

A new Home at James Terry Court

It was announced earlier this year, by RMBI Chief Executive David Innes, that the redevelopment of James Terry Court, Croydon is to go ahead.

Phase one of the re-build is currently taking place at its current location in Warham Road, by local construction company Mansells which has a long history in Croydon having been established in the area since 1908.

The RMBI is very grateful for the huge charitable efforts that have produced extensions over the years. However, the need to re-build this well-known and long established home is due to the ever changing care needs of older people, particularly as the average age of residents is rising along with their expectations.



Demolition of the current nursing wing that will be used as the site for the East Wing.

The new facilities will provide up to 75 bed-sitting rooms with large communal areas. The Home will include full ensuite wet rooms and ceiling hoist rails in large spacious bedrooms which exceed the Government minimum requirements. The Home will also boast new dining facilities, health & beauty room and reception, and provide residential, nursing and dementia care.

The work will be phased, so that the current 39 residents at the Home face minimum disruption and will begin with the development of the 48 room east wing.

Commenting on the new facility, James Terry Court Home Manager, Diane Collins said, "When the RMBI decided to redevelop the Home on site, residents and staff were very pleased. The new facilities will ensure that we continue to provide excellent care now and in the future."



Artists impression of the new Home; view from Warham Road.

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Activities for all

All RMBI Homes provide comprehensive activity programmes to suit individual needs and are an important aspect of the care at the Home. Below are just some of the highlights of activities that have been taking place recently.

People living at Prince George Duke of Kent Court, Kent were given a talk on Indian cultural dress and traditions by care staff member Jigneshaben Patel who is from India. Jigneshaben presented the different types of traditional outfits, how they would be worn and by whom. The talk was followed by Indian sweet treats.



Connaught Court, York celebrated the 65th anniversary of VE Day by sharing memories and music. The memories came flooding back when songs by Vera Lynn were played; resident Mr Richardson played wartime songs on the piano and a presentation by the Living History Museum included items from the war such as ration books, gas masks and tin helmets.



Cornwallis Court, Suffolk residents have been enjoying days out in the sunshine with trips to The Hut, Felixstowe; Nowton Park, Bury St. Edmunds and Haughley Park, Stowmarket.



People living at RMBI Home Zetland Court, Bournemouth took part in a national arts project which involved decorating an elephant called Kubella in mosaic tiles. Organised by the Elephant Family Charity, the Elephant Parade had 250 elephants on display in various locations in central London. The Parade aimed to raise awareness about the endangered Asian elephant. All 250 elephants will be auctioned at Sotheby's aiming to raise £2 million for the charity.



Barford Court, Hove had unusual visitors when the local ZooLab came to visit. Residents were introduced to an array of exotic animals from snakes to rats which they were able to handle if they wished to do so.

Still keeping active is RMBI's oldest resident Mrs Lucy Cornut, at Lord Harris Court, Berkshire, who at 109 years of age still likes to read the newspapers, watch television and loves a good old sing-a-long.



Photos: (From top right) Staff in cultural dress at Prince George Duke of Kent Court, Kent; Mr Wakefield remembers VE Day at Connaught Court, York; Residents from Zetland Court, Bournemouth help to decorate Kubella; Lois gets up close and personal with a snake at Barford Court, Hove; Mrs Lucy Cornut at 109 still enjoys the activities at Lord Harris Court, Berkshire.

My role as an Activities Co-ordinator

With all the activities that take place in RMBI Homes, do you wonder how an Activities Co-ordinator came to be in their position? How they arrange activities to suit a diverse audience?

Here Sue Gosling, Activities Co-ordinator at Cornwallis Court, Suffolk shares her story as to how she became an Activities Co-ordinator and how she ensures that the activities she organises appeal to a wide audience.

Background

"My mother at the age of 85 suffered a stroke and became extremely ill whilst also living with dementia. At that time I was working for a large organisation focused around marketing and communications. I had no training in social care and felt helpless in my ability to help my mother. I expressed an interest in pursuing a career in helping people; and a friend suggested that I contact Cornwallis Court.

"I have been working at Cornwallis Court for seven years: three years as a Care Assistant and four years as an Activities Co-ordinator, a job that I thoroughly enjoy and find extremely rewarding.



Sue Gosling (centre) with residents Mrs Hetty Ell (left) and Mr Desmond Wellbelove (right) enjoying the fresh air in the Cornwallis Garden.

Developing into the role

"Since working at the Home I have obtained qualifications in Social Care, completed courses on Sympathetic Hearing and The Provision of Activities in a Care Setting (NCFE) which helped me to fully understand the importance of spiritual support, motivating interaction, encouraging independence and personal choice. These courses have really helped to ensure that I plan an activities programme that suits everybody.

Organising activities

"When I organise social activities I do so by talking to residents and their families. I enquire about their life history, their pastimes, hobbies, likes and dislikes, special needs, anniversaries and things of interest.

This helps to ascertain the types of activities people would enjoy and helps to generate new ideas for future activities.



Residents enjoy the flower workshop at the Home.

"An Activity Profile form is also completed for each person in their care plan. I use this information when I have a one-to-one reminiscence session with them, because it assists with their memory recall and past experiences can be very therapeutic and stimulating for everyone.

"I am a Florist in my spare time, which I enjoy immensely. Twice a month I incorporate a flower workshop in the activity programme that the residents really enjoy. We talk about the names of the flowers and foliage, the importance of colour, contrast and design shapes.



Sue Gosling (second from the left) with residents at Felixstowe Seaside.

"I believe that compassion and empathy are the main credentials for a good Activities Co-ordinator. As well as a positive attitude, a calming disposition, a sympathetic ear and an understanding for peoples' needs."

Sue, together with Ron Harvey, work together to ensure that the residents at the Home are entertained through activities, events and visits to places of interest.

Sonas -

A therapeutic activity for people with dementia

Following the launch of the Government's National Dementia Strategy, the RMBI has been looking at how we can improve the support and care for people with dementia who are already living in our care Homes. As part of our ongoing strategy to develop new initiatives to improve the wellbeing of people with dementia and other communication difficulties we have chosen to introduce Sonas into our Homes.

Every RMBI care home now has a trained Sonas facilitator who, with the support of other staff members and people who live in our Homes, runs a Sonas session for those who wish to attend.

The Sonas group session is a therapeutic activity that is completely focused on communication. The session is 45 – 60 minutes, involving stimulation of all five senses – touch, sight, smell, taste and hearing and follows a recorded format.



Residents playing percussion instruments at the Sonas session.

The benefits of Sonas include:

Communication - different forms of communication are covered.

Awareness - if a person is more aware of their surroundings through the stimulation of the senses, they are more likely to interact.

Initiative - Sonas gives opportunity and encouragement without judgement. The repetition within Sonas brings familiarity and a sense of security.

Relaxation & enjoyment - Familiarity is brought about through repetition which promotes security; thus people are more able to relax and enjoy themselves

Interaction - other people are there to interact with and the activities are designed to facilitate this.

Self worth and positive attitude - if participants find they are able to do things, and are appreciated for what they do, they are likely to gain a more positive attitude of themselves. Staff also benefit as they are enabled and empowered, through the programme, to facilitate the participants, and often see them in a new light. This can encourage more involvement and benefit both parties.

Time - Sonas gives quality time as opposed to functional time to group participants.

Individuality - focusing on each person with frequent use of their name, recognising and reinforcing their abilities acknowledges each person as an individual.

Abilities - the focus is on abilities rather than disabilities.

Memory - as well as long-term memory being triggered by e.g. smells and old songs, the constant repetition of the programme may help to aid memory.

How the Sonas sessions work in a care home

Activities Co-ordinator Sheila Thomas at Albert Edward Prince of Wales Court, Mid Glamorgan explains how the Sonas sessions are carried out in the Home.

Introducing Sonas

"Sonas is proven to be extremely beneficial to residents with dementia. We introduced Sonas to residents here at the Home in March and have been incorporating two sessions a week into our activities programme. We have the same six residents who all have varying levels of dementia attend the sessions.

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"The residents sit in a horseshoe shape and keep the same seats. There are two carers, who have received Sonas training, that alternate the sessions and interest is growing amongst the care staff.

Stimulation of the five senses

"We start each 50 minute session with a signature tune to welcome everyone. This is followed by a greeting song where we say hello to each resident individually. It's wonderful to see and hear their reaction when everyone sings to them. Gentle exercises to music are followed by something to smell. We have used curry powder where we all talked about baking; talcum powder where we reminisced about babies and children and aftershave which was the ladies favourite so far! We have a great sing-a-long and then listen to a piece of relaxing music whilst the residents taste something, for example After Eight Mints, coconut and ginger biscuits. Each resident then has a gentle shoulder and back massage; all love the gentle contact and some close their eyes whilst still singing to the relaxing song.



A resident receives some gentle contact from Sheila.

Real life benefits

"We all wake up then with lively music and percussion instruments. It's wonderful to watch a resident, who usually sits in a wheelchair with her hands clasped together, shaking pink maracas with tinsel on the end. We use different sizes and shapes of tambourines, brightly coloured maracas and small shakers. We then enjoy listening to a lovely poem which is recited on the CD and then finish the well known proverbs that are read out. It's lovely to hear the residents all shouting out the end of the proverb. We then stop and ask if anyone knows a poem or a proverb. One resident recited 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' beautifully and was rewarded with applause; but didn't stop to hear it as she was already reciting another!

"Nursery rhymes have produced some lovely stories and rhymes and have brought back memories for the rest of the group. After another sing-a-long we then sing our closing song and the signature tune is played to signal the end of the session. It's a pleasure to take the residents back to their lounges with them smiling and still singing the songs.

Positive for all

"The feedback has been extremely positive. Relatives have said how pleased they are that so much is covered in such a short time. There is no doubt that the residents taking part get great relaxation and enjoyment out of Sonas and I have to admit the staff enjoy it every bit as much!"

Training & Development to provide the best care

Retaining high quality staff is paramount to the RMBI. We are committed to delivering exceptional care to our residents and as such recognise the need for ongoing staff development.

As well as a robust induction programme lasting up to 12 weeks for all care staff, the RMBI consider and take into account staff's experience in a caring role and provide support accordingly.

We have recently made a substantial investment to develop teacher/training skills for selected staff who will specialise and become champions for different types of care.

Through monitoring and feedback we seek to improve our services to ensure high levels of care are delivered and staff are supported in their role.

The professionalism, commitment and dedication of all our staff plays a vital role in the wellbeing of people using RMBI services.



Carol Grieve, Shift Leader at The Tithebarn, Liverpool.

The Care Advice Team

A unique service that the RMBI provides is that of the Care Advice Team.

The Team, currently consisting of six Advisors, works across England and Wales with the aim of supporting Freemasons and their dependants both in the community and RMBI Homes, whilst acting as ambassadors for the RMBI.

The team's work consists of:

- Providing advice on claiming the correct benefits and the availability of care services.
- Care advice on how to remain in your own home with the correct financial and care support.
- Advice on respite care for both the carer and those they care for.
- Working with the Provincial Grand Almoners and / or Lodge Almoners to help Freemasons and their dependants.
- Give talks to Masonic groups across the Provinces. Includes talks at Almoners' Workshops and away days, Lodge meetings, Masonic Widows' Associations, Friendship clubs and open days at RMBI Homes.
- Talks to RMBI staff within the Homes.
- Carrying out pre-admission of prospective residents.
- Involvement when an RMBI resident's needs can no longer be met at their present Home and a move is required.
- Organising four UK holidays sponsored by the Friends of the RMBI and a holiday to Malta sponsored by the Provinces.



Care Advice Visitor Terry Ryan on a visit.

The Care Advice Team and the central Masonic charities

In addition to the above, the Team works closely with the central Masonic charities. With the Grand Charity this involves carrying out visits and joint visits with Almoners; introducing themselves to Masonic Relief Grant recipients and informing them of services available; and providing information on the RMBI.

The Team provides the Masonic Samaritan Fund with a report to support an application either for private medical treatment, medical appliances or home adaptations. Assessments are also completed by the Team for those applying for respite care either in an RMBI Home, a non Masonic Home or for care within the carer's own home.



Elaine Hansen, Care Advice Visitor, provides some advice.

When visiting clients the Team needs to be aware of the 'whole' person and their family situation. This may include liaising with the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys if children are in need of assistance.

If you would like to get in touch with the Care Advice Team or would like to speak to a member of the team please call 020 7596 2400 or email enquiries@rmbi.org.uk

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We are always interested in receiving your contributions to this newsletter. Please contact Deena Samani at dsamani@rmbi.org.uk if you would like to contribute to the next issue.