

THORNHILL HOUSE

Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 11

Summer 2015

Editorial.

Activities Round-up

Readers of the Newsletter learn about the Activities organised for our residents, and the photos on the back page give a flavour of what we get up to.

For a reminder here is a list of the range of the activities offered to our residents: Tai Chi, musical entertainment, film club, basketball, boules, quizzes, flower arrangement; a variety of trips such as cycling on the Monsal Trail, canal trips, Christmas shopping, the outing to Cleethorpes, afternoon tea at Chatsworth, barbecues, sing-alongs... the list is incomplete. There are also activities specifically designed to be stimulating and therapeutic, such as the newly set up Sensory Room, poetry and reminiscence sessions, PAT (dog and animal therapy) and, of course, residents always join in Open Days such as the summer and winter coffee mornings.

Alongside these go the making of Christmas cards, Easter bonnets, bookmarks, cakes and biscuits which are sold in the entrance hall of Thornhill House and at coffee mornings. There are outdoor activities on site such as the Gardening Club and looking after the rabbits.

Staff news

We have had no changes of staff since the last Newsletter. This is good news- it makes for stability and it's re-assuring for residents. It also confirms the Staff Surveyl's finding that people are pleased to be working here.

It's worth noting that our hairdresser and our Manual Handling Trainer both worked here as Carers before using their own qualifications in the Home.

One of the most memorable activities (indoors) was watching chicks hatch.!

Sophie Barker who—doubles up as Accounts Manager—organises all this with astonishing enterprise, imagination and efficiency. She is full of ideas, knows who to contact, encourages visiting entertainers including the children from the local school with their singing and recorder playing, and with all this she takes account of residents' individual preferences and sees that everyone is catered for.

An elderly lady, no longer able to live independently, was looking round care homes to find one she would be content to live in. She liked the look of one, and as she was leaving she asked "Which is the talk-ing room?"

She wouldn't have needed to ask that at Thornhill House!

Residents, relatives, friends, staff, trustees- we're all very fortunate in our Activities Or

ganiser. Thank you very much, Sophie.

Stop Press

We have just learnt that Sophie will no longer be organising Activities – she will still be looking after our accounts. We've always been lucky with our Activities Organiser, but Sophie will be a particularly hard act to follow

Flower Power

It was a surprise to find Don Kendall absorbed in flower arrangement, as he usually prefers to occupy himself independently rather than join in activities.

But there he was, learning something new and enjoying it. He has always been ready to turn his hand to something new-working on the railways, joining the army, driving Esso tankers. "I didn't get on well at school" he says. "I hated it. Got

away as soon as I could.”

His first job was on the railways as a porter and then as a pigeon handler, seeing that racing pigeons got safely back home. “You’d get odd ones if there was thunder about as it makes them lose their sense of direction and they get lost. You had to read the ring on their leg for the owner’s phone number and send them home by train.”

In due course Don joined the army. “I hated the learning bit, but as soon as I knew what to do I loved it!” This was in the fifties and Don was sent to Suez where he experienced active hostilities. He would have stayed on in the army but his family were keen for him to come back, so, with regret – partly because he liked the life and partly because he would have to forego the good army pension- he left.

Back home Don took a job driving fuel tankers for Esso. Once again there was a lot to learn and he had to do six months training before he was allowed to drive a tanker alone. “The journey out was always slow” he says” because of the weight you were carrying. With 10,000kg on board you can’t stop in a hurry. You had to look at a car that was six cars ahead so that you had time to slow down.”

Don was accompanied on all his trips by Tanya, his dog. “She used to sit next to me in the cab, and if I left the cab to go to the tax office she’d stay there and look after it and I never had any trouble with any break-ins or anything of that sort.”

On Don’s windowsill there’s a photo of Tanya lying down with her tongue hanging out, looking for the world as if she’s smiling. Next to the photo is a small casket “She’s in there” says Don. It was a job that suited Don, and it gave him a good pension. The other “companion” in Don’s room is a handsome bear wearing a Land Rover T-shirt. “That’s Fred,” says Don. “He came everywhere with me in my 4x4 Land Rover strapped in with a seat belt!”

By this time Don was married to Janet, “my beautiful wife” he says pointing to a photo on his wall, and there she is, sitting at a piano and looking back over her shoulder, smiling.

In recent years Don has been hit by a series of health problems which have given him a lot of pain and affected his walking, his memory and his eyesight. This would be an affliction for anyone, particularly if they were accustomed to such an active life, and Don is robust in his comments about some of the doctors who have treated him- (nobody connected with Thornhill House).

However, being Don, he makes the best of it, content to be liv-

ing in Thornhill House. “It’s a wonderful place. They’ll do anything for you, even teach you flower arrangement.”

Donations

We have received the following contributions:.

£60 towards our Sensory Garden.

£1000 from Anne Almond in memory of Robert Almond.

£250 in memory of Wilf Evans.

£270 was raised by the Summer Garden Party.

Many thanks to the people who have made donations to Thornhill House and also to everyone who helped in making the Garden Party such an enjoyable way of raising funds.

Obituaries

We are sad to report three deaths:

Anne Sutton from Bakewell died on 17 April. She came to Thornhill House in January, 2013

Jill Sparks died on 28 April,

Thornhill House 100 Club winners

Date	Name		Prize (£)
14 Feb	Mrs.Winkworth Smith	Ashford	10
28 Feb	Mrs. R.R Cumming	Gt. Longstone	25
14 March	Mr.and Mrs.R.C. Field	Gt. Longstone	10
28 March	Mrs.M.R. Scott	Gt. Longstone	25
11 April	Mr. B. Graham	Grindleford	100
25 April	Mrs.P.M. Mizon	Bakewell	10
9 May	Prof. J.N. Tarn	Stanton in the Peak	25
23 May	Mrs. J. A. Green	Gt. Longstone	10

2015. She came to us from Baslow in January, 2009.

Henry Frost died on May 7. He came to Thornhill House from Monyash in July, 2011.

We send our sympathy to their families and friends.

Thornhill House Staff Survey

Two of our Trustees felt that it would be useful to seek out where improvements might be made to the experience of residents, visitors and staff of Thornhill House.

Below is a report of their survey.

Over the last 12 months a number of improvements have been made at Thornhill House following the 2014 staff survey. Trustees Stephanie-Jane Kenning and James Duncan coordinated a staff survey designed for all staff to anonymously give their views on life in the home. Responses were received from nursing staff, care staff and other staff within the home.

It was humbling to read so many positive comments from many different members of staff.

There was an overwhelming enjoyment expressed from staff of being able to provide such a high standard of care to all residents in such a calm, well-run and purposeful environment.

A number of suggestions were also made on ways to further

improve the resident experience at Thornhill house, as well as streamlining some of the systems that are already in place. We welcomed each and every suggestion and are pleased to report that many of these changes have been made.

Thank you to all staff for taking the time to complete the survey. It was such an insightful and useful exercise that plans are afoot to conduct the survey again in the future.

The team of Trustees at Thornhill House are always keen to consider ideas that may improve the quality of residents' lives. Staff, residents, relatives and visitors are always welcome to make suggestions at any time, either anonymously or directly to Matron.

Welcome

to the two gentlemen who have joined us recently, one came from Bakewell in April and the other from Foolow in May, and to the lady who is spending some respite time with us.

In Safe Hands

Liz Granby has worked at Thornhill House one way and another since 2009. She started as a bank carer and later contracted to join our staff. She then took a four day course as a Manual Handling Trainer. She qualified in February 2015 and now holds

the post of Manual Handling Trainer at Thornhill House.

To make the lives of residents as safe and comfortable as possible is one of our core principles, and Liz has devised a rigorous programme of assessing residents' needs, making sure that suitable equipment is on hand and that staff are trained in using it.

Every year all staff have to attend a full 3 hour class in Manual Handling. This includes kitchen and household staff and anyone employed on site. For instance, kitchen staff are reminded to half-fill containers so that they aren't too heavy. Household staff need to see that equipment and tools are kept safe and not left around.

Staff must re-train before the previous training runs out.

New carers have to do a 3 hour training before they can work here and when they start they work with a mentor.

Liz explains how she makes her system run smoothly.

"I do a risk assessment of all new residents, taking account of all their needs" she says. "Do they need help with walking/standing/managing a wheel chair or a Zimmer? How about bathing, dressing, eating? Is all the equipment they need available? If someone needs something we haven't got, all I have to do is to ask and we get it. We're very lucky."

Each resident's assessment is reviewed monthly and updated as appropriate. It is then pinned inside the resident's wardrobe so that carers can see what is needed without having to leave the room to go searching through files.

The Manual Handling training includes what to do if someone

falls or is on the floor -always to summon help and to get the nurse in case First Aid is needed. Liz's remit is very

large, and it's a great advantage to Thornhill House to have our own qualified Manual Handling Trainer on our staff.

Pictures

*Above: Sea, sun and Thornhill House Gang at Cleethorpes.
Below: Margaret Rowland and Margaret Potter concentrate on their flower arrangements.*

