alleviate this problem. Growing will now begin in earnest so a programme of regular spraying will commence ensuring the trees remain in top health. There will be a few more years yet of establishing the trees and installing the infrastructure but with any luck the future looks bright for producing our own cider.

Regrettably we are planning to leave several areas fallow this season. The wild flower border and the 2 herbaceous beds closest to the house will be left empty allowing us

to tackle the perennial weed problem we have in them. Although this looks unpleasant it desperately needs to be done and looking to the future we will be able to provide much more attractive, mostly weed free displays.

The veg and fruit gardens are primed and ready to produce an abundance of crops. Looking ahead we are planning on expanding this valuable resource. Plans are being mooted for a Birtley Box scheme, whereby you can purchase a box for a set price which we will fill with seasonal fruit and veg. This is still in the planning phase and may not be up and running this year, but watch this space as we will soon be putting out some information to gauge what kind of interest we may have.

As with anything in gardening the trick is to get things under control early and we will be spending the next few weeks finishing off all the mulching and any cutting back that still needs doing, pruning the roses, feeding and re-seeding the lawns, seed sowing vegetables and bedding plants and making sure we get on top of the weeds before they get on top of us.

With the beautiful surroundings we have here we are always treated to some fantastic displays from the local bird population. Most days several buzzards can be seen circling high over the gardens, there is a sparrow hawk who patrols the grounds looking for a meal and can often be seen perching on the various structures. Kestrels are common place hovering over the meadow grass hopefully looking to nab one of the Voles that are munching away at the plants. Recently a barn owl has been seen hunting through the meadow - its well worth getting here early in the morning to see this wonderful flying display.

Sadly, Sean who has been working with us for just under a year has moved on and will be greatly missed as we could always rely on him to get on with things with no fuss. We would like to wish him all the best and hope he comes back to see how some of the work he started has progressed.



Finally we always value any feedback, either positive or negative, so if you would like to contact us regarding anything garden related please don't hesitate to do so on Gardens@birtleyhouse.co.uk.

*Matt Miller
Assistant Head Gardener*

RARE
PLANT
FAIR



*A wonderful event
for all gardeners*

Birtley House

Sunday 14th April

11am - 4pm

Entrance: £4

which includes
entrance to the grounds
(free for residents & staff)

Homemade Teas

You will have the opportunity to buy unusual and hard to find plants as well as many of the tried and trusted reliable garden varieties. There will be exceptional nurseries offering a wide range of interesting shrubs, perennials and bulbs to enhance your garden. All the nurseries attending are dedicated to giving you well grown plants, at reasonable prices, along with information to ensure that the plants you buy thrive in your garden.

Date for your Diary ...

Surrey Hills Wood Fair

5th & 6th October
10am - 5pm

The Surrey Hills Wood Fair, held in the parkland at Birtley House, started in 2010 and is a popular event bringing local people in touch with woodland contractors, crafts people, wood stove installers and equipment showcasing 'All that's good about Wood'. In 2012 we had over 3,000 visitors.

This year we have been successful in securing the Boat Project to be the star feature of the show. It is the South East Cultural Olympiad project and is a 30th sailing boat called 'Collective Spirit' which is made up of a 'collage of memories', and includes some 1,200 donations of wooden items from individuals including a tiny piece of the Mary Rose, a sliver of Jimi Hendrix's guitar, a salad server in the shape of a spanner, a plank from the London 2012 Velodrome, several Hockey Sticks and a Victorian Policeman's truncheon. It is not only a great celebration of wood and the stories behind the wooden item, but is a stunning sculpture and a piece of public art.



Physiotherapy at Birtley House



BEVAN WILSON

Physiotherapy & Sport Injuries Clinics

Specialist Neurological and rehabilitation physiotherapy is available at Birtley House.

According to a recent survey commissioned for Parkinson's UK, over 70% of people have little or no knowledge of the condition, which affects 1 in 500 Britons, or about 127,000 people.

Parkinson's UK are hoping that a new national advertising and information campaign will reach at least a third of the population and have a similar awareness-raising effect to the Stroke Association's FAST campaign.



Sara McGowan is a specialist neurological and rehabilitation physiotherapist based at Birtley House seeing patients in the residential treatment room or in their own homes in and around the Guildford area. Sara has significant experience in rehabilitating all neurological and rehabilitation patients but has a particular interest in Parkinson's and Stroke.

Should you or a family member wish to discuss issues relating to neurological or general rehabilitation physiotherapy please contact:
Bevan Wilson Physiotherapy on 01483 424505.

**For further information about all the specialist rehabilitation physiotherapy services available to Birtley House residents please visit the Bevan Wilson website at:
www.bevanwilson.co.uk**

Sculpture comes to Birtley



Now in its fifth year, The Sculpture Garden is the largest temporary sculpture exhibition in Surrey, possibly the South East.

We are expecting 150 sculptures by 54 different artists, 15 of whom are new to this exhibition at Birtley House.

As always there will be a wide variety of exhibits in terms of style, shape, size and media. One particularly exciting piece we are expecting, shown here, is called *Symbios II* by sculptor Jane Clarke. This piece in stainless steel has been on public display across the UK including Althorp, the Spencer family home in Northampton and the Honda Formula One Team headquarters. Following these exhibitions Jane was commissioned to make a slightly smaller piece for a private garden in London recently.



The Sculpture Garden exhibition is very popular with our residents who enjoy the extra 'buzz' associated with the arrival of all the exhibits and the continual flow of visitors around the estate. In addition, Caroline and the Activities always tailor some of the activities over the month to focus on the exhibition e.g. the lively Art appreciation afternoon when individual likes and dislikes are discussed.



4th May - 2nd June

Open daily: 10am - 5pm

Entrance to the exhibition remains free but we encourage donations to the Community Foundation for Surrey.



All sculpture for sale

Children's Quiz

Teas: 2:30 - 5pm
Weekends and Bank Holiday
Holidays only

Private Viewings
We can arrange teas at other times for group visits. Alternatively, private evening viewings, incorporating a drinks and canapes reception, can be arranged.

**A big Birtley welcome
to our new members
of staff since January
and few who have just
started:**

Lesley Beardmore
Care Assistant

Tina Bell
Activities Assistant

Michaela Copley
Care Assistant

Katie Cowey
Care Assistant

Beatrix Du Plessis
Senior Staff Nurse

Gill Madgewick
Lead Carer

Alicia Manduca
Nutritionist & Care Assistant

Fausitina Mubaiwa
Senior Care Assistant

Rachel Richards
PA to Director

Gina Simbajon
Care Assistant

Amber Turnell
Counsellor/Supervision Officer

Katalin Vass
Housekeeping Assistant

Peter Walker
Pantry Assistant

**Farewell to the
following who have
moved onto new jobs
elsewhere:**

Katarzyna Obrycka
(Housekeeping Assistant),
Mariola Paszkiewicz (Senior
Care Assistant), Sarah Walters
(Lead Carer), Sean Richards
(Gardener) and Sue Wilkinson
(Staff Nurse)

Staff News

Happy Retirement to Pat Aberdeen

Over sixty residents, colleagues and friends gathered at Birtley House Nursing Home at Bramley on 17th January to mark 60 years in nursing for Staff Nurse Pat Aberdeen and to wish her well in her second retirement. Pat qualified at St George's Hospital in 1953 and later worked for many years at the Royal Surrey County Hospital where she worked as a night sister and was closely involved in training new nurses.



Pat 'retired' in 1988 and joined the Birtley House team where she has worked, mainly as a night-duty staff nurse, for nearly two and a half decades. In this time Pat built a wonderful caring reputation and several residents and colleagues shared their happy experience of this care with those assembled to wish her well.

Promotions

Ewa Drabik was promoted to Senior Care Assistant late last year and Carole Fulker was promoted to Lead Carer just recently.

Our congratulations also go to Matt Miller on his promotion to Assistant Head Gardener.

Foot Therapy

Lynn Cawkwell, who was a Senior Care Assistant (Bank) has qualified as a Foot Health Therapist and is now a registered member of the British Association of Foot Health Professionals. She holds a Diploma in Foot Health from the SMAE Institute. Lynn has over 30 years' experience in elderly care, before she came to Birtley House. She currently visits the residents at Birtley House for foot health therapy sessions on an ad hoc basis.

House & Home is available to download from
www.birtleyhouse.co.uk

The next edition will be August 2013
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