



# house & home

Birtley

The Birtley House Group Newsletter, Spring 2015

Mervyn Mewis explains how  
**Green Wood Works**

Is your ISA about to  
**get nicer?**

The Care Act  
**2014**

The History of **Sculpture Gardens**

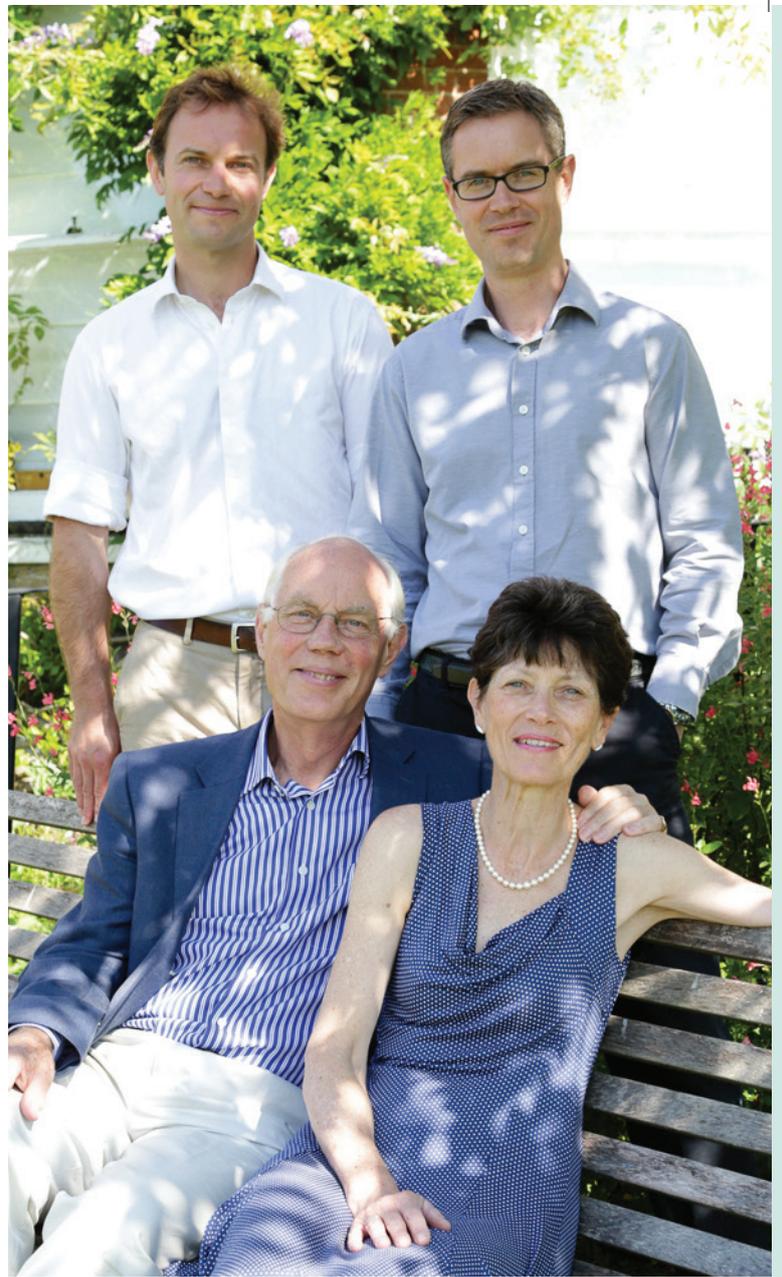
The **Elizabeth Nurse  
Initiative**

# A warm Welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2015 edition of the Birtley newsletter, and we hope you like the new look – all feedback gratefully received!

At the recent Elizabeth Nurse presentation ceremony held at Birtley (see page 4 for more details) it was heartening to hear MP's Jeremy Hunt and Anne Milton talking so passionately about their desire to properly address the needs of those in care homes, and how this could be achieved by combining the talents of the Social Care and Health Care sectors. This same collaboration between different departments - in effect, smart teamwork – is what we try to achieve at Birtley. Caroline has explained in her article how this works in the Activities team, and Amber Turnell has been instrumental in organising and instructing a number of staff members in her enlightening Communication Training sessions over the past months. Effective communication is the key to helping an organisation as large as Birtley to run efficiently, and we are working hard to identify any areas where this might not be as good as it could be. Ultimately, this results in better informed, more relaxed and more contented staff which can only be good for our residents.

Good collaboration within Birtley is not the whole story though, as we also strive to further our connections and influence amongst the



local community. This helps to add, we hope, a rich experience to the lives of our residents that can be as beneficial to their well-being as traditional care. Mervyn Mewis, who you can read about in the newsletter in the first of a new series called Birtley Links, is someone who does exactly that, and we hope you enjoy reading about him. I know he'd be delighted to talk to any of our residents or their families should they make their way to his workshop in our woods during our events this year.

With Easter fast-approaching, and the promise of some warmer days ahead, we look forward to the wonderful events that we have in store for our residents and the local community this summer.

*Frank Whalley*  
*Managing Director*



## From Matron's desk ...The Care Act 2014

At last spring seems to have arrived and we can all look forward to lighter evenings, and time spent outside once again. With spring there comes some fundamental changes within the care system on a national level. There will be the introduction of the Care Act 2014 which is the largest piece of legislation within the care system for 60 years.

We are looking at how this affects Birtley, how we deliver care and how we inform you about the care you receive. There will be even more involvement with families, where consent has been given, and, of course more meetings with our residents to discuss care needs and all other aspects of life. If anyone would like more information on this, please let me know.

Alongside these changes the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the organisation which regulates care homes, has overhauled its way of inspecting homes and the criteria it feels demonstrates 'good care'. This will mean some changes to documentation and more challenges around safeguarding and person-centred care. I will be producing a leaflet for residents and families to explain person-centred care and how any changes will affect you. Person-centred care is a positive way

forward, and I view this approach as building upon what already exists here at Birtley. i.e. making the quality of life even better for all our residents.

The company has invested in staff training over the past year and onwards into this year. This is to ensure that our staff are continually updating and improving their skills and knowledge, ensuring that the care you receive is compassionate and evidence based. Clinical Lead Rudo and Staff Nurse Orsi are currently undertaking a Mentorship course and Staff Nurse Michelle and I will be updating our skills in Palliative care.

I have also been delivering some core training to our care staff. I think that the coming year will be an exciting and interesting one for all of us.

On a personal note, I am looking forward to two new grandchildren being born in early spring both boys, or so the scans say, photos to follow. I also have a new puppy, Louie, who I will bring to meet you when he is trained.

*Karen Williams  
Matron/Registered Manager*



# Elizabeth Care certificate

presented by MPs Jeremy Hunt and Anne Milton  
to Birtley House Lead Carer, Ola Szychulska

Birtley House had a very exciting evening on Friday 23rd January with Jeremy Hunt, MP for South West Surrey and Secretary of State for Health, and Anne Milton, MP for Guildford, presenting the first Elizabeth Care certificates awarded following a course at the University of Surrey to six successful candidates, including Birtley Lead Carer, Ola Szychulska, who received a very loud cheer from fellow staff.

The Elizabeth Care course is part of a project that offers the first real career pathway for those wishing to specialise in Health and Social Care for the Elderly.

An invited audience of over 50, including the Mayor of Waverley, Cllr Liz Wheatley and Prof Martin Green, CEO of Care England and several of Birtley House residents and staff, were there to see the ceremony and join in the celebrations.

Jeremy Hunt congratulated all the candidates and said *"I was delighted to visit Birtley House Nursing Home and take part in the presentations to students involved in the Surrey-based Elizabeth Care project. I want to make this the best country in the world to grow old – and that means continuing to do everything we can to improve a culture of compassionate care. This programme is a really important initiative and I look forward to seeing it develop further in the future."*

Anne Milton added her congratulations and thanks to Birtley and Rosemary Hurlley of 360° Forward, who pioneered the course, for their support for the project.

**Many congratulations to Ola.**

# Foot health at Birtley House

My name is Lynn Cawkwell and I am a Foot Health Practitioner. I have over thirty years of experience working with older people and have seen many limb and foot problems associated with getting older. These include diabetes, vascular/neurological conditions and bio-mechanical associated conditions such as corns, callus, thickened nails and fungal infection.

These conditions can have a direct impact on general health and wellbeing and my interest in elderly people was the main reason why I decided to train as a foot health professional, as this area of healthcare is quite often overlooked. I have been practicing at Birtley House since 2013 and I thoroughly enjoy my work. It is very rewarding meeting and getting to know the residents of Birtley House and Birtley Mews.

My training has been extensive with one of the oldest chiropodist/foot health teaching

institutes in the UK. Since qualifying, I have taken further courses to extend my skills to include common conditions affecting the elderly, looking after patients with chronic pain and what can go wrong with a diabetic patient.

Each resident is treated with a set of sterile pouched instruments which have been autoclaved to a temperature of 134 degrees. Residents are fully informed and involved in their treatment plan.

Common nail conditions such as in-growing nails, thickened nails and fungal infection can be quite distressing and uncomfortable but with regular treatment and care, improvement in nail condition can be achieved, thus, less distress and discomfort.

I am at Birtley House on Monday and Wednesday plus ad-hoc Thursday's and Sunday's.

*Lynn Cawkwell*  
*Foot Health Practitioner*



# On this day in history –

- 1542** Catherine Howard, the fifth wife of Henry VIII, was executed
- 1575** Henry III of France was crowned at Rheims
- 1633** Italian astronomer, Galileo Galilei, arrived in Rome for trial before the Inquisition for professing his belief that the earth revolved around the Sun
- 1689** British Parliament adopted the Bill of Rights which established limits on the crown and rights of parliament
- 1832** First appearance of cholera in London
- 1861** Abraham Lincoln was declared US president in Washington DC
- 1867** Johann Strauss' Blue Danube waltz premiered in Vienna
- 1895** The moving picture projector was patented
- 1907** English suffragettes stormed the British Parliament and 60 women were arrested
- 1911** Birtley Resident, Mrs Gladys Amey was born!

So, at 104 that makes her our current oldest resident. Gladys celebrated her 104th birthday with a visit from the Mayor of Waverley, Cllr. Liz Wheatley and her Consort Mike. Gladys then went out for lunch with her family to enjoy her favourite pub lunch of steak and kidney pie!

Gladys' granddaughter, Karen Williams, who is of course our Matron/Registered Manager here at Birtley House said "Gran had an amazing week of celebrations, she enjoyed a champagne party with other residents and family and still had the energy to go out today. She is an example to us all"

Gladys was born in Washington, West Sussex and was in domestic service and worked as a cook. Gladys has three daughters, six grandchildren, six great-great grandchildren with two more on the way! So, how does it feel to be 104? Gladys says "I feel much the same as I did at 100, apart from not being able to move around so quickly! I feel that God still has some things for me to do... which is why I'm still here."



# 13th February





## The History of Sculpture Garden Exhibitions in the UK

Sculpture exhibitions held in garden settings have become increasingly prevalent and popular since the 1980s. Prior to that, apart from the famous Henry Moore Exhibition in Hertfordshire and the Barbara Hepworth Exhibition in Cornwall, outdoor sculpture exhibitions were almost non-existent in the UK.

A prime example of how a sculpture garden can grow from nothing is the Quenington Exhibition - Curators Lucy and David Abel Smith held their first biennial FreshAir exhibition in the grounds of Quenington Rectory, Gloucestershire in 1992, making this exhibition a pioneer in the growing trend of exhibiting sculpture in outdoor settings and it has now grown enormously and attracts large

numbers of exhibitors and buyers. Another example of a thriving exhibition is that at Burghley House: in 1995 Lady Miranda Rock decided to have a permanent sculpture garden within the grounds of the Burghley Estate. Each annual themed sculpture exhibition lasts for six months and the Trust buys work(s) from each exhibition to add to the ever-growing permanent sculpture exhibition.

In 2001 the University of Leicester began 'Sculpture in the Garden' at the Botanic gardens and now there are many other garden sculpture exhibitions held in the UK each year – e.g. Chatsworth House, Hatfield House, Mottisford Abbey and Doddington Hall. From the Estates of stately homes to large gardens,



the number of both permanent and temporary exhibitions is increasing year-on-year. This has the benefit of making contemporary sculpture more accessible to the general public. We are unsure if Birtley House may be the first Nursing Home in the UK to hold a sculpture exhibition in its grounds – probably it is.

*Special thanks to sculptor Ian Campbell-Briggs for researching these details. One of Ian's sculptures stands outside G-Live in Guildford and we are delighted that he will be exhibiting at The Sculpture Garden this year.*

**The Sculpture Garden at Birtley House** has grown in size and popularity since the first exhibition in 2009. It is the largest temporary sculpture exhibition in Surrey and this year we are expecting over 170 exhibits by 58 sculptors from across the UK. All sculpture is for sale.

The exhibition runs from 2nd-31st May and is open daily from 11am to 5pm. Homemade refreshments are served daily and, with a quiz for the children, it makes a fun outing for all the

family – even dogs on leads are welcome!

Entrance to the exhibition is free but we encourage donations to the Community Foundation for Surrey who support local voluntary and community projects and those in need in Surrey – of which there are a surprising number in this apparently affluent county.

A visit to the exhibition gives the rare opportunity to see a wide range of style of sculpture set in the beautiful grounds here at Birtley. On Sunday 10th May there will be the added attraction of three choirs singing during the afternoon and there will be sculpture demonstrations on selected days during the exhibition.

For further details please see: [www.birtleyevents.co.uk](http://www.birtleyevents.co.uk) or contact the Sculpture Garden team on 01483 899513 or email: [sculpture@birtleyhouse.co.uk](mailto:sculpture@birtleyhouse.co.uk)

**Janet Hall**  
Marketing Manager

# Birtley Links

In the first of a new series of articles in this newsletter, written by members of the local community, we are delighted to introduce you to the many-talented Mervyn Mewis...

From a very early age, trees and woodlands have fascinated me. In 1988 I moved to Surrey from the West Coast of Ireland and discovered the beautiful North Downs and the woodlands of this county. These have kept me here ever since, and through voluntary conservation work, continuous studies and educational training I have come to learn more about the countryside in which I live and work.

While studying at Merrist Wood, the concept of green woodworking, i.e. unseasoned, recently-felled timber straight from the tree, was introduced. This has led to a long and rewarding investigation into historic timber management utilising traditional tools and techniques.

Typical examples of this genre of woodwork include chair making and, in particular, the "Windsor" style and "ladder-back" or "post and rung" chairs which are fine examples of simplistic engineering and ergonomics combined to form comfortable, useful pieces of furniture. These concepts are used when designing and making unique and interesting pieces – the timber is sourced from conservation work where I choose the tree for the timber qualities including beauty, strength and natural form. It is this combination which provides "life" to my work, maximising the grain and texture to enhance the woodwork.



With the enthusiasm of the Birtley team, last summer we built a dedicated place for people to come to experience and learn some of these traditional skills. The Surrey Hills Green Wood Works is a small barn set in the woodland at Birtley, complete with the necessary equipment to bring people and wood-craft together. The first public engagement was at the Surrey Hills Wood Fair in October when the Barn provided a wonderful suite of activity and demonstration for the visitors, many of whom have since expressed the desire to come and learn more. The setting allows for the holistic approach where students of many ages and abilities can come and find an understanding of the relevance of historic woodland management, how this impacts on the land and the related wildlife; providing a seamless and on-going supply of timber for use in traditional woodworking.

This year my exhibit for the Sculpture Garden is in the process of being made at the Green Wood Works and I hope to have the Barn open and operating on certain days during this event.

Over the years, my interests in woodlands and woodwork have diversified, from studying chair making to musical instrument making at West Dean in Sussex, City and Guilds

Carpentry at Guildford and latterly gaining a Post-Graduate Degree from Birkbeck, London in Countryside Conservation. There is always something to be learned!

Together with my partner Kathryn Young (who made and plays her own Celtic Harp) we have played traditional and ancient music for events at Birtley, including the Open Gardens, Surrey Hills Wood Fair and the Sculpture Garden. We play a range of the musical instruments which we have made, and are busy during this year playing and promoting at events including the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, exhibiting at Haslemere Museum, Hatfield House Living Crafts and at Clandon House. Kathryn is a member of the Harp Ensemble and has played music across England, in America, and in Holland where they performed some of the music I have written and invited me to play my hammer dulcimer with them.

My aim is to pass on the skills and techniques which I have learned over the years by providing courses at the Barn, and in bringing people and woodlands together. I look forward to meeting you in the future at the Surrey Hills Green Wood Works.

[Mervyn Mewis](#)



# Teamwork-

the combined action of a team, group etc especially when effective and efficient. (Oxford Dictionary definition)



Whenever I am thanked for “a wonderful afternoon” I always respond with “It’s all teamwork here” which indeed it is, and I would like to demonstrate in this article just how important this teamwork is and how all the departments help ensure that our Residents can enjoy the activities on offer.

We recently asked a number of our Residents what it was they most enjoyed about Activities, and although several specific activities were highlighted, e.g. picture quizzes, musical sessions, and word games, the over-riding reason seemed to be the enjoyment of company with fellow Residents and always having something to look forward to. Admittedly there will always be people who are selective about which activities they attend, but we find that there are many “regulars” who are happy to come to everything on offer, knowing that they will have fun, companionship and maybe learn something new from an interesting talk, slide show or quiz, followed by a sociable time over a cup of tea.

Reflecting the individual interests of our Residents is something we constantly consider when planning the monthly programmes. With well over 40 Residents, this means we will include plenty of choice within the programme. Each month’s programme begins with Sinead producing a “skeleton” for us. Then Carol, Tina and I fill in any regular dates such as the bookings for T’ai Chi, Armchair Yoga and Kevin Jacot’s musical afternoon. We also check for any special interest days to focus our ideas for appropriately themed craft or cooking sessions. We liaise with our Chaplain, the Rev. Tricia Hislop, to arrange a date for the Communion Service, as well as confirming dates with our PatDog and PatCat visitors.

Unfortunately, Qweenie, our feline visitor has been unwell since Christmas and has not been able to visit us, but her owner, Sue Collingwood, is optimistic that she will be able to recommence visiting us after Easter. We all hope so too as Qweenie has been much missed.



Another very vital member of the team is Ann Enticknap, who arranges the monthly Book Club as well as the Saturday Cinema, usually on alternate weeks. Ann devotes a great deal of her own time to researching these Activities, which is much appreciated. For those Residents not joining in the Book Club, we plan a Girl Friday session, when Carol and Tina will assist Residents with various tasks, such as letter writing, tidying a cupboard, sewing on a button, or just having a friendly chat with them in their room or outside in the garden if the weather is kind.

We are always delighted to welcome our Mews Residents to Activities and really appreciate the talents that they bring. Recently Brenda Slade's artistic talent came to the fore with her suggestion to use real branches for our "Robin Tree" which made it the success it was. I hope the photo does it justice.

Teamwork continues with the active support of the Carers who escort the Residents to meals and to the Activity Room every afternoon.

They will always respond to any call for assistance and, after tea, they help those who need an arm or a wheelchair back to their rooms. Some have also helped us learn about their own countries and we are always looking to develop new ideas for participation.

The Kitchen Team also play a crucial part in our department as, if there was no tea platter with sandwiches, cakes and biscuits, there would be a lot of disappointed people! Special mention should be made to the birthday cakes which are made for everyone on their big day, so a big thank you to the chefs for never letting us down.

I must also include the housekeeping team, who ensure our Activity Room is always clean and tidy, and Sue in the laundry who meticulously irons the numerous aprons we provide during our cooking sessions and all the dining room cloths; also Emma Browne (Head Gardener) who advises us with our planting projects with the Residents and her team who keep the gardens so beautifully.



The Maintenance team play a vital role as well - like moving the piano in readiness for a recital or mending a broken table and did an amazing job in redecorating our Activities room and the Orangery during the year.

Then of course, there are several activities that require teamwork. We find that our Residents are extremely competitive and enjoy working in a team. For instance, in Indoor Games (quoits, skittles, Birtley Bullseye etc) team names are chosen by the Team Leader, which seems to instil an extra sense of competitiveness. Our Picture Quiz afternoons usually take place sitting at tables with team work essential, and should the word "prize" be mentioned, teamwork is even more evident. It creates a great atmosphere too.

Also coming under the umbrella of Activities is our very dedicated and patient team of Menu Takers and Dining Room Supervisors. This essential team, namely, Mary Blay, Jayne Evans, Ann Enticknap and Julia Clarke, ensure that everyone is personally visited each day to make their menu choices for breakfast, lunch and supper 24 hours in advance, and then this information is passed onto the Kitchen for the chefs to produce. This task requires enormous patience and accuracy and might easily be taken for granted, but if it wasn't done, there would certainly be chaos! This team happily support each other by covering for holiday

and sick leave as well. Then when it comes to serving the lunch in the Orangery, more teamwork is necessary, so one, sometimes both, members of the Activity team assist for the duration of the meal. The numbers vary each day depending on guests visiting, but there are seldom less than 16 and sometimes as many as 24 lunching in the Orangery.

Multi-tasking is a fashionable word these days, but I think that most members of the Birtley staff could say that they do that on a regular basis! When I asked my team why they enjoyed their job, the response was because no two days are the same, they are always busy and most importantly, they really enjoy their interaction with all our Residents who realise how much they benefit from coming to the Activities.

It has been a particularly busy period since our last Newsletter and I am certain that we couldn't achieve all that we do without teamwork.

**Caroline Whalley**  
Director/Head of Activities

p.s. Many thanks to those of you who bought Christmas cards in aid of CICRA (Crohns in Childhood Research Association) - we raised a great total of £291.75.

# Is your ISA about to get nicer?

In a time when interest rates on savings are low and stock markets can be difficult to predict, the tax relief of an ISA is an attractive and sensible way to ensure your money works as hard as it can for you. We are at the time of the year when banks, investment managers and financial advisers will be telling us to use our ISA allowances before the tax year ticks over and the opportunity is lost. However, after an announcement in its Autumn Statement last year, the Government has released draft legislation which may offer increased advantages to ISAs for those who are married.

During the lifetime of an individual, income and gains generated on assets held within an ISA are free of tax, and for those who have used their ISA allowances diligently over the years this means quite significant tax savings. But the ISA “wrapper” is lost upon death, and with it the tax advantages. The proposal under the new regulations is that where the first death in a married couple, or civil partnership, occurs after 6 April 2015 the survivor will be able to apply for an ISA allowance equivalent to that which their other half enjoyed before they died. There are also transitional rules for those who died since 3 December 2014, but before the regulations come into force, to enable their widows and widowers to benefit in a similar way.

Individuals whose spouse had funds in a cash ISA will be able to apply to increase their ISA allowance in the tax year of death by an amount equal to the value of their other half's ISA at the time of death. Where there were stocks and shares in an ISA then the increased ISA allowance will be the equivalent of the value of those investments at the time the survivor applies for the increased allowance.

The draft regulations contained detailed conditions that must be satisfied to claim the increased allowance, but broadly speaking these are that the ISA must continue to be managed by the same account manager as the deceased, and that the couple must have been living together at the time of death. For tax purposes, this means that a married couple must not have been legally separated or factually separated and heading towards legal separation.

Interestingly, there is a distinction between ‘Cash’ and ‘Stocks and Shares’ ISAs. The survivor does not have to have inherited the deceased's cash ISA to claim the allowance, meaning that the deceased's Will could leave the funds to a child, or elsewhere, while the spouse could still benefit from the allowance. The survivor must have inherited a Stocks and Shares ISA to enable them to benefit from the increased allowance. A curious, but important difference!

By their nature, the draft regulations that have been published are not free of complications or questions, but it looks likely that for those who are unfortunate to lose loved ones there might be a silver lining on their fiscal horizon.

Sally Ashford, Legal Director, Charles Russell Speechlys LLP

[sally.ashford@crsblaw.com](mailto:sally.ashford@crsblaw.com)



# Garden Views

Spring is upon us and there is a lot to do in the coming months. We have pruned the garden fruit and the cider apples (all 700 of them!) and now we are busy cutting-back the herbaceous borders, weeding, mulching and pruning the wisteria and roses in anticipation of warmer days ahead. Soon, the mowing and edging will start again in earnest and the propagators are already full of pots of seeds. You will see a few tweaks to the borders as soon as the young plants are ready to be planted out - I am always striving to improve the borders (and to overcome the wildlife!)

The snowdrops and crocuses are lovely now and I try to add to our bulb displays every year. The hellebores in the woodland garden, opposite the Lodge are also flowering now and will appreciate more light following the removal of two sickly sycamores late in February. Hardy little *Iris reticulata* are providing stunning early colour in the Secret Garden. Early sources of nectar are important for the bees too, and we are planting a new



'bee friendly' mixed flowering hedge along part of the perimeter fence.

We are trying a few new things in the kitchen garden this year, with baby vegetables in the raised beds and some heirloom varieties of tomato in the polytunnel. Roz, our WRAGS (Work and Retrain as a Gardener Scheme) trainee, and I had great difficulty in choosing which to grow - you would be amazed at how many varieties of tomato there are!

We are always pleased to see Residents and visitors out enjoying the gardens so do feel free to stop for a chat. The garden never stands still, and our next new projects will be the development of a nursery, a natural progression of the extensive propagation that we already do, and enhancing the planting around the pond, with the addition of a fern garden.

I hope to see many of you in the gardens in the spring and summer.

Emma Browne, Head Gardener



# Woodland News

I am sure we say this every year, but it does seem to have been a long winter! Bright on most days, but with a bitter wind - overall exactly what you would expect and, believe me, I'd rather that than rain when working in the woods!

The woods are making a slow recovery back into being working woodland. Last year's coppicing has survived its first year, with only a little bit of deer damage to the newly planted hazel. Many of you are aware that we have pigs in the woods and their role has been to help us manage the encroachment of the Bracken and Himalayan Balsam. This is our second year keeping pigs and what a success it has been! They stop at nothing; however it is quite apparent that the Saddlebacks are not as hardy as the Old Spot pigs we had last year which had a dash of wild boar in them, somewhere down the line. These Saddles only have to see a raincloud and they scurry off to their shelters to keep nice and dry!

Come wintertime, all the vegetation dies off and the pigs are forced to start really rooting-down which can burn off a great deal of energy and fat. To supplement their diet, I have made friends with a local bakery which gives me all their surplus bread, cakes, biscuits, and rolls on a daily basis. The bread is so good that even the gardening team and I have enjoyed the occasional Brioche, French stick or Bloomer! The pigs (and the geese) absolutely gorge themselves on this fresh bread, not to mention their favourite – the salted caramel doughnuts!

As many of you will have seen, there have been snowdrops and daffodils poking up their heads around the house since the end of January. Down in the woods, we have been on a countdown to beat the arrival of the bluebells and to get all our felling, coppicing and replanting done before their heads peek through the topsoil. By the beginning of March, we had finished all our replanting and the woodland is now home to 70 new 40cm Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea Sativa*) and 100 new 90cm Hazel trees (*Corylus avellana*). These have been protected by tree guards which stop the deer, rabbits and voles browsing the tender young stems.

Much of the Hazel coppice in the woodland has been left untouched for nearly 40 years which means it is 'overstood'. This is dangerous for the delicate nature of the stool which can easily split out if left uncoppiced. The massive boughs put extreme pressure on the stool and they quite literally spilt in two, creating a hazard and extra work as the fallen wood has to be removed. The resulting wood is turned into firewood after it has seasoned in the woodland over the summer.

During March we will be sending the last few pigs off to slaughter, so please don't forget to tell your family and friends that there will be more Birtley Pork for sale. Charcoal will be back on sale soon in time for the BBQ season and of course don't forget to purchase your Birtley Gold Cider to sup with a sausage sandwich during what, we hope, will be a beautiful spring.

Theo Tramblinas, Birtley Ranger

# Update from the Catering Department



I have now been here at Birtley House for four months and it feels as if I have always been part of the team. In the Catering department we managed to get through the Christmas season unscathed, always the busiest time of year for us, and have still come out smiling! Now we have a new year to look forward to with lots of new exciting developments on the horizon.

With the advent of spring I have been having discussions with Emma, Roz and Matt from the Gardening department about all the wonderful things they have planned this year in the kitchen garden. They have given me a full list of what they are planting, along with a predicted harvest schedule. I can't wait to incorporate their freshly harvested produce into the menu so that you can all enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of their labour!

I have started making a few changes into the menu and have introduced quite a few new

dishes, some of which have been popular and some not so popular! Part of being a Chef is the challenge of creating new and exciting dishes and finding a balance which takes into account the wide and varying tastes and preferences, while adding variety, interest and new dishes into the menus.

I have managed to meet quite a few of the Residents and I have had many discussions about what your favourite dishes are, but if you have a particular favourite which you haven't had for a while, please tell me and I will make it for everybody to try. Mario from the Maintenance department did just that and you all had the chance to try his favourite Polish dish, with a slight Scottish twist!

Once again thank you for making me feel so very welcome at Birtley and I am looking forward to everything 2015 brings.

**Steve Morton, Head of Kitchen**

# Bits and Pieces



**A new logo for Birtley**  
You may have noticed that Birtley House has a new logo.

Based on the original line drawing of a birch tree (the name Birtley come from the old English 'Beorc Leah' – a clearing in the birch wood) the new logo is, we hope you agree, more fresh and modern.

The three shaded areas around the tree depict the rolling Surrey Hills in which Birtley nestles, while the circle around the tree depicts values of comfort and safety. The key feature is the name 'Birtley' which represents everyone who lives and works here and is, we feel, synonymous with 'excellent care'.

You will see variations on a theme, with new logos for The Sculpture Garden and Birtley Estate which are all based on the original.

It will take a while for us to use up stocks of pre-printed materials but you will gradually see the logo in use more and more. It will appear on our website following a revamp later in the year.

## The 2015 Rare Plant Fair

This one-day event is very popular with gardeners from



across Surrey and further afield, giving the chance to buy unusual and often difficult to find plants directly from the growers. Normally held during April the event this year will be on SUNDAY 14th JUNE, open from 11am - 4pm. Entrance is £4 for adults (although, of course, entry is free for our staff and residents) which also offers the opportunity to enjoy the grounds here, which are not normally open to the public. Delicious homemade refreshments will be available throughout the day. For further details please see: [www.rareplantfair.co.uk](http://www.rareplantfair.co.uk) or [www.birtleyevents.co.uk](http://www.birtleyevents.co.uk)

## More News from Birtley

Don't forget that the Blog on our website ([www.birtleyhouse.co.uk](http://www.birtleyhouse.co.uk)) is updated regularly with short news items and pictures. The newsletter is available to download from the website too.

If you are a reader of Surrey Life you may have noticed that each edition since January 2014 has contained a short feature article on a wide range of topics relating to life at Birtley. e.g. In the March edition, on page 153 you will find 'Living in the Surrey Hills' which centres around life in Birtley Mews while the 'Life with the Gourmets' article on page 150 features our own Head of Kitchen, Steve Morton.

I am usually sent a couple of additional copies of Surrey Life each month and these are placed in the main hall for you to read.

Janet Hall, Marketing Manager

# Staff News

## Starters and Leavers

There are more new faces at Birtley House and the following staff members have joined the Birtley Team since the beginning of November:

Joining Karen's Nursing and Care teams are Staff Nurses Teresa Casas Oliver and Alicia Malaescu and Care Assistants Karolina Poznanska, Melinda Chikanya, Rad Ciba, Dorothy Boloz and Mahida Miah (Bank). Emma Abrew has also joined Karen's team as her new PA.

Steve Morton, Head of Kitchen has appointed a new Kitchen/Pantry Assistant, Michal Ordon.

We are delighted to welcome back Housekeeping Assistant, Mina Budhathoki, who has returned from an overseas posting with her husband, and Dorota Pieczynska Care Assistant (Bank), who returns from maternity leave.

Best of luck to the following who have moved on to pastures new: Meltrin Castaneda (Staff Nurse), Gyorgyi Mellor (Senior Carer) Bea Du Plessis (Training and Development Nurse) and Julie Jenkinson (PA to Matron). Many congratulations to Julie who got married at Byron Bay, Australia on 4th January.

## Birtley Babies

We send our congratulations to Katarina Pivarnikova and her partner Emil Zaborowsky who welcomed their baby son Kamil into the world on 22nd January.

Matt Miller has become a father again. His son, Luke, was born on 23rd February weighing 7lb 15oz.

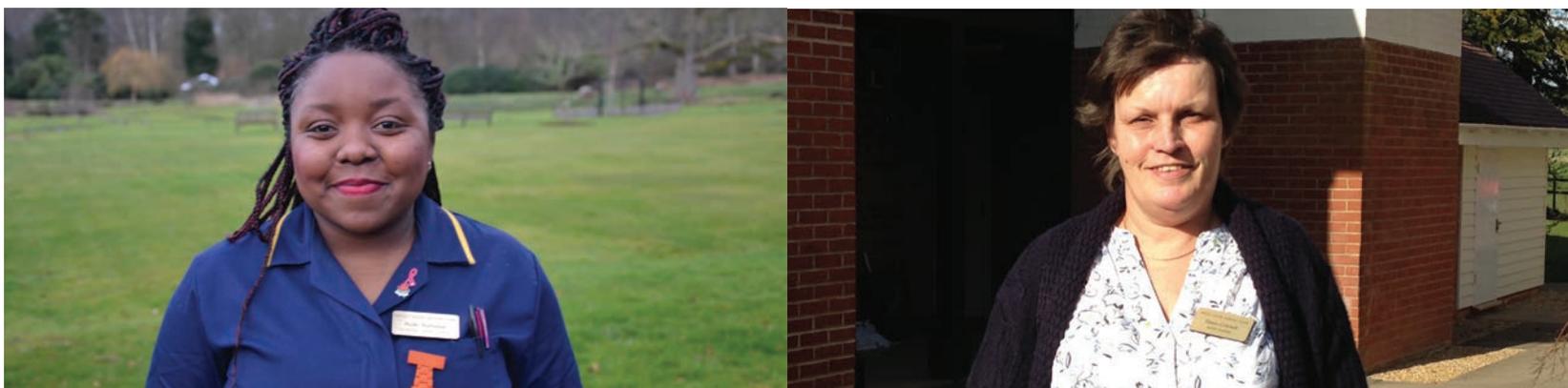
## Promotions and role changes

Many congratulations to Rudo Rumveye who was promoted from Staff Nurse to Clinical Lead Nurse and also to Orsi Kiss-Messenger who not only returned from maternity leave, but has been promoted from Staff Nurse to Senior Staff Nurse.

Gill Benhassoune has received a change of job title and is now Administration Supervisor, in addition to her duties as Group Assistant Accountant. Whilst Magda Tyniec is on maternity leave, Suree Brook-Jones is helping Steve Morton in the Kitchen as a Kitchen Assistant.

Dawn Critchell has taken on a Bank Mews Warden role and is also now our Support Services Supervisor which is a new role.

**Emma Abrew, PA to Matron**



## News from Birtley House

**The next edition of House & Home will be Summer 2015.** In the interim, you can keep up to date with all the latest news from Birtley House on our blog: [www.birtleyhouse.co.uk/blog](http://www.birtleyhouse.co.uk/blog)

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