

BERRYSTEAD FAMILY NEWS

A quarterly Home and Community Newsletter of Berrystead Nursing Home

Mar-May Issue 2009

St. Patrick's Day Celebrations

On Tuesday 17th March '09 the service users of Berrystead celebrated St. Patrick's Day with a themed tea-time.

The dining room was adorned with green balloons decorated with embossed shamrock motifs and life-size, colourful cardboard leprechauns- Paddy, Shamus, Sean and Eamon! The tables carried the Irish theme through with laminated placemats featuring pictures of Leprechauns and table centres of Irish flags.

On arrival, service users were greeted with a choice of drink, Guinness, Baileys Irish Cream or a sparkling white wine.

Getting into the Irish spirit service users wore Irish hats. To complete the Irish ambience CD's of the music and songs of Irish artists played in the background. Favourites were Val. Doonican singing 'Paddy McGuinty's Goat', Daniel O'Donnell's version of 'Danny Boy', Foster and Allen's, 'The green hills of Ireland' and Sean Wilson's 'Where the River Shannon flows'.

Sandwiches made with Irish Soda bread in-



Irish ladies – Molly Kelly, Alice Locke, Rosalie Cosgrave (seated at front) with Hannah Wild and carestaff Joseph Cann.

cluded a tasty Irish Wexford cheese. Pork pie, sausages, onion plait and scotch eggs made for a mouth-watering choice of savouries.

The finale of the occasion was for a slice of Bailey's Irish Cream cheesecake.



Lucy Hill and Lary Dudek serve food in 'Irish Style'

Feature Activity

The Butterfly Experience - bringing the outdoor experience indoors for the service users to enjoy



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The **EASTER RAFFLE** in aid of the Berrystead Patients Comfort Club raised **£102**

Many thanks to all who supported this fund raising!

EASTER



Hilda Shuttlewood making salt dough rabbits

The week leading up to Easter Sunday provided the opportunity for service users to enjoy Easter craft and baking session.

A group of Service users helped activities leader Julie Hilton to bake a batch of miniature Easter Simnel cakes. Each member of the group joined in with weighing the ingredients using an old-fashioned set of weighing scales with weights in pounds and ounces. Then with the mixing, rolling marzipan circles and finally with spooning the cake mixture into prepared baking tins ready for the oven.



Dorothy Ball making Easter Simnel cakes

The service users although frail with short concentration spells benefited from the session with its short bursts of activity with plenty of opportunities for 'watching and listening' in amidst a kitchen atmosphere.

Another group of service users used their pastry making skills but with salt dough to mix, knead and roll out rabbits (Easter Bunnies) shapes. They were then painted ready to put into brightly coloured Easter baskets decorated with Easter motifs by other service users.

On Good Friday morning, activities leader Julie Hilton helped by Linda served buttered hot buns to the service users, visiting relatives and staff. The buns had been freshly baked that morning at the village bakery in Syston and were much enjoyed by everybody with the morning tea trolley.

The Friday afternoon Bingo group joined in the Easter festivities. They donned fun Easter Bunny ears and played for prizes of Easter Eggs.

An Easter/Spring afternoon service was organized for the service users of Berrystead. The service was lead by members of our two neighbouring parish churches of St. Michael's and All Angel's Church, Thurmaston and St. Peter's and St. Paul's of Syston.

Easter Bingo Winners



Mercy Lardner



Jean Moulton



Joan Potter

The service was made up of traditional Easter Hymns which included 'There is a green hill far way' and 'The old rugged cross'. There were also bible readings, prayers and poetry. One of the poems read by activities leader Julie Hilton was a favourite of the service users, William Wordsworth's 'The Daffodils'.

The lounge was decorated with spring flower arrangements, Easter craft work made by the service users and the focal point a decorated egg tree which provided much ambiance to the occasion.

ST. GEORGE'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

On Thursday April 23rd '09, the service users of Berrystead celebrated St. George's Day.

At the request of the service users a themed tea-time was organised. Activities leader Julie Hilton spoke with the service users to find out what they would like to see on a traditional English tea-time menu. So after many of the reminiscence conversations we arrived at the menu for the occasion.

MENU

Platters of sandwiches

Mature English Cheddar
Roast Beef
Crumbed Ham

To be served with 'Walkers' ready salted crisps

Crumpets
Toasted and Buttered

Homemade
Traditional Victorian Sandwich Cake

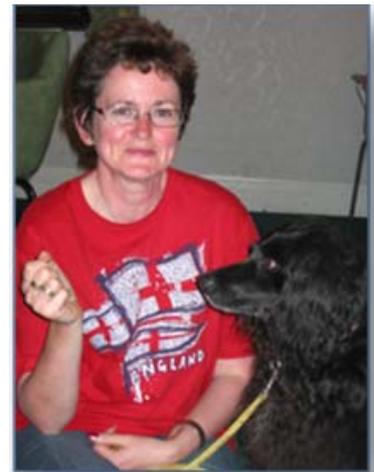
Freshly brewed cups of tea

The dining room tables were decorated in a St. Georges Day manner with laminated place mats depicting a completion of pictures including the English flag, St George and the Dragon, British Bull Dog, a London route master double decker bus and an old style red public telephone box and a bottle of 'London Pride' beer.

Table centres sported a bud vase with a single red rose the emblem of England.

On arrival service users were given a St. George's Day hat to wear for the occasion and an English flag.

Whilst they waited for tea to be served, activities



Joy Wood our 'PAT' dog volunteer came in her England shirt



Service users enjoying the St. George's Day celebrations

leader Julie Hilton offered everybody either a glass of wine or a soft drink. To carry the English theme through a CD of English music played in the background.

During the day, the Pheasant's group met for their monthly Harry Ramsden's style fish and chips luncheon. Another very English tradition much enjoyed by many of our service users at

Berrystead.

There was also the chance to have a go at a series of word searches all themed to St. George's Day and English themes.

Service users were also reminded that April 23rd was also the birthdate of Shakespeare and some were able to recall some of Shakespeare's plays and quotations.

'Mr. Spoons' Entertains

On Thursday 26th March '09, Berrystead welcomed back 'Mr. Spoons' for an afternoon concert.

come instruments in his Skiffle band. Skiffle was made popular by Lonny Donagan in the late 1950's, early 1960's. Mr. Spoon's volunteered Activities leader Julie Hilton and service user Jean Moulton's husband Arthur to join him on guitar to form Berrystead's own Skiffle band. They were met with much applause. Arthur showed a particular natural talent playing the washboard.



Mr Spoon's with service user Thurza Stevenson.

Mr. Spoons' special brand of entertainment is lively with the essence of joining in. This maybe by joining in with the lyrics of well-loved familiar classics, playing a variety of percussion instruments or hand-clapping or foot tapping to the rhythm of the music.

Aptly named Mr. Spoon's party piece is to expertly play the spoons. This skill was taught to him by his granddad. Years ago it was familiar place to find somebody in the family or the local community who could play the 'spoons' or the 'paper and comb'.

Following on from these items Mr. Spoon's brings a tea chest and an old-fashioned washboard that be-

Mr. Spoon's returns during 'Berrystead by the sea week of activities'

To show another of his talents. Staging a 'Punch and Judy show'.



Berrystead Skiffle Band

BRANDYWINE BRIDGE ENTERTAINS

For a special treat to add to the Easter celebrations Brandywine were invited to Berrystead to entertain the service users.

Husband and wife duo Stuart and Sheila Hague came in with something a little different to the normal afternoon concerts. In medieval costume, they perform songs of a bygone age that the service users would have sung at school and other songs reminiscent of the war years, some well known others original.

They play a selection of instruments including guitar, cuatro (medieval type guitar) recorders, mandolin, whistles, concertina, banjo, spoons and a dancing jig-doll.

Service users were encouraged to join in playing a variety of per-

ussion instruments that they could shake, rattle or tap to the rhythm of the music.

Brandywine Bridge have been



Stuart and Sheila in medieval costume with service user Florence Jones.

resident entertainers of Warwick Castle for many years and also perform at medieval banquets. The service users thoroughly enjoyed the medieval ambiance of costume, instruments and lyrical songs.

One of the highlights of the afternoon that enthralled the service users was Stuart's demonstration of playing the 'jig-doll'. (A jig-doll is a wooden doll with moveable joints hung on a string/much like a puppet). A plank of wood is placed across a table. The operator sits the jig-doll at one end and holds it in position like a puppeteer. The other end of the plank is then rhythmically tapped to vibrate the plank. This together with the expertise of the operators' puppetry skills makes the jig-doll dance. It is very entertaining.

Stuart then invited activities leader Julie Hilton to have a go dancing the jig-doll. Very reluctantly she had a go and much to everybody's surprise made the doll dance in a fashion!

SG Productions

'The Golden Age of the Music Hall'

On the afternoon of Thursday 2nd April '09, Berrystead welcomed back SG Productions to perform their Spring production, 'The Golden Age of the Music Hall'.

It was billed as a veritable feast of variety, mirth and merriment, song and dance, music and mystery all for everybody's delectation and delight.

Two experienced actors with musical theatre background led us through a show that portrayed the well-loved music hall performers Vesta Victoria, Arthur Askey, Marie Lloyd and Florence May Flanagan.

The show was fast moving, full of songs from the era and dance routines. There were many costume changes giving much visuality to the occasion and a Victorian music hall ambiance.

Service users sang along to well known music hall classics such as 'The Boy I Love', 'Joshua', 'Johnny O 'Connor bought an automobile', 'Burlington Bertie' and 'Has anybody here seen Kelly?'

The medley of Scottish songs attributed to Harry Lander, saw one of the entertainers dressed

in full Scottish attire. He was very well received especially by the fe-



male members of the audience. There must be something about a man in a kilt!

Another highlight of the afternoon was the performance of the Galloping Major bringing with it much humour.

The finale of the occasion was to return to the East End of London with the entertainers dressed in Pearly King and Queen outfits. Service users joined in with gusto singing '**Lambeth Walk**' and '**Down at the Bull and Bush**'.

The afternoon had brought the chance to enjoy some pure Victorian style nostalgia and was much appreciated by the service users and relatives visiting on the afternoon.

Service users comments:

'What tickled me was the Galloping Major. I loved watching him pretend to ride his horse around the lounge.'

'The afternoon has been great.'

'I really enjoyed the concert yesterday. Everything was wonderful, the costumes and the songs.'

'I thought the costumes were good. My wife used to be a professional dressmaker she would have liked the Victorian Ladies dresses.'





THE BUTTERFLY EXPERIENCE

Following on from last year's NAPA competition 'Breath of Fresh Air'; Berrystead Nursing Home is continuing to give service users the choice to enjoy the outdoors and also ingenuity to bring the outdoor experience indoors within the programme of activities especially for the more frail individuals.

Earlier this year, activities leader Julie Hilton purchased a butterfly kit from the Consortium catalogue. The kit comprised a hanging butterfly pavilion and a certificate to send off to receive 33 painted lady caterpillars from 'insect lore'.

We decided to receive our caterpillars just after Easter. It takes about 3 to 5 weeks for the entire metamorphosis (depending on temperature). When releasing the butterflies, the outdoor temperature should be at least 10°. So springtime was an ideal time to carry out the project. On their arrival we had to transfer each of the tiny caterpillars by means of a paintbrush, rolling each into separate clear

plastic vials with a square of tissue paper secured under a close fitting lid. In the bottom of each vial the service users had spooned a specially prepared food that the caterpillars would feed on.

The larvae stage takes about 8-15 days. Service users were intrigued viewing daily the caterpillars in the vials and watching them grow rapidly and shed their skins five times.

We kept two of the vials for some of our service users to enjoy observing the caterpillars on the palm of their hands. One lady commented that the caterpillar was tickling her as it moved across her hand and it made her laugh.

When the caterpillars were ready to become chrysalides they climbed to the top of the vial and spun a silk pad to hang upside down from the square of tissue paper in the shape of a 'J'. It was crucial that the chrysalides were not disturbed at this point as this was their most vulnerable stage. The gold-tipped chrysalides remain like this for around 7-14 days before becoming butterflies.

Because of the chrysalides vulnerability, the service users watched Julie carefully collect the chrysalides and place them as directed onto the special concertina sheets and then place them into the butterfly pavilion.

About 8-15 days after the chrysalides form the butterflies began to emerge. It was a wonderful experience to see a butterfly emerge from a chrysalis.

We were able to keep the butterflies for a few days and observe them feeding. The service users were enthralled commenting on their beauty, the intricate colourful patterns on their wings and their very

graceful fluttering flight in the pavilion. One such service user spent a whole activity session watching the butterflies. *'I've never seen a butterfly up close'*, she said, *'I love them, they are so interesting, I can't stop looking at them!'*

When it was time to release



Thurza Stevenson observes one of the caterpillars



The gold tipped chrysalides are mounted on the concertina cards



Fully pledged Printed Lady Butterflies in the pavilion



Laura Greasley enjoys watching the butterflies at close quarters



Alice Locke with activities leader Julie Hilton releasing the butterflies

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the butterflies, a group of service users went out into the garden. We gently let them fly out of the pavilion.

The painted lady butterflies would live for about four weeks and the whole cycle start again in their natural habitat.

It had been an activity with a purpose. In recent years butterfly populations have been on the decline and this conservation project helped boost numbers in their natural habitat. Out of the 33 caterpillars we first received all 33 turned into chrysalides and 32 emerged as painted lady butterflies.

It was however to have an amusing twist the fact that we had helped add to the numbers of a declining species. Just after we had released our

butterflies the Daily Express newspaper ran an article 'Invasion of the Butterflies' and wrote about the sudden arrival of millions of butterflies spreading a blanket across Britain. The charity Butterfly Conservation were asking the public to track the Painted Lady butterfly after they had arrived in Britain in huge numbers following an extraordinary 1000 mile migration from North Africa.

The project followed with butterfly themed activities baking butterfly cakes, butterfly themed word searches, making and decorating salt dough butterflies, colouring in by numbers drawings of the Painted Lady butterfly and collage work.

During the summer months we plan to make a 'well dressing' butterfly. To do this we will sketch the shape of a butterfly



onto a piece of plyboard. This will be covered with a base coat of clay which will be kept moist. Then the patterns and shapes of the wings etc. will be coloured by using different coloured petals of flowers, seed heads and foliage. The petals etc. are gently pressed into the clay.

St. David's Day

Week of Themed Activities



This year St. David's Day fell on Sunday 1st March '09. Activities leader Julie Hilton used this Saint's Day to theme the activities programme for the week to St. David and Wales.

The week started off with the Pheasant's group meeting for an afternoon of 'Play Your Cards Right'. The two teams were named after the emblems of Wales, the 'daffodils' and the 'leeks'. Service users had to answer themed quiz questions about Wales, famous David's and answers to questions that began with the letter 'W'.

The Magpie's group who meet once a week for an afternoon of therapeutic activities that include manicures, nail polishing and

hand massages listened to Welsh music which included a Welsh Male Voice Choir and CD's of Welsh singing artists Catherine Jenkins, Charlotte Church, Shirley Bassey and Tom Jones.

The Friday afternoon bingo group joined in the spirit of the occasion by joining activities leader Julie and our work experience student Lucy to wear St. David's day top hats. The prizes for each of the bingo games



Service users Edith Chapman, Marjorie Nicholls, and Hilda Shuttlewood wearing St. David's top hats

was a vase of daffodils. Winners were service users Ada Baines, Kitty Cooley and Jean Moulton who all enjoyed watching their daffodils open from tight buds to glorious bright yellow blooms bringing a first taste of spring.

ULVERSCROFT GRANGE

On the 30th March a group of service users were taken to Ulverscroft Grange on the 1st of two outings booked for 2009 by activities leader Julie Hilton.

Founded in 1989 by the late Mr. David Clarke, the foundation is a registered charity situated on the edge of the

Charnwood Forest. The main focus of its work is to ease loneliness and to offer comfort to the elderly within the Leicestershire area.

The foundation runs two houses, Ulverscroft Grange and Ulverscroft Manor, which are used daily to entertain pre-booked groups.

Over the years the foundation has developed its services to include an Out-

side Visiting Scheme, which provides a listening ear, comfort and guidance for those in need and who are no longer able to visit the foundation.; a Disability Aid Loan Scheme of various items and aids on free indefinite loan to those in need and 'Men Only' social days, which help to improve the self-esteem of those that are alone or have disability.



Florene Jones with her daughter ready for a drive through Woodland

"On a bright Monday morning at the end of March, my mum Florence and friend Mercy piled into my car to follow the minibus taking Julie and Diane, Arthur and Jean, Elizabeth and Rosalie to Ulverscroft Grange.

When we arrived we were warmly welcomed into the conservatory overlooking the beautiful Charnwood countryside. Tea and biscuits were much enjoyed, as was a pleasant hour of chat and reminiscences. Then we were asked if anyone would like a trip on the Buggy, so Mum and I sat on the back seat, warmly wrapped up in rugs, and Arthur sat next to the driver. We were taken a lovely slow ride around the beautiful grounds and woodlands, listened to the birds, and watched a heron and a moorhen on the large natural pond.

Back at the Grange, lunch awaited – and what a lunch! Roast beef, 'proper' Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes and all the trimmings. Second helpings were brought round and eagerly accepted. No one thought they could possibly eat anymore, but when the chocolate-orange sponge (so light it nearly rose off the table) arrived, we all decided we should make our best effort. Suffice to say there wasn't a morsel left on anyone's plate!

A little walk round the sensory garden helped the lunch go down, and then some of us had a look around the gift shop and bought mementoes. Another sit in the conservatory looking out over Old John, finally a cup of tea and arguably the best home made buttered scones you will ever taste anywhere in the world. We all agree it had been a lovely, lovely day. Many thanks to the ladies of Ulverscroft Grange (all volunteers) for making it so."



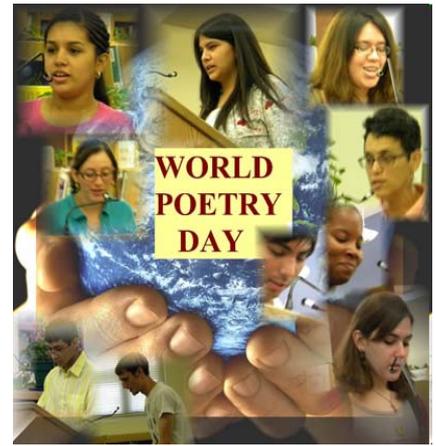
The group enjoying Ulverscroft lunch

Account By:
Kate Clover

Our next visit to Ulverscroft is on Wednesday 2nd September '09

World Poetry Day

March 21, 2009



Over the years the activities program has often included a poetry group. So with 'World Poetry Day' on March 21st '09, activities leader Julie Hilton took the opportunity to run a poetry afternoon for the Service users of Berrystead.

A wide variety of poetry was read from some of the classic poems. *William Wordsworth's 'The Daffodils'*, *Leigh Hunt's 'About Ben Adhen'*, *Thomas Hood's, 'I remember, I remember'* and *William Blake's 'The Tyger'*.

There was time to reminisce of childhood poetry with the group recalling the much loved '**The Owl and the Pussycat**' by *Edward Lear*. Another favourite being '**Father William**' by *Lewis Carroll*.

Everyone enjoyed the humorous selection of poetry and remembered Pam Ayres who found TV fame by reading her own poetry on '**Opportunity Knocks**' with Hughie Green.

Service user Molly Kelly is well-known for reciting poetry about her homeland Ireland and she didn't disappoint the group reciting several poems from memory.

In one of the poetry groups of some years ago was a

service user by the name of Fay Smith. She had written a lot of her own poetry. When she passed on, her family gave Julie Hilton two of her notebooks containing some of her handwritten poems for her to

Thoughts of an Older Person

*Remember that us old folks
Are worth a fortune.*

*With silver in our hair,
gold in the teeth,
stones in the kidneys,
lead in the feet and
gas in the stomach.
While I may have become
a little older since
I last saw you,
I have in the meantime
become quite a frivolous
old gal.*

*Having two gentlemen
with me everyday
WILL POWER helps me to
get out of bed each day,
and ARTHUR RITIS never
leaves me alone.*

*The Preacher came to call
the other day.
He said that at my age I
should be thinking of the
hereafter.*

*Oh I told him,
I do that all of the time.
No matter where I am;
in the living room, the study,
the kitchen or upstairs,
I always ask myself
'What am I here after?'*

use at Berrystead. And so it was with much emotion that Julie read one of Fay's poems to the group. It had been written in 1988 and was entitled '**The Secret Drawer**'.

Service user Elsie Baskett asked if she could read a short poem. That morning she had had her new spectacles fitted and found that she could read text that she hasn't been able to for some time. She read the poem '**Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**' in her best West Midlands accent much to the delight of the rest of the group who gave her a round of applause for her effort.

The session ended by service users asking for another session to be arranged. They suggested the names of different poets and poems. Some said that they would sort out books of poetry they themselves had. Others who had not read this time said that they might like to read next time. Activities leader Julie Hilton suggested that they might like to think about limericks and monologues as well.

An Invitation to Bishop Ellis Primary School

Activities leader Julie Hilton received a phone call from the local Bishop Ellis Primary School to invite a group of service users to watch their year 4 children perform a school play about the 'Easter Story'.

So, on the morning of Wednesday 25th March '09 a group of four service users were taken to the school.

We were made to feel very welcome on our arrival. Whilst enjoying tea and biscuits in the staff room we browsed through the photographic albums of school activities, events and outings.

Our group was then escorted into the school hall by head mistress Gail Neill.

We joined year 2 children from

another local school Churchill Primary School, residents from Abbey Field Residential Home in Birstall and pupils of the school.

We were privileged to watch a very professionally staged performance of the 'Easter Story'. The children all played their roles well with no prompting of their lines necessary. The choir sang songs throughout the performance with much enthusiasm.

After the play, we were again served tea and biscuits whilst we awaited the arrival of our bus.

One of the service users talked with the headmistress telling her that her three children had attended the school under the then headmastership of Mr. Prior.

Service users also reminisced about their own school days and wearing school uniform.

Grand National Sweepstakes Winners



(Saturday 4th April '09)

'MON MOME'

Julie Hollingsworth
£10.00

'COMELY OR DIE'

Jayne Jackson
£6.00

'MY WILL'

Don Stevenson
£4.00

Mothering Sunday

The afternoon service on Monday 16th March '09 was themed to 'Mothering Sunday'. The service was led by our two neighbouring parish churches of Thurmaston and Syston and included hymns, bible readings, poetry and prayers. Activities leader Julie Hilton read two poems one entitled 'My Mother's Table' and the other 'Mothering Sunday'. Pat Davies in her address told of how Mothering Sunday first came about. Many young girls had to leave their families to work in service. Once a year they

were allowed to return home to attend a service at their Mother Church and to visit their Mother's. It was customary to take with them posies of wild flowers. Violets were popular, picked from beneath the hedgerows.

On Mothering Sunday, a special tea was organized for the service users. Tables were set with pretty feminine disposable tableware and napkins and each table had a central vase of pink roses.

On retiring to bed, one of the service users commented to the carer, 'What a day- I've had visits from my

family, boxes of chocolates and bouquets of flowers, and we have just had a wonderful tea-time. What a day!'

