



**Birtley**  
House

# house & home

The Birtley House Group Newsletter, Winter 2017

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- *Recognition for Birtley*
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With another year drawing to a close and Christmas fast approaching, now is traditionally the time to reflect on the past 12 months and to enjoy time with one's family and friends. 2017 has been yet another year of uncertainty for the Care industry, with no clarity of how the increasing elderly population will be adequately cared for in the future by a decreasing number of care and nursing staff. Brexit is clearly partly responsible for the reduced numbers of care workers, with the numbers of nurses working in the UK falling for the first time since 2013, according to a report written this year by the King's Fund. The vulnerable and

## Welcome...

elderly population of the UK deserve better. I hope that a way to deliver consistently superb care for those cared for at Council-run homes is found soon as it should not only be the homes with a majority of private-funded residents that achieve the coveted Care Quality Commission rating of Outstanding.

Saying that, I am glad that the Outstanding rating is given out to only the most deserving of Homes as this should not be devalued. At the time of writing, and according to the CQC website, out of a total of 10,296 nursing homes in England only 82 have been awarded their top rating, which shows what dedicated and special staff we have.

I think it's this reassurance that people know they will receive the highest standards of care whilst living somewhere they can really call 'home' that makes Birtley House unique. However, we are always striving to improve and we welcome all comments and suggestions from our Residents and their families on how we may do this.

## Introducing Harrison Catering

We are delighted to announce that Harrison Catering ([www.harrisoncatering.co.uk](http://www.harrisoncatering.co.uk)) has been chosen to run and oversee our kitchen and catering duties, starting in January. They are looking to retain all our existing kitchen staff, and, at the time of writing, a new Head of Kitchen is being sourced to replace Kerry Nash who left us in November.

At Birtley, our determined aim is to provide the best possible food and catering service for our Residents on a consistent basis. This consistency is something that has not always been apparent, and, having looked at all available options for the future direction of the kitchen, all the Birtley House Directors agreed that Harrison Catering would be able to provide the level of service that we require.

Harrison Catering are a family-run company founded 23 years ago who provide the catering for other local businesses including St. Catherine's School in Bramley, and Cranleigh School. Harrison's also provide the catering for many other nursing homes, all of whom have spoken very highly of the company. Finding a catering company who could fully understand the varied requirements of our Residents was fundamental in reaching our decision, and we feel confident that in Harrison's we have found that.

We will of course be introducing the new Head of Kitchen to you as soon as he, or she, is appointed.

**Frank Whalley**  
Managing Director

# Thoughts of *Christmas*

Do you remember those far off days when you were very young, when going to bed on Christmas Eve was so hard? You might have been so excited like me, or waiting hoping to hear Santa's sleigh! Christmas was such a magical time with decorations, presents to wrap, the tree lights – and didn't they always seem to go wrong just as you were ready to put them on the tree? Then there was the waking up very early on Christmas morning and feeling the crunchiness of the stocking at the end of the bed. What might be in it?



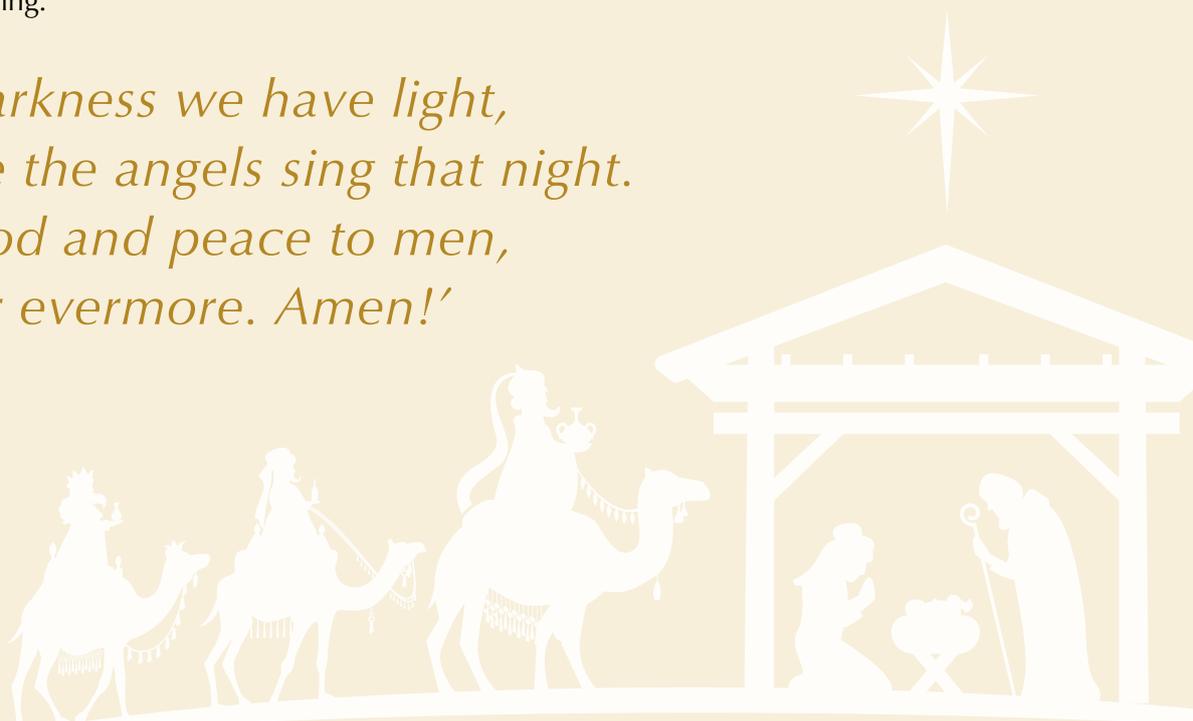
As we get older our expectations of Christmas become less magical. The realities of the world crowd in upon us. The news is full of darkness - war and suffering, hunger and poverty. Politically, there seems to be less certainty and we begin to wonder what the future holds for us and what will be in store for our children and our grandchildren.

The story of Jesus being born in a stable seems such an unlikely beginning for a boy who grew to be the man that changed the world. For change the world, he did. There are millions of people who believe in him and many who worship him Sunday by Sunday.

At Christmas we sing carols, often carols about light and peace, love and joy. What would you like to find in your 'stocking' this year? Perhaps you might like to find just that, light and peace, love and joy on Christmas morning.

*All out of darkness we have light,  
which made the angels sing that night.  
'Glory to God and peace to men,  
now and for evermore. Amen!'*

**Angela Townshend**  
Chaplain



# *From* Matron's desk



Dear All,

Time is flying by to my favourite time of year, Christmas, and all this brings. I think Birtley does Christmas particularly well and cannot wait for the enormous Christmas tree to be put up in the hall. I know also that Christmas time can bring its own sadness, when we remember those who are no longer with us and I remember my own dear Nan who loved Christmas and made us all feel so special and loved. I am mindful that it is not a happy time for everyone and for many this will be the first Christmas without someone special. I often take comfort in the poem: 'The Ship' by Bishop Brent, which reminds us that people are only gone from our sight, and not from our hearts and minds.

My Christmas will be very busy with a growing family, six grandchildren already and one on the way. I will be cooking and wrapping presents and bracing myself for the whirlwind that is family.

I also regard Birtley as an extension of my family, each one of you bringing something of value to our community. It is very important that we focus on this, creating a space where life continues to the full and together we welcome the changes and embrace all the new staff and Residents joining us. We continually evolve which is something I am very proud of at Birtley - we never stand still and adapt to ensure we are the best we can be.

We have had some very proud moments over the last few months with many staff achieving certificates for training and we have been finalists in the Gold Standards Framework (GSF) and Surrey Care awards. A small group of us are about to go to York as Birtley is a finalist for a national award. We have embraced best practice and we are proud that this has been recognised by outside organisations, as well as local groups.

I have had the opportunity to speak on several occasions to large groups of health professionals at various venues. Although rather nerve wracking, this has given me an opportunity to showcase what we do at Birtley as a team and also to acknowledge how much I have learnt from our Residents. Many thanks go to Angela Townshend, our Chaplain, who allowed me to speak about her husband Ned's journey in one of my

presentations. Angela also spoke about her experiences, which was very powerful in helping to raise awareness about the end-of life care we deliver.

We have introduced a new event which I hope will become an annual event here at Birtley 'Light up a Life', a service to remember those who have died and to celebrate their lives.

I have enjoyed our coffee mornings, where we have a real laugh and discuss various issues, plus the drinks evenings. Thank you to all who have come - I love to see you and I feel it is very valuable that we hold such events. The themed evenings are always eventful, with the last one being particularly so as I accidentally set off the fire alarms with the indoor sparklers! It's good to know the fire-alarm works!

We have some new staff about to start and I know you will help them feel part of the Birtley family. Gail Maguire, our new Counsellor, seems to have been very well received. She has a wealth of experience and I feel that this is a very necessary service for us to offer.

There have been some real challenges this year, including the kitchen, which I feel is finally about to be sorted out with the partnership with Harrisons, a family-run catering company who I feel will serve our needs and the high standards we wish to maintain.

We continue to support student nurses and health care students which I feel is very valuable. Many of the student nurses who come on a work placement here, ask to go on 'Bank' as Health Care Assistants, which is

indicative that Birtley is a great place to work.

The Nursing team continues to grow and we have the return of Rudo Rumveye from maternity leave in the New Year, something I know we will all welcome. I have also employed two new Staff Nurses onto the team which will complement the skills we have already. Both nurses will start before Christmas - please give them a big Birtley welcome.

I am interviewing for Care Assistants and have had many applications, so we are obviously the place to work, which is all good. Janet Hall, Digital Marketing and Internal Communications Manager, is working hard in developing our Social Media presence. Facebook is such a good way of raising Birtley's profile, not just locally but further afield.

Cheryl Searle continues to provide Wellbeing services which I feel have been a great addition to the holistic care we provide. She has some great ideas for the coming months and I really welcome her contribution to the Wellbeing of our Residents, as I know you do.

Please remember that I am here for you, to champion what you want in your life and to help you live well. I am open to any suggestions so please feel free to tell me what you want raised.

I really enjoy sharing your home and being here to support you all. Thank you for being great.

Yours,

**Karen Williams**  
**Matron/Registered Manager**

# *Birtley outreach to the Community*



*Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Surrey, Mr Michael More-Molyneux*

In our last Newsletter, I outlined some of the community activities we have developed at Birtley. Now I would like to profile some of the community organisations we engage with, or support, across Surrey. As many readers of our Newsletter will know, we have supported the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) for nearly a decade. We have our own Fund there through which we have supported local organisations with a health, environmental or young people's objective. Most prominent amongst the beneficiaries has been the

local groups for those who are blind or partially-sighted. Last year they reformed the GAMBIT groups from Guildford & Godalming into a new group called Weysight and we continue to support their administrative costs for weekly learning and support sessions. I have been a Trustee for CFS for some years and have huge admiration for their achievements; for their philanthropic work in identifying and raising support for the many much-needed projects amongst the disadvantaged in our community.

Over the last five years we have also supported the work of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). AONBs are similar to National Parks, but get only a fraction of the funding and I feel we have to demonstrate our commitment to support the wonderful countryside in which we are privileged to live. Our support has been focussed on the Community Interest Company 'Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC'. Through this, we aim to support the rural economy by recruiting rural businesses who we help promote and provide with specialist advice as appropriate. We also organise a number of events (such as the Wood Fair and the Sculpture Garden, both hosted at Birtley) which help create awareness of the AONB and raise the profile of the organisations, individual artists, craftspeople and businesses taking part. All profits from the CIC return to support the work of the AONB and through one event (last year's Surrey Hills Cow Parade) we raised over £100,000 for local charities. We have recently been honoured that the Lord Lieutenant for Surrey (Michael More-Molyneux) has agreed to become Patron for Surrey Hills Enterprises and look forward

to some very exciting new events and activities in 2018.

We also, and not surprisingly, take a strong interest in the Care Sector in Surrey and nationally. We have a very strong relationship with the national body, Care England. I was on the Board for some years but decided to concentrate on the re-structured Surrey Care Association (SCA) when it went independent from Surrey County Council some 3 years ago. In that time, it has recruited organisations representing over 80% of all the care beds in Surrey and large numbers from the domiciliary and learning difficulties sectors. Birtley House is a Founder Subscriber to SCA and I am currently its Vice-Chairman. We are working hard to help the public sector (NHS and County Council) develop effective collaboration with the provider sector and develop new models of care that will help alleviate the growing problem of underfunding for Care.

I believe it is vital for all those in the Care Sector to engage fully with the community so, in addition to the projects outlined above, we continue to support local charitable endeavours, local churches and other community organisations very actively. We encourage our Residents and their families to share our commitment and help us continue with this work. We feel it is an important aspect in helping maintain quality of life for everyone at Birtley and helps break down barriers and misunderstanding of the work of Care Homes such as Birtley House.

***Simon Whalley***  
***Chairman***

# Acts of *Remembrance*

## Forget-me-Not

Losing someone you knew and loved is never easy to cope with and so Karen set up our 'Forget-me-not's group to offer staff the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings, and to gain support, following the death of a Resident. Birtley also has a 'Book of Remembrance' in which we keep a record of photos of Residents who have passed on.

## A visit to the Poppy Factory

The Poppy Factory started in the Old Kent Road in 1922 with five disabled veterans as its first employees. The original ethos of providing paid employment for disabled veterans, and now also disabled dependents of ex-Service personnel, continues today with 17.5 million poppies, in addition to 136,000 wreaths and 950,000 Remembrance crosses, being made by hand each year and sold in aid of the British Legion.

Mews Warden, Barbara Mintz, accompanied resident Mrs Stevens on a recent coach trip to the factory. As part of the tour they had the opportunity to make some poppies, using only their left (non-dominant) hand with the other kept firmly behind their back – not easy at all! Although this was incredibly fiddly, using a block pattern helped them to assemble a few poppies and they thoroughly enjoyed their trip to this fascinating factory.

## All Souls' Service

The All Souls' Service at Holy Trinity, Bramley is traditionally held in late October/early November, especially remembering departed loved-ones. The names of the people whose Funeral Services have taken place in the parish during the last two years are mentioned by name, and candles can be lit by members of their family. Other departed loved-ones are also remembered at the service. This year, Karen and

Cheryl, our Wellbeing Mentor, took five of our Residents along to join members of the local community at this Service.

## Light up a Life

Karen and Angela decided that it would be a wonderful new initiative at Birtley if we held our own Service of Remembrance, specifically to remember all former Residents who have died during the past year, but also so that we could remember other departed loved ones. The relatives of former Residents, our current Residents and staff were all invited to attend the service and to light a candle, if they wished.

The peaceful service was conducted by Angela with readings from Karen and Resident Mary Grigalis. We were very touched that 20 relatives of former Residents, and indeed staff, came to join current Residents, guests and staff. The names of all the departed loved ones were read out and everyone was invited to light a candle in their memory. Following this evening service tea and cakes were served in the Orangery, giving us all chance to chat and reminisce.



# Mews News

## Out and About

Although our Mews Residents have a lovely environment in which to live, and plenty of activities to get involved in if they wish e.g. their regular sherry party, it's always refreshing to get out and about. So, Barbara Mintz, one of our Mews Wardens, has organised several outings this year which Residents have been able to join in with if they were interested:

The Poppy Factory in Richmond (see the previous page); Bewl Water near Tunbridge Wells; and closer to home, the Summer Fete at Cranleigh Parish Church and the Yvonne Arnaud theatre in Guildford. The afternoon matinees at the theatre have been particularly popular and our Mews Residents, accompanied by Barbara, have enjoyed a wide variety of performances including: 'Don't Dress for Dinner', by Marc Camoletti; 'Death of a Salesman', by Arthur Miller and the hilarious 'How the Other Half Loves', by Alan Ayckbourn.

The outings further afield usually utilise Day Trips which are run by local coach company, Gastonia. Their 2018 Day Trips brochure is eagerly awaited by Residents who are looking forward to selecting, with Barbara, where they'd like to go to next.





# Activities *at Birtley...*

“Where has this year gone!” I hear it said so often by friends and family of all ages, and it is true - 2017 certainly seems to have flown by and no sooner have we organised one month’s programme of Activities, than the next one needs doing! It is also said that time flies when you are having fun, and this really is the vital ingredient for successful and enjoyable Activities.

Something that has been really fun to watch develop was the Activities Courtyard project. The area leading out from the French doors in the Activity Room was initially planted up by some of our Residents with Mediterranean type plants such as different varieties of lavender, rosemary and sage, as well as geraniums and fuschias. The herbs are now well established while the geraniums are renewed each summer. Due entirely to the enthusiasm of some Residents, the painted pebbles and terracotta pots have added a splash of colour in the courtyard, and thanks to the encouragement given by the team, this has proved to be a very popular painting activity. Even those who thought they weren’t very artistic have found a new confidence in painting on this medium.

Following on from a visit to the Therapy Garden in Normandy, Guildford, we were inspired to make some decorative bead hangings which have been hung on the outside walls of the Courtyard and we are also planning on creating a ‘living wall’ which will probably have to be done next Spring.

One of the highlights in October, was a visit of some small, and not so small animals, which we arranged through Tina Montague who

runs a local company called the Care Comfort Company. We know full well the benefits of animals, as we experience this regularly with the visits by Claire Jenkinson and her 18 month-old spaniel, Ambrose, who passed his PatDog tests recently, and can now officially visit Birtley. Well done Ambrose and thank you Claire for all your visits. For those who enjoy stroking a cat, we have Qweenie, a Burmese PatCat, who comes once a month with her owner Sue Collingwood. Thanks go to them too for all the visits and pleasure they give. When the Care Comfort Company offered to come with some other animals, we happily accepted, and our Residents were able to touch, hold and stroke lots of small animals including: a guinea pig; the softest and most beautiful miniature rabbits; some very young chickens; a very friendly dog; a small goat and even a pony called Rascal! It was so rewarding to see the smiles on everyone's faces, proof that contact with animals can be very therapeutic.

No harm in a bit of retail therapy either! We had a second visit by Belinda Cramp, a local jewellery maker, who set up her 'stall' in the Activities room and successfully sold many of her pieces to Residents and staff. We were so busy helping people with their shopping, that I forgot to take any photographs which was a shame. However, I noticed that some Residents were wearing their new jewellery the next day. Another visit is planned for May 2018.

November is the time of year to pack the Shoe boxes for those children who otherwise wouldn't get a Christmas present. We have again supported Samaritan's Purse, the charity that Holy Trinity Church, Bramley supports, and I am delighted to say that we packed 41 boxes with gifts which had all been donated by either members of our staff or our Residents. One afternoon was spent making the flat-pack boxes provided, and a couple of days later, the Residents packed the boxes. It is extremely heart-warming to think that we will have given

41 children a happier Christmas than they might otherwise have had.

Our most recent themed supper was held a few days after Bonfire Night and Fred, the 'guy' made by Residents, joined us for this event! Despite a very wet evening, we lit a few sparklers inside, which set off the fire alarm, but everyone said how pleased they were to know that the smoke detectors work so efficiently! The mulled wine and delicious meal was greatly appreciated and enjoyed by about 25 residents.

On a sadder note, I would like to pay a tribute to our dear friend and colleague, Julia Clarke, who very sadly passed away at home on October 8th. Julia had been such a dedicated and loyal member of staff here at Birtley House for about 18 years - working initially as a Care Assistant and then, for a great many years, as our only Menu Taker. How she managed to do this role 6 days a week, and only taking the occasional holiday, I shall never know, but I do know that she absolutely loved the job, all our Residents and the 'family feel' of Birtley. The fact that she was still working only a few weeks before she died, speaks volumes. She would always say to me "I never want to let you or the Residents down" and she never did. We all miss you very much Julia, even if you did tell us to let you get on with serving the lunches without our help!! You will always be remembered by my family and all your friends at Birtley.

All of us involved with the daily activities, myself, Carol, Tina, Ann, Cheryl and Denise, as well as Hanna, Mary and JoJo, thank you all for your appreciation throughout the year, and we look forward to 2018 being full of fun, laughter and enjoyment.

Happy Christmas and all good wishes for the New Year.

*Caroline and all the Team*



# Recognition for Birtley

2017 has been a very successful year for Birtley House and in the summer newsletter we updated you about winning the Family Business of the Year Award (South East Region) in the National Family Business Awards.

Since the summer, Birtley was selected as a finalist in the Gold Standards Framework (GSF) 'Care Home of the Year' award. Sadly, we didn't win but were very proud to have been selected as one of just six finalists out of 3,000 homes in the UK who have achieved this prestigious accreditation.

The Surrey Care Association (SCA) awards recognise the outstanding dedication of individuals and teams working in adult social care across Surrey and ten members of staff travelled to the awards ceremony and dinner held at Epsom Racecourse in November.

The awards were presented by Rachel Morris, a British Paralympic sportswoman, who has won Paralympic gold medals in both cycling and rowing. Rachel, who had both of her legs amputated when she was just 17, gave a very moving speech which made us all count our blessings. She is patron of the Guildford-based charity Challengers ([www.disability-challengers.org](http://www.disability-challengers.org)) who provide inclusive, fun and safe places where disabled children and young people can spend

time with their friends. A raffle on the evening raised £1,030 for their invaluable work.

Birtley didn't win an award but we were very proud to have been selected as a finalist in four of the 15 categories. The event provided the opportunity to celebrate the dedication and commitment of those working in Social Care across Surrey. It was a truly inspirational, and fun evening.

It is also very exciting that Birtley has been selected as one of six finalists in the inaugural Caring UK 'Care Home of the Year' award. The ceremony for these prestigious awards is being held at the National Railway Museum in York, early in December. The event is being held after the printing cut-off date for this newsletter, so I'm afraid we can't tell you how we fared, but Staff and Residents will be updated as soon as possible and the news will also be posted on our website blog and Facebook page.

Last, but by no means least, Birtley House has been selected by Surrey Choices to receive one of their 'Making a Difference' awards which will be presented in January at a ceremony to be held at Denbies Wine Estate. Please see the next page for further details on the background to this award.

**Janet Hall**  
*Internal Communications*



# Making a Difference

Michael Foreman was introduced to us by Surrey Choices in their capacity of helping people with learning difficulties get back into work. They had seen our advert for a Kitchen Porter and contacted Karen asking if Birtley would be interested in interviewing Michael for the position. Michael came to the interview accompanied by his support worker, Becky Grammel. He interviewed very well, seemed very genuine and had similar previous experience - so Karen decided to give him a chance in the Kitchen Porter role.

Initially, Becky came to shadow and support him while he was learning the job. However, Michael quickly came on in leaps and bounds

in both his personal skills and his confidence in interacting with others. So, the end of his probation period was brought forward and Michael is now a valuable and confident member of the kitchen team.

Birtley is proud to have been selected by Surrey Choices to receive one of their 'Making a Difference' awards. The award recognises both the achievement of Michael getting back into work, excelling in his job and becoming a valued member of the team, in addition to the commitment of Birtley for giving him the chance, time and guidance required to allow him to flourish.



## What is Surrey Choices? ([www.surreychoices.com](http://www.surreychoices.com))

Surrey Choices is all about helping individuals and their families to find the best support, care, activities and services.

Working across the whole of Surrey, they offer day and community support services, supported employment, enhanced home living and support, training and skills for independence, and a professional social work practice team.

# Garden views

## autumn 2017

As the glorious browns & golds of autumn slowly give way to the white frosts and blue skies of the winter months, out in the garden the process of 'putting the garden to bed' is well underway. Borders are being cut back & overcrowded plants split and divided, ready to be potted on for sale or moved to increase existing clumps or create new ones elsewhere.

The end is in sight in the seemingly never-ending battle with all the falling leaves, with some of the trees, particularly the oaks, reluctant to relinquish their foliage. Therefore, a job which is usually completed by the middle of November, will be keeping us busy well into December!

In the kitchen garden, the beds are being dug over ready for next year's crops. Thanks goes out to all the groups of volunteers who have helped so enthusiastically. The ongoing brilliant work that our friends from the *halow project* are doing has already reaped a summer of bountiful produce.

Some crops have been more successful than others - apologies to the kitchen staff for the endless supply of courgettes & marrows! We are planning to utilise the space more effectively next year, planting up the empty beds with the emphasis on having smaller quantities of a wider variety of crops.

We are always open to suggestions on how we can improve the gardens & surrounding grounds, so please feel free to let us know your thoughts on things you would like to see done or changed. There's still a great deal of potential and our aim is to create an environment that can be enjoyed by everybody. As always, it's nice to have a chat with the residents and their families, so hopefully we'll see you as we work our way around the beautiful grounds here at Birtley.



As I look out across the parkland, I do hope that we can enjoy more of these stunning mornings where the sky is blue, the ground is frosty and there's that comforting winter chill in the air. From myself, Sam & all the team from the *halow project*, we wish you all a very Happy Christmas & look forward to a prosperous 2018.

**Matt Miller**  
*Lead Gardener*

### A busy week of community engagement

Our gardening projects working with the local community continue to flourish and the following outlines the various groups who were involved in working in our grounds during just one week at the end of October:

**Tuesday:** A visit by one of our regular *halow project* volunteers, with their 'buddy', working for several hours tidying and picking fruit and veg.

**Wednesday:** A visit by *halow project* year group A who re-potted Christmas tree seedlings into larger pots and prepared beds for setting them out.

In addition, Oakleaf Enterprise (adults with learning difficulties) borrowed compost to the Rose garden and filled the beds.

**Thursday:** A visit by the *halow project* 'Cook & Grow' group who were supported by two groups from Phillips Electronics – making 18 volunteers in total! They dug over several beds in the kitchen

garden to remove weeds; completed setting out of Christmas tree pots; cleared out the last of the tomatoes; picked and stored the squash; cleared out the remains of harvested cabbages, etc.

**Friday:** There was another visit by Oakleaf Enterprise who continued with the composting of the beds round trees, shrubs and in the kitchen garden.

We also had a visit by 'Wild Learning' with two groups of children from the local facility 'Big Bear Education'; for those struggling with aspects of education and self-esteem. Their weekly visits are based around a 'Forest School' style of learning in the Birtley woods. We hope there will be time to arrange the new plan they hatched for a session making 'natural' Christmas decorations with our Residents nearer to Christmas.

The following week we had two additional *halow project* volunteers, Erica & Harry, who we know well as they have been here many times. They helped Resident Mavis Greaves, plant out tulips in the raised beds by the front door, overseen by Sam, which will provide a welcoming splash of colour in the spring.

### **Simon Whalley**



### **Apples, Apples and more Apples!**

The picking of 700 apple trees remains a daunting prospect each year, made more so than usual following the bombshell I received in September explaining that our established volunteer group were not able to help us again this year.

It is for that reason that I am even more grateful to the young persons from the *halow project* who stepped in to help Matt, Sam and myself with the picking. I am particularly grateful to Aisha Ariakutti and her team from the *halow project* 'Reason to get Up' group for their epic efforts in October who, along with four volunteers from the Nationwide Building Society in Guildford, helped us pick a record four tonnes in one day, over half of the total eventual yield. This was graphically described by Aisha as the equivalent of one fully grown White Rhino!

Whilst I am not entirely sure of the relevance of this African savanna-dwelling mammal in the process of making cider apple brandy, I will continue the theme by proudly announcing that we are currently fermenting a total of one adult elephant's worth of apple mash. Either way, I'm sure you'd agree this was a mammoth task! You may well wonder at this point if all that alcohol has rather gone to my head!

### **Tim Whalley**

# Work Experience *at Birtley*



Manju Gurung is in the second year of her NVQ3 course in Health and Social Care at Guildford College and she came to Birtley on a week of work experience, overseen by Dawn Critchell.

*"I am writing this to give my feedback regarding the block week placement at Birtley House Nursing Home.*

*Firstly, I cannot thank all the staff at Birtley enough for welcoming me as their own family member. The staff and their teamwork was amazing; everyone was super welcoming, kind and friendly*

*towards me. Next, the care home itself was very organised and delegated tasks well. Everyone had their own roles and responsibilities to be carried out, which were completed without any doubts or flaws. The ambience of the house was always happy and cheerful, which made the Residents feel at ease and homely as well.*

*Last but not the least, thank you very much to Dawn for appointing me to various staff members, with different roles, which taught me a lot of new things in the varied field of care. Furthermore, special thanks to Michaela, Cheryl, Jane and Kerry for showing me their expertise and being very kind and patient in teaching me."*

**Manju Gurung**

# Wellbeing with Cheryl

*'Wellbeing' is defined as the state of being 'comfortable, healthy or happy' and at both the recent Registered Nursing Home Association (RNHA) and Care England conferences, there was an emphasis on the importance of incorporating 'Wellbeing' into the day-to-day lives of Residents. At Birtley, as is often the case, we have 'led the way' in care initiatives and, two years ago, appointed a Wellbeing Mentor to incorporate further meaningful activities into the daily lives of our Residents, in addition to the varied afternoon activities we already provide.*

Our lovely ladies and gentlemen at Birtley have been enjoying my Monday morning activities which have recently included a series of craft sessions focussing on the autumn. Residents have made foxes faces, pumpkins and acorns using various materials, many of which were gathered from our beautiful grounds. Music mornings are always very popular, as are Reminiscence ones. I recently gave a talk on Famous Speeches from around the world, including a recorded speech of Edward VIII which was very moving. A selection of photos from these sessions are on display on the Wellbeing Board, which is situated outside Karen's office.

For Residents who prefer activities in the comfort of their own rooms, I visit them on a one-to-one



basis offering Poetry, Reading, Music, a game of Scrabble or maybe just a friendly chat.

Weather permitting, I also escort Residents on outings of their choice e.g. a pub lunch, a traditional afternoon tea or maybe a trip to the Garden Centre.

It is so lovely to be able to spend quality time with our Residents and to see them enjoying themselves. Roll on Christmas!

**Cheryl Searle**  
**Wellbeing Mentor**





## *Support & understanding along life's journey*

Gail Maguire is our new part-time counsellor. Here she outlines her approach to her work and what it can achieve. The photo shows Gail with Ebony & Rufus, her two re-homed German Wirehaired Pointers whom she hopes will join her, individually, from time-to-time in the sessions at Birtley.

### **Gail's approach to Counselling at Birtley:**

*"It is often surprising how much conversation and enjoyment is generated as Residents take a stroll down memory lane and recount bits and pieces of their life story. For all, including those who experience occasional forgetfulness, counselling may help affirm a sense of identity, offer emotional support, provide an opportunity to communicate emotions and describe feelings, and revive logic and meaning.*

*During the conversation, I gently guide the journey, listening attentively and searching for information or threads that can be used to benefit the Resident and add to his, or her, quality of life. Often the threads may have originated, for example, in some sort of trauma or severe stress experienced earlier in life, or they may relate to fear of dying, loneliness or feelings of neglect, which have often been contributory causes in making their lives unravel. These threads make it easier for me to help my clients come to terms with things, to see things in perspective*

*again, and to help face down issues that may be distressing or disturbing.*

*Together we embark on a journey, in a confidential, non-threatening environment, that aims to lead clients to somewhere peaceful, complete, whole and safe.”*

**Gail Maguire**  
**Counsellor**

### **More about Gail...**

Gail is trained as a person-centred counsellor. This means she works from the premise that everyone has potential, albeit at many different levels. Life situations can appear overwhelmingly daunting; as a counsellor Gail sees her task as helping unlock the potential to address these seemingly impossible issues. To this end she works in an accepting and empathic way, striving to understand clients and their world as they see it.

Alongside Gail's work at Birtley House, she also works for two charities: The first, also supported by Birtley House, is Macmillan Cancer Support, where she works with partner organisations to improve services, support recruitment and selection of Macmillan Professionals and ensures that Macmillan professionals feel supported and valued. Secondly, in a voluntary capacity Gail thoroughly enjoys her work for Independent Age, who provide advice and support for older age.

Prior to this, Gail jointly led on the creation, development and management of The Fountain Centre charity based at the Royal Surrey County Hospital. Gail has amassed considerable experience and expertise in understanding the need for, and delivery of, psychosocial support to address the emotional repercussions of cancer related diagnoses.

A registered general nurse and a member of the British Association of Social Workers and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, Gail holds a BSc (Hons) in Applied Social Science, a Certificate of Qualification for Social Work, an MSc in Social Studies, an MSc in psychological counselling, a Diploma in Psychology, an MSc in Gerontology, Care and Practice and a Diploma in Individual and counselling Supervision.

Gail lives in Haslemere with her husband John and her two dogs. She enjoys holidays in France and evenings out with family and friends around Surrey.



# Staff News

## Welcome to the Birtley Team

Jacquie Atter (Care Supervisor); Jane Baker (Mews Warden & also Bank Care Assistant); Sally Coluccia-Gill (Mews Warden); Sean Critchell (Pantry Assistant); Janet Gourlay (Night Care Assistant); Gail Maguire (Counsellor); Paige Ogburn and Allanah Wilds (Care Assistants).

## Welcome Back to Birtley

Clinical Lead, Rudo Rumveye returns to Birtley on a part-time basis, following her maternity leave while Tina Mubaiwa has returned as Bank Lead Care Assistant, usually working two nights/week.

## Moving on to pastures new

Ola Szychulska (Care Supervisor) who had been with us for over seven years has now moved to Southampton; Ildiko Peter (Staff Nurse) and Kelly Karaivanska (Bank Staff Nurse) who is moving to Cambridge; Melinda Chickanya (Reception); Michal Ordon (Pantry Assistant); and Kerry Nash (Head of Kitchen). Sadly, Rachel Enticknapp, one of our chefs, is leaving after an incredible 20 years of dedicated service. Rachel actually first worked here 27 years ago when she completed some work experience in the Housekeeping department! Best of luck to all our leavers.

## Change of Role

Kirsty Foster, Care Assistant, has returned to University to continue her Medical Degree. We are delighted that she will continue working here in her holidays until she qualifies as a Doctor.

Smolly Taringa (Sister Smolly) has stepped down from her role as Night Sister. Smolly first started at Birtley in 2006 and then left in 2007 to return home to Zimbabwe and her family. We were all delighted when, in 2009, Smolly was able to return to the UK, with her family this time, and returned to the team here at Birtley. She now wants to return to Zimbabwe and has to get a year of UK hospital experience before she is able to secure a nursing job back at home and therefore had to give up her full-time role here. Luckily though, it's not yet 'goodbye' to Smolly as she will remain a Bank Nurse until she finally leaves the country.



## Promotions

Michaela Pollard has been promoted from Lead Carer to Care Supervisor; Jacqueline Atter was promoted to Care Supervisor shortly after joining the company as a Care Assistant; while Carole Fulker has been promoted from Care Supervisor to Senior Care Supervisor. In this new role, in

addition to overseeing the team of three Care Supervisors, Carole will take over much of the responsibility of giving training courses from Karen. Julie Eagleton has been promoted to Lead Care Assistant and Charlotte McNamara has been promoted to Senior Care Assistant. Matt Miller has been promoted to Lead Gardener. Finally, Vio Darie has been promoted to Senior Staff Nurse, while Alisa Malaescu becomes our new Night Sister. Many congratulations to all the above on their well-deserved promotions.



### Long Service

Kitchen Assistant, Magda and her husband, Wojciech Tyniec, who is our Deputy Housekeeping Manager, have both completed 10 years of service while Pam Wright, Housekeeping

Assistant, and Sue Hendy, Laundry Assistant, have both completed 15 years. Many thanks to them all for all their hard work and loyalty to Birtley.

### Wedding Congratulations

Many Congratulations to Sarah Ragless (née Mills) who is a Senior Care Assistant and to Staff Nurse Manisha Gurung (née Gurung!)

Sarah is shown here adorned with metres of loo roll - her 'wedding dress' made by colleagues at her wedding shower party, and also in a more usual dress on her wedding day! Manisha who hails originally from Nepal, is shown here with her husband in their traditional Nepalese wedding clothes.

Wishing both of our beautiful Birtley Brides every happiness from all their friends at Birtley.

### RIP

Many of you will remember Julia Clarke who had worked at Birtley for 18 years, latterly as a Menu-taker. We were all greatly shocked and saddened when she died just two weeks after a diagnosis of cancer. Julia had been working at Birtley until her diagnosis.



# Bits & Pieces

## Winter 2017



### Macmillan Coffee Afternoon

Many, many thanks to everyone who supported our coffee afternoon in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. Suppliers, local businesses, staff and Residents donated prizes for the very popular tombola, while staff had also made homemade cakes to sell on our cake stall. We raised £880 on the day but, with the many generous donations we received from those who were unable to attend, the total rose to an incredible £1,020 – a Birtley record for this event. Well done Team Birtley!



**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**

### The Surrey Hills Wood Fair

There was fun for all the family, whatever their age, at the Surrey Hills Wood Fair, which is held annually in the parkland. As always, there was something for everyone to enjoy with a wide variety of Coppice crafts, demonstrations, horse and wagon rides, food and drink, and Children's activities, including tree-climbing and bug hunts.



To ensure that our Residents could join in with all the fun, Birtley hired a vehicle which could cope with the bumpy terrain and transport them to the thick of the fun; while on the Birtley House stand in the marquee they could enjoy a glass of Prosecco. Brilliant fun was had by all.

### Nobel Prize in Literature

I'm afraid that it's highly unlikely that any of us here will ever win such a prestigious prize; however, you may remember an article in our Winter 2015 newsletter by the award-winning author Kazuo Ishiguro, whose Mother was a Resident here. We were delighted to hear that The Nobel Prize

in Literature 2017 was awarded to Kazuo "who, in novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world".

Many congratulations to Kazuo from everyone at Birtley House.

### Spreading the word of excellence in care

Karen's expertise and knowledge is highly regarded amongst opinion leaders in Adult Social Care. She has been asked to share her knowledge by speaking on end-of-life care; attaining a CQC rating of Outstanding and Staff training and retention at the following venues over recent months:

- Care Home Collaboration conference organised by Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network
- Skills for Care conference
- Registered Nursing Home Association (RHNA) conference

All her presentations have been very well received and have showcased the passion she has in providing the best possible care we can for our Residents.

### Read all the latest news from Birtley House

To keep up-to-date with all the latest news, events and activities at Birtley House please see our website blog and/or Facebook page [@BirtleyHouse](#) where updates are loaded on a regular basis. The next newsletter will be April 2018.



Birtley

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*The next edition will be April 2018.*

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