



Birtley
House

house & home

Newsletter, Winter 2018

- *Q&A with Aisha from halow project*
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Welcome to the latest edition of the Birtley House newsletter...

Safe. Effective. Caring. Responsive. Well-led. These are the five fundamental standards that all care providers must be able to demonstrate effectively to the Care Quality Commission. As 2018 draws to a close on what has been a challenging year for us at times, I genuinely believe that we reach this point better able to provide these five fundamental standards than at any time in Birtley's past. We have our wonderful staff, and especially Sylwia and Michelle to thank for that, and the teamwork and commitment from so many has been incredible to see. We are grateful for the many heart-warming letters from residents and their families this year, and rest assured that we will continue to look for ways to make our residents' lives even better in 2019.

Of course, what would certainly help to make it easier to run a well-organised and effective UK nursing home in 2019 would be some proper support for the Care Industry from the government. We are still waiting for the 'Green Paper' which will apparently give us a framework to provide better care, and the sector continues to receive only meagre financial offerings compared to the NHS. At the recent Care England Conference, Professor Martin Green, CEO of Care England, was quite animated in his belief that the government wasn't going to help

the Industry, and that answers to the many questions concerning the care of the elderly would have to come from within the sector itself, especially with regards to new technology which would enable workforces to be more efficient. With this in mind, Simon has been holding some very encouraging meetings with senior NHS managers about his Virtual Care Home concept which could provide a very helpful link between NHS hospital, home and nursing home.

On a personal note, I am delighted to report that Sinead and I moved our family into Birtley Brook in October after a rather longer than expected renovation. However, the wait was worth it as we're very happy to be in our new home in such a beautiful setting. The enclosed photos are taken a year apart and give an insight into how it has changed.

On behalf of all the staff at Birtley House, as well as from the Whalley family, may we wish you all a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to seeing many of our residents' families on Christmas Day for a lovely home cooked lunch!

Frank Whalley
Managing Director



Pre-renovation November 2017



Almost finished November 2018

Hot Topics

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

The introduction of new European laws around Data Protection has been a hot topic this year, and, like all organisations, we have reviewed our processes around personal information. Healthcare records have always been managed with the highest care and professional obligations and therefore the changes have not significantly altered our fundamental duties towards confidentiality and privacy which remain as important to us as ever.

Central to the new laws is an emphasis on our rights to know how our information is being gathered, stored, shared and disposed of. In the spirit of transparency and accessibility, we have re-written what is commonly called a Privacy Notice to provide a plain-English summary of how we manage personal information. This is available in hardcopy from Reception, in large-print format on request. It is also available on our website: www.birtleyhouse.co.uk/privacy-policy/.

FIRE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff, residents and visitors for their exemplary response to the difficult events of Friday 2nd November when a smouldering of lint in a tumble dryer set off our alarms and resulted in a call to the fire service and a partial evacuation of the residential area above the Laundry.

Our automatic fire detection system combined with the diligence of our Deputy Housekeeper ensured that the emergency services arrived on site within minutes and were able to extinguish the fire before any chance of it igniting. The partial evacuation of residents was carried out extremely well by staff on duty, normal service was restored within an hour and lunch was served a mere 10 minutes late! We are very grateful to the Watch Commander Steve Love and his team from SFRS Guildford who responded so promptly and indeed, dismantled the tumble dryer so carefully that the engineer was able to get the machine back up and running that same afternoon, following a thorough inspection and clean bill of health from our service engineers.

The evacuation procedure has always caused concern from residents or new staff members, due to it being a delayed operation. However, this incident clearly demonstrates its effectiveness, as the initial evacuation of all staff and visitors meant that we had plentiful staff numbers to then begin evacuating the specific area most at risk.

By all accounts, including from the fire service themselves, we were extremely unlucky that such an event occurred given that all safety procedures had been carried out by our staff and the third-party contractor. Nevertheless, we remain very vigilant towards fire on the premises and continue to do all we can to keep these risks to a minimum.



RECEPTION HALL

I am delighted that we've had such a positive response to the recent restoration of the parquet floor in the Reception Hall. We're due to redecorate the Main Hall in the New Year and will begin the task of removing the existing 50+ year-old flock wallpaper as soon as the Christmas Tree comes down. With only Simon remembering a time before the current décor, we are not taking this decision lightly and will also be focussing on improving the lighting within the Hall to complement the new chosen design. With that in mind, I'd draw your attention to the display of wallpaper samples in the Hall for which we are asking for feedback. There has been some excellent engagement with this so far and all opinions are very much welcomed. We even persuaded Brian, our long standing postman to have his say so please chip in.

INSPECTION

At the time of writing this, we are anticipating our re-inspection following the disappointing result of the last one in May. Whatever the result, I have the most enormous respect for the way in which Sylwia, Michelle and the whole team at Birtley have worked to act on the CQC's recommendations and to get us to a point where I can confidently say that Birtley has never run more smoothly or effectively than it is currently doing and that the outcomes for our Residents are better than ever.

The rating we received in June was a shock for us all, and though we managed to hold our nerve through a tricky period prior to meeting Sylwia, we knew from our first discussion with her that she would bring so much to Birtley. She has genuinely been the most perfect fit for us in so many ways and I am sure you will enjoy reading her piece in this Newsletter edition, where she offers a true insight into the progress made.

Tim Whalley

Caring Insights

from Sylwia



Before I delve into all that we have been up to, I would prefer to start with a huge THANK YOU to everyone I work with day to day, from house-keeping to my nurses & carers and the Directors, but in particular to Michelle for her unwavering support and hard work, without which we would not have achieved the remarkable improvements we've managed so far.

Since starting here in July, I've received fantastic support towards the strategies I proposed to meet our objectives, which has allowed for an easier transition in generating an all-round understanding of the mission and focus required to meet our goals.

An essential part of my role is to build healthy relationships with each member of staff, our Residents and their families. These relationships always affect the working environment and when they are healthy, the organizational culture that fosters will be positive, resulting in a motivated and engaged workforce and a warm and harmonious environment for Residents and their visitors.

At Birtley employees are trusted, treated as adults, and not micromanaged. My person-centred approach to care also reflects in my management delivery. I value the importance of people's individual values, vision or mission and don't underestimate the impact any changes to our strategic framework may have on each person. I believe these person-centred values are central to maintaining high standards of people management, crucial for any business working towards optimum success and effectiveness.

It's important for me to have frequent communication with Residents, staff and families and follow up where necessary with meetings that aim to understand and satisfy, as well as impromptu team building sessions. For me to have a clear understanding on what is going on in our Home, I operate transparently and encourage this also in my team. I have an open-door policy and empower all staff to speak up and present any new facts, their views and opinions when involved in solving any problems that may arise or offering an innovative idea that may cultivate growth in some way.

There are many things that my team and I have implemented around the house, one of my favourite innovations being the 'Resident of the day' operation which has been underway since 1st October. This process involves every single Resident once a month, and they each receive a visit from people who run key areas within the Home, such as the Chef, the care and nursing staff, the housekeepers, the maintenance team, the activities department and of course, a visit from me. The purpose is to give each Resident an opportunity to raise anything they wish to on a one to one basis, such as mentioning a preferred routine for the cleaning of their room, a certain way that they would like a meal to be served, or a new meal

choice etc. It also helps to ensure compliance as well as assisting us in recognising areas of service that may benefit from some form of quality improvement.

Continuing the path of generating feedback I have introduced my 'Fabulous Feedback Folder', which is one that staff can access to be reminded of their achievements and feel both inspired and encouraged by its contents. There are useful reflections on project innovations, sharing practice successes, Resident involvement notes, and of course any general nice feedback. We are also working on a project we call 'Echo' where we come together (via video conference) with the Princess Alice Hospice and 11 other care homes, to work through case studies together and presenting solutions through skill sharing. We also have an online training platform for all staff which started in October and so far over 500 courses have been completed.

Another new practice was the introduction of a 'Staff Mentorship Supervisor', which Carole Fulker has enthusiastically taken on and is successfully implementing. The idea is that Carole will work with any new starters closely over a 12-week period of induction, to ensure consistency in their understanding and adoption of new processes, rules and expectations. It also ensures that as a manager I am clear about who has what level of understanding of both their role and my expectations. Equally it ensures that each new team member fairly receives the same level of training, support and guidance throughout their induction period.

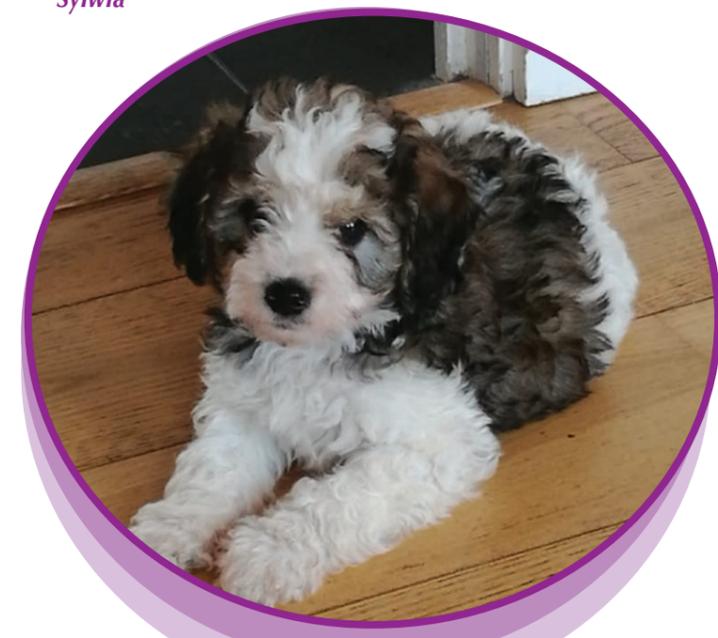
There is so much I could elaborate on further, informing you also about our care-plan evaluations and family reviews that have so far taken place, our refreshed mental capacity assessments, medication competency tests, further care plan audits, staff reflection accounts, nominated keyworkers for support and more... but I fear I would take up most of this newsletter. I hope to portray to you the level of hard work that is taking place here and to inspire you further to continue to trust with confidence and faith that we are making exceptional progress in our daily operations, exceeding many of our targets and will continue to do so. It has been an incredibly productive time, and at risk of repeating

myself, I am truly thankful for all the support received from every angle, and I recognise the initiative, willingness to improve and motivation from all whom I am surrounded with, all of which continues to motivate me in fulfilling this journey with passion and determination.

On a personal level, I have recently enjoyed a holiday back to Poland to see my family. Although sad to leave when the trip was done, I longed to come back to England again as my husband and I recently became parents to Jasper, our 'Cavapoo' puppy. Now 5 months old, Jasper is a cross breed from a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel (mother) crossed with a Poodle (father). We did a lot of research before choosing our 'fur-baby' confirming the biological history of his doggy parents, their parents and their general health, so that he has the best chance in life. You can see from the pictures I very proudly share with you, that he is a cheeky, loving and happy little pup, who we're trying not to let get away with too much, although it is hard as he is most adorable, and we are totally in love.

My kindest thoughts go to everyone for a Happy Christmas and an optimistic New Year for 2019! Thank you all again for your support, and please don't forget my door is always open to both Staff, Families and Residents for anything you wish to discuss.

Best wishes,
Sylwia



Informational changes around the home

It may have been noticed that we recently put up new signage around the Home, making it easier to navigate for both visitors and any new Residents. Our Statement of Purpose has been updated, reducing its content significantly to be purely informative about services provided and not watered down with any extra information. We're working on a new 'guide to familiar faces' which will help all our residents identify who people are in the house. This document is to be a library of pictures of our staff, with the names and position of all nurses, carers and various other members of the house teams that Residents may come across daily. There is now also a bright green folder (you can't miss it) placed in the reception area containing various pieces of other useful information, we expect it to be useful to all in one way or another and urge our Residents to have a look through it. Finally, we have changed the nurse uniforms to reflect the job title from Staff Nurse to Registered General Nurse. This is in line with a re-organised staff structure which has been rolled out to streamline our daily operations and services provided.



Harrisons Catering...

Since it was established in 1994, Harrison Catering has always championed cooking fresh food from quality ingredients.

This year, the glorious autumn weather has created some extra rich pickings in the Birtley House gardens and provided a plethora of opportunities for chefs to work with produce that's been grown on site.

Harrison Catering staff have transformed the bumper crop of fruit and vegetables from the Birtley Gardens into some delicious delights. From crab apples and squashes to quinces and damsons, Catering Manager Simon Wheatley and his team have been creating delectable jellies, jams and chutneys for the enjoyment of residents and their families.



The homemade jams and chutneys made the perfect accompaniment to the wide array of cakes created in the kitchens for the recent Macmillan Coffee Afternoon. The Harrison team baked some traditional favourites; coffee cake, scones, lemon drizzle cake, Victoria sponge and doughnuts to name but a few. It was an enjoyable afternoon and very well attended with 70 people enjoying the cakes whilst raising funds for a very worthy cause.

The next big event in the culinary diary is Christmas. The team has already been preparing the Christmas puddings, and are very much looking forward to sharing some winter dishes with you over the next few months. There will be a selection of homemade gifts created in the kitchens during the festive season.

The kitchen staff are always keen to meet the friends and families of everyone at Birtley House, so please say hello if you're visiting. And if you have any special requests or suggestions, we'd be delighted to hear about them.





Garden Review

Winter 2018



The summer of 2018 will go down as the longest and hottest in the 16 years since I chose to leave a banking career to become a professional gardener. Two solid months of almost unbroken sunshine, temperatures well into the thirties and zero rain fall were something I've not been used to. Memories of cold wet summers are still fresh in the memory. But then I wouldn't be a proper gardener if I didn't moan about the weather!

The extreme heat of the summer and the glorious Autumn months have extended the growing season by at least a month. This is something I've noticed more and more over the years, seasons tend to blend into each other, gone are the distinct seasonal changes as only a few weeks ago temperatures were still touching the mid-twenties in November.

The result of this extended season means that the usual tasks of 'putting the garden to bed' has become increasingly staggered. At the time of writing, dahlia's are still in flower, oak trees are still in green leaf and raspberries are producing fruit closer to Christmas than mid-summer.

Despite these changes to the norm, as ever we're always busy out in the garden. The ongoing task of leaf clearing is relentless, and it looks like we could still be raking up oak leaves when we should be putting up Christmas lights. The



herbaceous perennials that have finished are being cut back, overgrown clumps are reduced and used to create new plants for sale and to fill in gaps.

The shrub border has been reduced in size opening up the space around the plants and stopping them growing into each other, creating a lighter and airier feel to the border and allowing some different species to be planted to extend the interest through the year.

The fruit garden has produced an abundance of crop this year. The early season fruit such as gooseberries, currants and strawberries were plentiful thanks to the warm spring. Apples and pears although abundant were undersized due to lack of water through the summer. Sadly, the raspberries suffered the worst in the drought and despite regular watering, the soil couldn't hold the moisture needed to sustain the fruit being produced, therefore there was almost no worthwhile fruit throughout the summer. However, the warm Autumn has allowed them to produce a late crop.

Mostly it's been a successful time in the kitchen garden. We've been harvesting crops throughout the year. Purple sprouting broccoli, asparagus and rhubarb in spring. Beans, peas, beetroot, onions, kale, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, squash, carrots, courgettes and pumpkins

throughout the summer and autumn. Sprouts and winter squash are still waiting to be harvested.

As usual the halow project have done a great job in keeping the harvesting and weeding under control, their enthusiasm and willingness to get stuck in have meant the burden of keeping on top of things has been taken out of our hands meaning Sam and I can concentrate on the formal areas of the garden.

Winter is always the time in the gardener's calendar when the planning for the following year can begin and we will be looking to improve things around the estate for the enjoyment of the residents, visitors and staff. Improved planting through the borders, more hard surface paths, an improvement to the fence and gates at the end of the long walk and beginning a regular programme of improving the condition of the lawns are on the agenda for the coming season.

As the year draws to its climax we'll still be out and about in the gardens, keeping everything to the high standards so on those cold and frosty winter mornings it is always welcome to see friendly faces enjoying the grounds here at Birtley House.

From Sam and myself I would like to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas!





Q&A with Aisha from halow project

Tell us a little about your career before you joined the halow project?

I graduated from Keele University in 2008 after studying an undergraduate degree in Biology and Psychology, shortly afterwards I began working as a Behavioural Support worker at a national charity for children with Epilepsy. I was in that role for three years before training in 'Applied Behaviour Analysis' at a Surrey based specialist school for children with Autistic Spectrum Condition. During this time I began a Masters at Manchester University in Learning Disabilities and my journey brought me to halow project while I was supporting a young adult to access one of their education programmes.

What was it that drew you to working with halow project?

While I was supporting a young adult to access Building Futures (halow project's educational programme), I was blown away by the work they were doing, the dedication of the staff to promote each young person's individual aspirations was inspiring and I wanted to be a part of it. Now I am one of their Project Coordinators taking the lead in a Daytime Activities programme and in February 2019 I will have been working for halow project for six years.

Do you have any favourite experiences with the group?

I have many favourite experiences with the group, when I first started at halow project I worked in the Social Activities team and one activity I led was a llama trek which involved taking a

llama for a walk! That was great fun and I think I enjoyed it just as much (if not more) as the young people. More recently some members of my Cook and Grow group decorated some pumpkins with some of the Birtley House residents and it was such a pleasure to see the young people and residents laughing, joking and even singing together over a shared activity.

Assuming volunteers are always needed, how do you go about finding them?

halow project heavily rely on the support of volunteers, without them we wouldn't be able to offer all the activities to the young people that we do, so we are incredibly grateful for our current volunteers and we rely on them to spread the word about how great it is to volunteer with us! We are a local charity and we have some dedicated local partners like Birtley House, who are able to showcase the work they do for us and inspire the local community to volunteer with us.

What do the young adults gain from the partnership you have with Birtley House?

halow project's partnership with Birtley House has opened up many opportunities for our young people. Simon Whalley and the Birtley House team have been exceptionally generous, allowing the young people to learn about wildlife from cray fishing, bee keeping to hosting a weekly group to grow their own food produce and win Guildford in Bloom awards for their hard work. Three young people who are keen gardeners have also been given the opportunity to do some work experience with Sam and Matt with one

now coming on a twice weekly basis. They are absolutely loving it as it gives them a real sense of purpose.

Tell us a little about halow's other community engagement projects?

I like to encourage young people to be proud of who they are and what they do. Some of them don't realise how much they contribute to the local community, so I relish any opportunity that showcases the young people's talents and skills. We often sell food products they have made at farmers markets, exhibit art work they have made at local galleries such as Watts Gallery or The Lightbox. We also cook and serve for the local community with companies such as The Boileroom and most recently Olivo Italian Restaurant.

What is the most exciting part of working with halow?

halow project has been on a real journey and there have been many different experiences I have been involved in. I take the lead on halow project's disability works campaign to help young people across all our programmes to develop their skills, confidence and talents, enabling them to better embrace the daunting process of finding a job. We work with many employers in different areas of the industry and this campaign took us to the House of Commons in both 2016 and 2018, where we were able to present and highlight the successes of our work. Not only is it an honour to be in such historic surroundings but also for the young people it's a real celebration of their achievements.

What's your most enjoyable part of the work you do with the halow group?

Watching a young person develop and grow in a multitude of ways gives me such joy and it is a real privilege to be part of their journey.

What are halow's aspirations?

To continue the fantastic work we are doing, and finding opportunities to reach many more young people that need our support.

To donate to halow project and help support funding towards the incredible work that they do, please visit their website below. Or alternatively contact any member of their team on the below details.

Aisha Ariakutti

A Reason to Get Up Co-ordinator

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www.halowproject.org.uk

halow
nurturing independence



Celebrating Continuity in Care

In any Care Home business continuity is a really important element in the creation of a trusting environment within which both the carers and the cared-for can flourish. It is therefore something which we at Birtley House particularly like to celebrate in view of the around 90 years and four generations that our family has run the business. It is particularly exciting when we recognise that it is not just our family but our residents and our team that contribute to the continuity equation. With a recent celebration of three generations of the Wells family residing here for over four decades, as well as another family with a mother and daughter both being resident here at the same time, we thought we would find these examples hard to beat. However, one of our most enduring family friendships has given us something else to celebrate recently.

In the 1970's Olave, Lady Baden-Powell GBE, widow of the founder of the Scout Movement and a former Chief Guide, came to Birtley from her home at Hampton Court. Her granddaughter-in-law, Patience, had been driving her around to see if there was anywhere she would feel at home as she was becoming more frail. Even as they drove up to the front door Lady BP told Patience "this is where I want to be" and soon settled in to what is now Wisteria Apartment.

Olave and my parents, Dick and June, became good friends. By this time Dick and June had been running

the Home for over 20 years following on from June's parents who founded the business in the 1920s. One of the highlights of each year at Birtley was Lady BP's birthday on 22nd February and in 1974 this was very specially commemorated as her 85th birthday with Mrs Helvi Sipila the UN Assistant Secretary General flying over from New York to present her with the UN Ceres Medal – awarded annually to the woman who had made the most striking contribution to world affairs.

After Olave's death in June 1977, her grandson Robert, the current Lord Baden-Powell, and his wife Patience remained life-long friends with our family and both have had short sojourns as patients here – Patience a little while before her sad death in 2010 and Robert convalescing after a time in hospital earlier this year.

To celebrate the 45 years of friendship I recently visited Robert at home where he is re-building his strength again and he was kind enough to fill in some of the background to this long association which we all value so much.

For many years after her husband's death, Olave had travelled the world meeting Guide groups and those working to build on the foundations of the Scout and Guide movement. She had a huge contacts list with over 7000 addresses. She had particularly staunch friends in Australia where she would spend the winter, returning to the UK in the spring. As her care needs then began to dominate it became clear that managing at Hampton Court with a trio of carers was not a long-term solution and Birtley House provided the perfect environment. Olave was very long-sighted and keen on bird watching and the views from her room were superb for this. The calm atmosphere and high quality of care in a place where she felt quite at home suited her perfectly. The Scout and Guide movement rallied round as her funds were limited and her fees were supported alternately each year by the Scouts and the Guides nationally.

Despite her increasing frailty Olave maintained her air of authority, which could feel a little intimidating to those who did not know her, but she still made strong friendships with some of the Birtley residents and loved having guests for tea right up to the time she passed away.

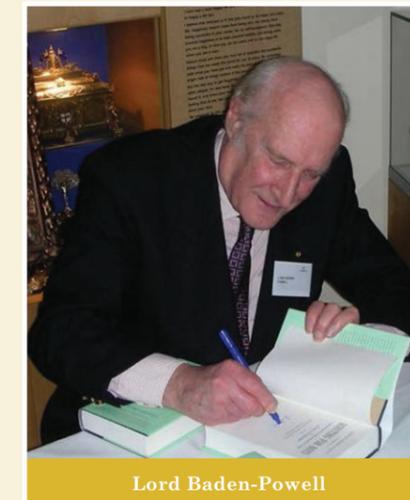
The family friendship with Dick & June Whalley persisted after this and many happy occasions at Birtley or at the B-Ps home at Chapel Farm (and later at Grove



Lady Baden-Powell



Patience with her race horse



Lord Baden-Powell

Heath Farm) still live in Robert's memory. He had championed the concept of quarter-horse racing – a very exciting sprint horse-race imported from the US. Robert had worked in the City but had a very creative interest in horses and their care. His firm Fieldguard has made high quality fencing and matting products for many years. When a French horse-breeder asked his advice for a better quality of bedding for an injured and very valuable brood mare, Robert designed such a successful new model that the business really became a strong competitor in the market. In recent years Robert's passion for horses has been supplemented by dedication to support for another 'racing certainty' – retired greyhounds which, without help, are often condemned. He always has at least a couple of dogs which he exercised regularly himself up until his recent illness.

Robert's wife, Patience, was Chief Commissioner for UK Girl Guiding in the 1980s and later became a Vice-President. She, together with Robert, had been an active promoter of the early Venture Scout Section in the UK and promoted the sensitive integration of Guides into Scouting. Her Majesty the Queen appointed her CBE in 1986. Patience grew up in what was then Rhodesia where she met Robert and when they came to the UK she applied herself tirelessly to support for the deprived and the wider Scouting including becoming the Founder Patron for Walton Firs at Cobham which provides Challenge Adventure and Education for young people. In this she was, as in everything, seemingly tireless and persistent in bringing support and influence to the project. Indeed Patience introduced me to the Walton Firs Adventure Centre too and I was an active supporter for some years on their Board.

The family mutual support has carried on over the years too. When my mother, June, died at the early age of only 52, Patience and Robert were among the most

faithful supporters to my father who was devastated but worked hard not to let it show. His small circle of special friends arranged social events and encouraged his commitment to community projects (such as chairing the fund-raising committee for the infant University of Surrey) and active involvement with local politics – he was elected as a Councillor for Hambledon RDC – and he supported Holy Trinity Church in Bramley as Church Warden.

Following our return from Wiltshire in 1997, Caroline and I helped run the business until my father's death in 1999 when I took over the Chairmanship. Robert and Patience continued to offer condolence and support and the multi-generational friendship continued to flourish at both the social and community level. Robert was very enthusiastic when we started to host the annual Sculpture Garden at Birtley and has been a regular buyer of some of the special pieces exhibited here over the last 10 years. As Patience's mobility decreased, we helped to provide specialist transport and we hosted one of the last big events for her charitable causes (in this case Walton Firs) at which, despite her affliction, she still shone like a beacon to motivate support.

Birtley was there too for Robert when following surgery and a difficult time in hospital, Alison Raw a mutual friend with strong links to both Robert and our family, realised that it was a matter of survival to get Robert to a place of safety and rang us. We provided a bed at short notice and helped him get back enough strength to return home.

So – 45 years of family friendship creating a unique example of mutual friendship and caring support. We feel hugely privileged to have had the opportunity to share so much with a family that has given so much to so many around the world over so many years.

Simon Whalley
Director

Activities

It is always good to be able to report about some new innovations happening in the Activities department, all of which we hope will be successful as well as enjoyable, and so the team are delighted to welcome Lisa Cadec as our Wellbeing Companion. Having been on the Care Team for three years, Lisa is no stranger to our Residents, which has meant that her move from one department to another has seemed very natural. Lisa's role is vitally important as she is concentrating on those Residents who for various reasons, are unable to join in the daily activities on offer, and Lisa is able to spend time with them on a one-to-one basis. This might be reading, playing a game, taking a Resident outside in the gardens, a shopping trip or to somewhere special. The opportunities are endless, and we aim to explore as many residents desires and ideas as possible! Another important requirement by CQC these days is the documentation of Life Stories of our Residents, of course only of those who wish this to be done. This is another area for which Lisa is now responsible and feels very privileged to witness first-hand our Residents' varied and interesting lives.

We are also very pleased that we have appointed the Reverend Liz Tilley as our Birtley House Chaplain, commencing with the Communion Service at the end of November, and we are looking forward to welcoming Liz to Birtley to help us fulfil the spiritual needs of our Residents. We are most grateful to our Area Dean, Reverend Debbie Sellin, for helping us to fill this vacancy, and of course our very sincere thanks to both Reverend Patsy Kettle and Reverend Adrian Leek for officiating at our Communion Services each month, and for the support they have given to some of our Residents during the past few months.

Another new and exciting initiative is our connection with Little Harriers, a local Day Nursery, who will be bringing between 6-8 three+ year



Lisa our 'Wellbeing Companion'



Remembrance Poppies

olds to Birtley, one morning a month, to share an activity with a similar number of our Residents. We are confident that this venture will be beneficial for both the young and not so young, and it will be interesting to see how this inter-generational activity develops over the coming months.

We were extremely fortunate to have been introduced to Heather Sullivan, the Outreach Officer for the Weald & Downland Living Museum, and Heather will be visiting us once a month for six months giving a series of different talks with slides, including some hands-on activities. Her first visit was an enormous success which stimulated plenty of discussion and interest.

Activities news could take up several pages of our newsletter as there is always so much going on in this department, thanks to the imagination and enthusiasm of the team, Carol, Tina, Ann and Lisa, so hopefully the photos will give an insight into the highlights of the past few months, and we all hope the fun will continue into 2019!

Caroline Whalley
Director

A Charitable Success



Pumpkin Painting



Green fingered giggles



Winter Pansy Planting

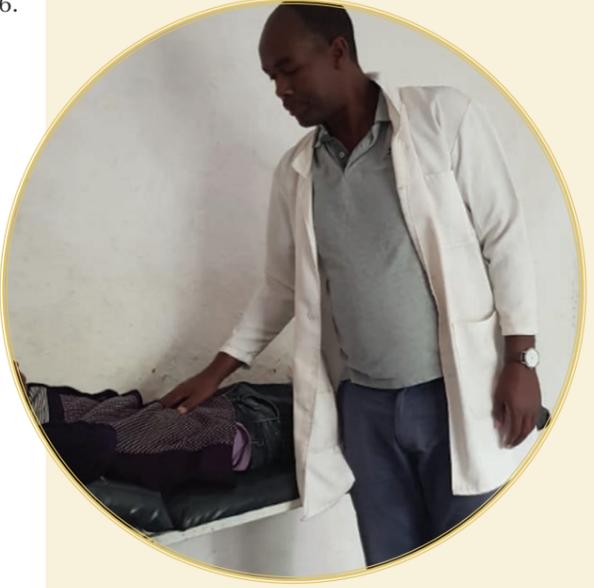


Building Santa



Its been a wonderful year for Charitable work at Birtley, thank you again to everyone who contributed to the success of our Macmillan coffee afternoon, which helped by the buzzing atmosphere, raised an incredible **£1850** towards Cancer Research, all from our Tombola, cake sale and some very generous donations!!

We continue our work supporting halow project and the Care Workers Charity (CWC) and are finishing the year with a foodbank collection for St Mark's Church, Godalming. The depths of our partnerships are set to grow further for 2019 with the likes of Unum (linked to the halow project), who have recently worked with us to clear our apple orchard for our Birtley Brandy and other projects we are looking to involve ourselves with.



Many in Birtley House will be familiar with Desta Gadore, one of our Lead Carers who joined us back in July. Desta moved to the UK from Ethiopia, where he was a qualified Registered Nurse since 2003, almost 7 years ago to further expand his care and nursing skills whilst working towards a charitable project that is close to his heart.

Desta was born and raised in an Ethiopian village called Kulit 2, which is currently home to a population of around 50,000 people. Life there is quite different to what we are used to here, and the lack of basic facilities which most of us are accustomed to encourages sickness to spread and poor health for many. With Malaria common and limited water supplies far beyond our imagination, the risk of disease is always high, and with the nearest hospital 60km away, many who need medical assistance will experience a deterioration in their health, which could so easily be managed with the right medical facilities and clean water to hand.

After sadly losing one of his sisters to Leukaemia only a few years ago, Desta, having always had the desire to help people and now more motivated than ever, set up a small medical clinic in his village to promote and maintain good health and well-being in his local community. Across a population of 50,000, his small unit, staffed with only two full time nurses, doesn't go far at all, but for the Residents of Kulit 2 it is a positive step in the right direction. Desta is currently involved in fundraising to further expand the capabilities of the clinic in ensuring healthier lives for locals, whilst also saving lives in extreme cases.

Since the initial success of the much needed clinic, Desta has built up strong relationships with his local government, as well as partnerships with the community church Kale Heywet which is a mutual benefactor, and therefore support the proposed growth strategy. The government have already supplied electricity to the medical unit and will continue to support subject to visits and inspections. The church which is only a stone's throw away, has the most suitable grounds to house the next water-borehole in the village and would supply the medical centre. Currently there are only two boreholes in the whole village,

Water and Healthcare project in Ethiopia



meaning many must resort to traditional river sources, or for those with a little money, they may buy bottled water that comes with an extortionate price tag.

Together, the church and medical unit have a vision to transform the health of people in the area, through a combination of high-quality community healthcare and the provision of adequate safe water resources. To further support maintenance and growth plans for the clinic, the water would be offered to locals at a very low but operationally effective cost.

The project has initiated relationships with various volunteers across the world. Andrew Mackenney-Jeffs, from the Environment Agency in England, has solid experience of other water installation projects in West Africa and was able to identify the best growth strategy to ensure mutual benefits, not only to the medical centre and church, but also the community, as the project would impact positively in a multiplying effect, creating more jobs and opportunities in the local area.

The next allocation of substantial funding would be to build a laboratory at the back of the clinic and supply a trained lab technician. Desta and the other project partners are now looking for an international partner organisation to advise the project further and fund the next stage. Estimated costs are approximately £40,000 and would cover as much as the implementation of the borehole, with drilling, headworks and pump, laboratory construction, materials and equipment, a year's salary for new lab technician, and various other consumables.

Back home in Ethiopia, Desta has his own family – his wife Beza, and two young children, a 5 year old boy, Melebo and 1 year old daughter, Hebron. He managed to make it home in September for Hebron's first birthday, although he will not go home for Christmas this year. He will return at some point next year for a little family time, whilst visiting the clinic to catch up properly with the nurses, and hopefully start to action further plans as a result of funds raised.

For more information on the project, or if you wish to donate, you may contact Desta on 07487 400266 or via his email address which is destagadore@yahoo.com



Intergenerational learning...



Having always been keen to work with our local community wherever possible, we've been particularly delighted recently to enjoy visits from both local school Gosden House & local Nursery Little Harriers. The Gosden House students will visit again in January to read their poems to our residents, which were inspired by the sharing of their own stories and memories during the war. The 3 & 4 year olds from Little Harriers were equally as engaging and brought so much energy with them, and left it behind after their visit. We know this intergenerational mix can give both parties opportunities for all ages to learn new skills and offers a new sense of purpose, not to mention the invigorating and energising effect it has on the well-being of older adults. We are very much looking forward to various projects lined up for 2019, where we expect to continue intergenerational activities and are actively seeking further opportunities to do so.

Social, Digital and Online Media

No matter how much some of us resist change, the revolution of the digital world continues to envelope more and more of us in both our daily lives and in our businesses. Here at Birtley we have decided to fully utilise various media platforms, to enable people to stay better connected with us as well as reach out further to the community. As always, we continue to update our website blog with the highlights of Birtley and any important topics, but we are now also utilising our existing Facebook platform and have created a new Instagram page, which has been followed up with a Twitter and a LinkedIn page. Each platform helps us portray a true vision of what goes on here in our daily activities, as well as promote up and coming events, job vacancies, our beautiful grounds and of course not forgetting the immediate connection it gives us to developments in the care industry and NHS, via online news. Aside from all that, we feel these platforms are an excellent tool for Residents families to feel more in the loop with what goes on inside Birtley and helps them to feel better connected.



Staff News

Wedding season for two couples at Birtley

We all want to offer our HUGE congratulations to Hania Kalinska & Ken Ashwell who were married on 13th September 2018. Hania has worked for us since December 2010, and although Ken left us in October 2016, he is still a regular face at Birtley events. Returning from a few days off together, they surprised us all as the new Mr & Mrs Ashwell.

We really do wish them all the very best in their new life together!

A beautiful quote from Hania...

"It all started some time after we met at Birtley House. Our love was growing and in recognising our values were the same, we knew we wanted to spend our lives together. The natural next step was to get married, and here is a picture of that lovely moment..."

As for myself, the celebrations started early as my husband to be, Charles and I were treated by my colleagues in the barn office to a handful

of cards and some lovely gifts. We also shared a bottle of fizz together before lunch, which after the short time that I had been at Birtley, I thought was exceptionally thoughtful of them. A few days later, on 22nd September 2018 Charles and I enjoyed a truly perfect wedding day, Military style, at St Mary's Church in Chiddingfold. We drew a short straw with the weather, as one of the only rainy Saturdays for the whole of the summer showed up to witness our day. Despite my hair preparation being a waste of time, and my Cathedral length veil which accompanied my dress (that had taken 9 months to arrive) both ending up wet and muddy even before our wedding breakfast, I can honestly say that it did not matter at all! I had just married my best friend, we were high as a kite and lucky enough to be joined by nearly everyone we love, some of whom had travelled from as far as Dubai, Spain, Ireland and Bolton to be with us. Neither of us stopped smiling the whole day and we are still talking about it now! Leaving the church through our Guards of Honour as husband and wife was our favourite part of the day, above is one of our favourite pictures.

We were all really thrilled for Michaela Pollard, our Care Supervisor who was incredible in completing a half marathon on 22nd September in memory of both her Father, and Grandfather.

"The reason that I took part was in memory of my Grandad who passed away in March 2014 and my Dad who also passed away in October of the same year. Both were diagnosed with Cancer far too late. The half marathon took place in London during the evening, we started in Southwark park and walked 13.1 miles to the finish in Old Billingsgate. The weather wasn't brilliant as it was raining to start with, but it did stop. It was tough towards the end of the walk and just about every muscle ached. But I did it, I'm proud to say I completed the walk in 4 hours and 20 minutes."



Staff News

Promotions and role changes

Congratulations to a handful of our team who have either been promoted or taken on a new role.

Carole Fulker on her promotion to Staff Mentorship Manager. With a new focus to deliver a consistent and comprehensive induction programme to all new care staff. This is a dual role as Carole also provides supervision and support to the Mews Wardens.

Lisa Cadec who is our new Wellbeing Companion. Previously a Lead Care Assistant, Lisa is now working as part of the Activities Team and you can spot her in her new pink uniform.

Bonita Mubaiwa on the completion of her Nursing Degree. Bonita originally started working at Birtley House as a Care Assistant back in 2014, now having graduated from the University of Hertfordshire, she is now in our team as a Bank Registered General Nurse.

We are also delighted that Desta Gadore, Senior Care Assistant has given up his other job to join us on a full-time basis.

We say farewell to a handful of staff this season, wishing them all the very best in the future!

And a very warm welcome to...

Debbie Archer - Full Time Care Senior Care Assistant - Debbie joins us with lots of experience and has a particular interest in Dementia. She would like to become a Dementia Champion for Birtley.

Francesca Apsey – Part Time Care Assistant - 'Franny' as she likes to be known, has just graduated from Keele University with a BA (Hons) Degree in Psychology, she obtained experience working in the care industry whilst studying.

Reverend Elizabeth Tilley - Our new Chaplain - Liz will be officiating at the monthly service and visit us mostly on Monday & Wednesday afternoons. Liz lives locally and has a great deal of experience to share with us all. She told us that she is "very enthusiastic about taking up this role and looking forward to helping to provide for the spiritual needs of the Residents".



Birtley

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