

Care News Round-up

Homecare Christmas

Father Christmas was everywhere, but never as impressive as Joe and his trusty elf, Khadija, who personally delivered gifts to some of the service users. This was a pilot project and next Christmas it's hoped that Santa will visit many more in their homes.



Santa and the Elf



Martin with Santa, Elf and staff

Christmas has been a very special time for the Homecare team and its service users. Santa and his elf delivered gifts and succeeded in brightening many lives and homes with their good cheer. Heather Gilling showed her appreciation for the

care her husband, John, receives at home by preparing a Christmas meal for six of his main carers. It has become a lonely time for Heather and John, with no family living close enough to share the festive fun. Heather felt that the Filipino carers would enjoy the experience of a traditional English Christmas meal and, while Christmas Day is just another working one for all of them, by cooking Christmas lunch, Heather could enjoy the day and show her thanks. Yours magazine published her full tribute [clip right].



A clip from 'Yours' magazine

Abbey Grange

A coffee afternoon in aid of Breast Cancer Pink Awareness Day was held at the home in October for which residents and relatives joined with staff to raise funds with a bric-a-brac stall.



Alex grinning and bearing it!

Cakes and coffee and tea were served, but the highlight of the day was senior care assistant Alex Antony enduring a sponsored leg waxing. Emily and Alison took great pleasure in carrying out the procedure and Alex did not scream once!! Manager Helen thanked everybody for their help and was delighted to have raised £150.

A month later, staff dressed up, paying £1 for the



Fundraisers for Children in Need

privilege, for another fund-raising event, this time for Children in Need. With a very well attended coffee morning running alongside, we raised £60.

Tallington

There's never a dull moment at Tallington! 2011 saw a major change of dynamic at the home with the arrival of manager, Tracey, whose energy and passion have infected staff and residents alike. Her latest venture is



Waterside outing

Tallington continued over page 8

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Dick Whittington

it all here! Tracey would like thank her staff for their contributions to this excellent enterprise, and will continue to distribute it to market the home.

In December alone the full calendar of events included the Salvation Army paying a musical visit; Partytime Productions presenting its pantomime performance of Dick Whittington and his Cat; the Women's Institute going to sing carols; parties being held for Music for Health and Zumba



Tony Hobbs with his winning Christmas card

Gold, with families, fun and dancing – and these were just the events at the home. Residents also went out, to Cophill School for the Christmas Concert and afternoon tea; to a coffee morning at Holland House, our sister home in Market Deeping; and to Waterside Garden Centre for shopping and coffee. The company Christmas card competition, open to all the homes, was won unanimously by Tony Hobbs – well done, Tony!

Beech Lodge

Christmas kicked off with Father Dave Sweeting holding a church service with a special Christmas theme on 13th December. The celebration at the Christmas fayre turned into a merry-hearted event that included song and dance and a male and female Santa. The combined party for staff, residents and their families was held on 16th December. The spirit of giving from staff and the generous and loving nature of families saw Kalina our lovely and hard working activity coordinator raise over £150.00 for the Beech Lodge Comfort Fund. Staff at Beech Lodge exchanged gifts in the tradition that

Tallington continued...

the launch of Tallington Tributes, a quarterly newsletter for all involved at the home and beyond, in response to Voices, because so much goes on at Tallington, there isn't enough room for



Salvation Army band

this would bring good fortune for the New Year. And, indeed, it was fulfilled in the form of our dedicated newly-registered nurse, Lijo Varghese, who joined the nursing team on 3rd January.



Santa Jain Mathew, Pat and Santa Kalina



Profile of a Centenarian

Georgina Atkinson is the latest resident to receive her birthday card from the Queen. Grand celebrations continued throughout 23rd December at Ashwood, with the so-called quiet lounge filled to capacity with family, gifts, balloons and cakes! Georgina was born at Newport, East Riding. She married Arthur in 1933 and they had two sons, Peter and Barrie. Arthur was a railway station master until retiring through ill health. Sadly he died in 1966, so Georgina has been a widow for 45 years. She lived alone in Harden, Yorkshire, buying herself a bicycle when she was 85, but it was exchanged for a mobility scooter soon after! She came to Spalding at the age of 90, living in a McCarthy & Stone retirement flat until April 2010, when she moved into St John's Care Home. After a short spell in Johnson Community Hospital she came to Ashwood in August 2010. It was customary for wives not to work in the old days, and Georgina always stayed at home looking after her family and grandchildren. She was a keen member of the WI, a regular church-goer and a member of the Mothers' Union. She has five grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. As a young teenager she rode a Raleigh motorbike. She has never drunk or smoked and enjoyed gardening, baking and knitting. She loves being at Ashwood.



Santa Kalina



Four generations!

Westfield

Westfield's residents and families contributed to the success of our Christmas raffle and tombola by managing stalls. All the visitors to the home were in good spirits and having a lot of fun (maybe the mulled wine helped them along)!

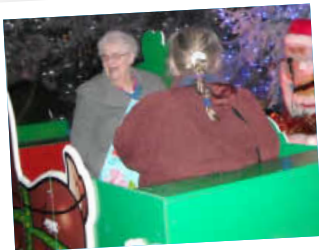
Resident Jean Betts had been busy for the last few months, knitting blankets, which she sold on the day raising enough to purchase more wool. She is pictured at her stall looking slightly underwhelmed, but she really did enjoy her afternoon!



Jean Betts (right) on her stall

Nancy and Charles sold bric-a-brac and, I must say, Nancy can barter!! We sold mulled wine and mince pies, tea and coffee. Eileen, our hairdresser, made some amazing cakes, which didn't last long!! £142.76 was added to the comfort fund, which paid for all the residents to go out for a Christmas meal. Thanks to all who supported us and to those local people and businesses who generously donated some exceptional prizes.

In anticipation of Christmas, residents had two magical outings to Baytree Garden Centre to get them in merry mood, as can be seen...



Sleigh ride for Jean and Grace in Winter Wonderland



Angela and Charles take a rest

Holland House

Residents, families and staff embraced the winter holiday spirit and organised lots of functions and trips to celebrate the Christmas period! Everybody thoroughly enjoyed the busy month, even the ones who loudly declared "I don't like Christmas!!" Well... the trips were far from boring as little funny incidents took place here and there – travelling with the elderly is always exciting and full of joyful events!

At Christmas our residents were spoilt for choice with lovely food and drinks: white wine and sherry and we mustn't forget thanks to all the staff, but especially to our lovely Sheila Giddings, who organised all the events



Santa in Queensgate!

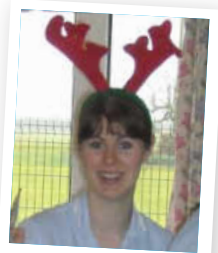
so passionately! She coordinated our coffee morning, sausage-and-mash evening, trip to Queensgate, outing to William Hildyard School's Christmas production and a visit to the church for carol singing.



Holland House Beauties: Gay, Dana, Beverlyn & Sheila

Ashwood

The joyful mood at Ashwood was demonstrated over the Christmas period, including staff wearing reindeer antlers. Residents remain unconvinced that Heather was responsible for pulling Santa's sleigh! Manager, Jo, is also leader of Pinchbeck Rainbows (below) and



Heather reindeer



Photo courtesy of Lincs Free Press

arranged for them to come and sing to the residents. After they had discharged this duty enchantingly, they were rewarded with a chocolate Santa each from the residents.

October heralded a hallowe'en party, with staff appropriately dressed and cobwebs and spiders everywhere! There were themed cup cakes, a raffle and a pumpkin-carving competition. The spacious new dining room and lounges give on to an enclosed garden, ideal for the display of the illuminated pumpkins and, later, fireworks; everyone had a ringside seat!



Pumpkin parade



Some of the Starlets

Michael and the Starlets of Connect congregation of St Mary & St Nicolas (last seen 2009) made a welcome comeback to sing carols at the Christmas Fayre. The lounges were packed as guests and residents waited for dusk to fall so the outdoor tree lights could be ceremonially switched on and the singing could begin.



O Christmas Tree!
O Christmas Tree!
Thy candles shine
so brightly!

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St John's

In early December the home welcomed Michael and the Starlets, on the second leg of their Christmas tour, who sang carols to Michael's keyboard accompaniment,



Carols with Michael

followed by mince pies and cups of tea afterwards. The next week some residents were taken to Ayscoughfee Hall School, by special invitation, to watch its Christmas productions, an immensely enjoyable time



Enthralled residents at Ayscoughfee Hall School

for them. On the 15th December the children from St John's school came and sang more carols and the pre-Christmas festivities were rounded off with our party on the 22nd December. Now, with the recent appointment of Lisa Maynard as activity coordinator, we look forward to a busy year of indoor and outdoor entertainment, outings and functions.



The Grumpy Sheep

Staff News



Lijo



Dany, Anoop and Tony

Congratulations to Lijo Varghese, Dany Antony, Anoop Thaykandiyidathil and Tony Jose on completing their Overseas Nursing Programme to become fully qualified nurses.

Having worked through the ONP at Ashwood, Lijo has now been transferred to Beech Lodge, leaving Ashwood in a state of grief at his departure. A party meal out for 30 at Spalding's Lincolnshire Poacher was arranged by way of an Ashwood-style send-off!

Anoop, Tony and Dany, all registered nurses in India, completed the ONP at Abbey Grange. Anoop worked

in intensive cardiac care for three years, and Tony was in neuro-surgery intensive care for three-and-a-half years; they will continue to practise their nursing skills at Abbey Grange. Dany is planning to relocate 'down south' to Beech Lodge; he has 18 months' experience as a registered nurse in dialysis.

Corporate News

2011 saw Country Court Care's attainment of Investors in People, Care Employer in the Great British Care Awards, and 2-star rating in Sunday Times Best Companies.

This last was conducted under extreme pressure, as the decision to enter was taken at the last minute, but it paid off, due to Joe Wey's coordinating skills and the honest feedback of many staff. A 2-star rating means we are doing outstandingly well as an employer. The results contained feedback on areas for improvement and we will implement the necessary steps to seek recognition as an excellent employer, aiming to gain maximum 3-star rating later this year.

The current challenge is to prepare our nomination for the Health Investor Awards; we are determined to succeed this year. As well as the Residential Care Provider, this time we are also entering for the Domiciliary Care Provider. Watch this space... Meanwhile, work is nearing completion at Ashwood, with a Grand Opening on 4th February – be there! St John's will then be top priority, its two-storey extension anticipated to be finished by June.



A good time being had by all!

The directors indulged managers and Head Office staff with a thoroughly enjoyable, delicious Christmas lunch at The Olive Branch, near Stretton. Staff agreed they would be prepared to make do with a repeat

treat instead of Easter eggs, later in the year!

And finally...

HAPPY GREAT BIG BIRTHDAY! to Mr Kachra, 60 in the New Year!

Head Office was heaving with balloons, cakes, gifts, cards, candles and congratulations. Mr Kachra pretended to be embarrassed, but he loved all the attention!



Mr K at 60!

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