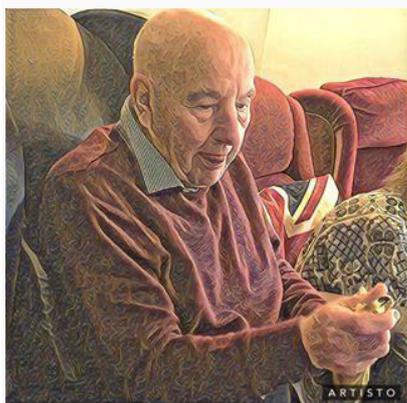


Spring has sprung at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 15:52, April 30 2018.

We may be being a tad premature in announcing springs arrival as the weather seems to be playing tricks with us currently but on the brink of the May bank holiday we feel ready to get planting and making more bunting for all the royal events coming up soon. We had **a grand time suggesting the name for the new royal baby** (our manager Jan picked Louis so gets a special thumbs up as her prize) - **we marked the Queen's 92nd birthday with a jolly quiz** and are eagerly awaiting her next official birthday in June a few weeks after the long awaited **royal wedding of Harry and Meghan on Cup Final day** - so a sweepstake planned for the first goal scorer combined with a glass raising for the happy couple - it's all go as we anticipate lovely weather dare we say.

We have had a busy few weeks since our last posting - a **visit from a very convincing robopet cat from Exeter University** with 'Friend of Pottles' Noreen, an action packed **Residents and Guests meeting with a big agenda** covering the mix of serious and light hearted topics and several events including **Jean winning the Grand National sweepstake** making up for losing her crown as **Easter jarping** champion 2017 - see jarping shots from this years highly competitive and hilarious event below and the furious lucky horseshoe shoe horn polishing in the run up to the big race.



We had young Oscar with us gaining some excellent experience helping with activity lead Lorraine seen here below being put through his paces by Doreen in one of our **'weight lifting for beginners' sessions.**



In other news we are pleased to announce the **official appointment of Jie Lu as our Deputy Manager whilst retaining her Head of Care role** too.



We had a really nice time marking Ronald's 60th wedding anniversary with a swift snifter of ginger wine joined by wife Rosemary and family.



We welcomed new residents Dot and Lynette and have **spent a lot of time reviewing our thoughts and ideas on the nature of moving into a care home** - the essential top tips - this we have shared with the national organisation Independent Age after contact and meetings with George our lead director. It's a big step that has much mixed emotion for the person moving in and their loved ones.

Whats coming up in the next few weeks:

- In addition to the Royal Wedding and cup final we will be marking several icons and stars of the past birthdays - **Bing Crosby**, **Perry Como** and **John Wayne** would have all had birthday's in May so we will be sharing memories and reflecting on their legacies
- our **Jumpers for Goalposts culminates at season end in early May** - Jean again takes the top prize with Man City with Ron runner up with Manchester rivals United
- we have both **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK & DEMENTIA AWARENESS WEEK'S in May** so we are planning lots of conversations and lighthearted focus on these 2 important issues
- Another **opportunity to lift the famous Pottles Cup comes with the annual Eurovision Song Contest extravaganza on the 12th May** - so here goes for another GB nil points night we suspect - but we'll be waving flags in a semi ironic, semi nostalgic for the good old days and proudly on the night kind of way - those able to stay the course of course!
- **Our bathrooms and loo makeovers are almost complete too** - just in case you were wondering - they are all looking lovely

So much more to say about **counting grand children and great grandchildren** as well as our **work with Exeter University projects aimed at enhancing the lives of those living in 24/7 care** ... but these will need to wait until next time. Do get in touch if you'd like to join in with what we do and get up to - we're still **seeking more musical help with our Desert Island Discs project** and the **installing of a safe but latter day kitchen for our folk** to use

That's all for nows

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What is the most important word when it comes to Pottles Court?

Posted by: pottles at 17:33, March 4 2018.

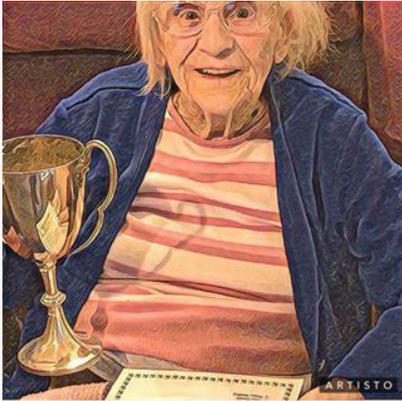
March saw the first snow fall at Pottles Court and boy did it fall! - the village quickly ground to a halt - transport, getting to the shops, getting to the post office, getting anywhere really, even our chickens kept indoors, but thanks to the heroics of our excellent team - several who stayed on and stayed over supporting each other and our residents the atmosphere was as ever - cheerful and upbeat. **We are so lucky to have genuinely Outstanding staff** being prepared to do what it takes in all weather to do great work.

What is the most important word question about Pottles Court we are considering at the moment as an exercise in how we see ourselves and how others see us too - so far words like **Homely, Kindness, Humour, Standards, and Belief** are being offered - there are so many that convey our ethos - the word **Culture** is at the heart of the home along with **Passion and Love** - we will keep the question going for a while yet and take a vote on the most pertinent

February was an action packed month with a lot of goings on as mentioned in our last posting - March too has so much to look forward to:

- We've already had an entertaining time on **World Book Day with an 'author and titles' quiz** - where Doreen yet again demonstrated 'quick on the draw' knowledge of 'Alice In Wonderland, Murder of the Orient Express and 1984' authoringness!! - see Doreen with the famous Pottles Cup below - we think Doreen has won the cup more than anyone!
- **Classic Care Homes will mark the 11th year as owners of Pottles** with some special thanks to staff and encouraging everyone to sample some small tokens of commemoration - chocolates we suspect but who knows - we will see on the 8th March
- We also have **'Roop' with his excellent ceramic creations** with us on the 8th bringing his playable vases to entertain and amuse - see him at a recent Devon Care Kite Mark event below

- We've had another **lovely message and permission from the author and illustrator Shirley Hughes to compile a 'Mother's Day' special collage for the 11th** using her wonderfully evocative drawings of mums and grandma's with children. They will be a brilliant catalyst for the conversations we'll be having on and around the day about our mums.
- It's **Oscars ceremony time again** and we will be having some conversation about favourite films during the coming week - we watched National Velvet on Elizabeth Taylor Day on the 27th February too - it would have been her 86th birthday
- **There will be a series of birthday tributes in March too** - **Vera Lynn** at 101yrs old (24th), **Albert Einstein** Day on the 14th and **Van Gogh** Day on the 30th



Another important word at Pottles Court is Research - we have for some time been a very ardent supporter and participant in research projects - We had Charlene (a nurse from Canada and PhD student) and Dr Kristin from Norway of Exeter University with us at our last Residents and Guests meeting taking views on medication use (and possible overuse for some) at Pottles and we are also working with another project at the University on how important the natural environment is for people living with dementia - yet more work is planned with our local Academic Health Science Network considering the needs and issues of someone in declining health

a few final quick news items here:

1. **Easter is fast approaching** - last year we had a practice at **the Lord's Prayer** - it was really interesting to see how many people were very able to recite the prayer and how we then talked about memories of this in the classroom and in our lives in bygone days
2. We have **our next Residents and Guest meeting on Tuesday the 27th March** - our agenda will include an update on our Real Food Campaign following on from **National Nutrition and Hydration week 12-18th March** - see pics below
3. Our meeting on the 27th will also share 2 progress updates on our **'You Need Hands' Project** and the **'Kitchen to Call My Own'** plans - we are still urgently seeking appliances from the 50s and 60s to use to re create a familiar kitchen for our folk to enjoy





A final mention on a more serious topic - we have for many months now been doing lots of training and awareness raising with our staff on **SEPSIS** - this has been brought even more into the public consciousness with a young mum actress dying on the radio serial The Archers - Sepsis is such a life threatening and rapidly deteriorating illness we are redoubling our efforts to keep everyone considering the question - **COULD IT BE SEPSIS?** - if one of our residents has a turn for the worst

That's all until next time

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Warmth - it's not just about the temperature!

Posted by: pottles at 13:31, January 29 2018.

We've been reflecting a lot on **what's important about living and working in a care home...** we were delighted to have Kirsty, one of our first Trainee Nursing Associates, return to do some filming as part of our Devon wide 'Proud2Care' work aimed at **encouraging more people to see health and social care as a rewarding career to pursue.** One of the things we chatted about was warmth and this being not just about having the heating on but the part it plays in a fun based atmosphere where light hearted things go on as well as the more serious daily life events.



We are still sharing our new year resolutions for Pottles - the ongoing work we are doing on environmental improvements and our colourful and varied range of events, celebrations and occasions too - we've already had **June become our latest Pottles Cup winner with her impressive knowledge of Elvis Presley on Elvis's birthday tribute day (8th January).** We have **James Dean Day** fast approaching too - coinciding with Doreen's birthday on the 8th Feb. **We are sorry to have missed Penguin Awareness Day on the 20th** but are not letting **National Chocolate Cake Day** pass us by without a few cakes to keep us entertained! - Ann Marie, our cook, is on the case as we speak!



Our most recent **Residents & Guests meeting on the 23rd January** had 5 specially invited guests to join our residents and families - **Magda, Kim and Deborah from the local academic health network came along** to offer some time to do useful things with us at Pottles and **Charlene and Kirstin exploring medication use in care homes as part of an Exeter University research study came too** - a follow up special meeting is to take place on the 1st February to seek further views on this - do come if you can - expenses can be covered as well as a small payment for family members giving up time to be involved.

We're very excited about the latest all comer's skills based challenge we have introduced - **'Flick a Jelly Baby'** an edible variation on shove ha'penny - every visitor is encouraged to have a go - so far George and Terry have demonstrated a keen eye and impeccable flicking abilities - but its too early to award prizes. **Jammy the cat has had a go but hasn't quite mastered the flicking motion fully** but we suspect when no one's looking she plays a part in all the missing jelly babies - we can't think what else could be happening to them all!?



A few final mentions here:

- We know February will be a busy month - **National Dignity Day (1st Feb)**- we also know this is an every day event of course but we make a special fuss on this day checking out what it means to us all, **James Dean Day (8th)**, **Pancake day (13th)**, **Valentine's Day (14th)** - we have another **special Valentine's Day photo album like last year** to add love poems, memories, first kiss tales and wedding day and special photos of loved ones pictures and some baking Outstanding biscuit plans and Lorraine having a go at leading some **peg doll making efforts** - to help with the Jelly Baby Flicking we are thinking !



- We are re introducing more **'weight lifting for beginners'** to aid and support people keeping active and retaining muscle strength too - safely and in a light hearted non competitive way!
- **We are also introducing a 'You Need Hands' project** in a homage to the immortal Max Bygraves song of the same name - the important element being hands being so important in so many aspects of our lives we want to make sure we do more than nail painting and hand massages to keep them well tended to.
- A final plea - **WE HAVE A PLAN TO CREATE A SAFE, FUNCTIONAL KITCHEN AREA IN OUR DINING ROOM 'A Kitchen to Call My Own'** with 1950/60s style equipment adapted to be interesting and ideally usable for our residents - if you have any equipment, utilities from that era or memories of bygone kitchen stories to share please get in touch something like this - https://www.instagram.com/p/BeiN_IAGOb8/

That's all for now until next time

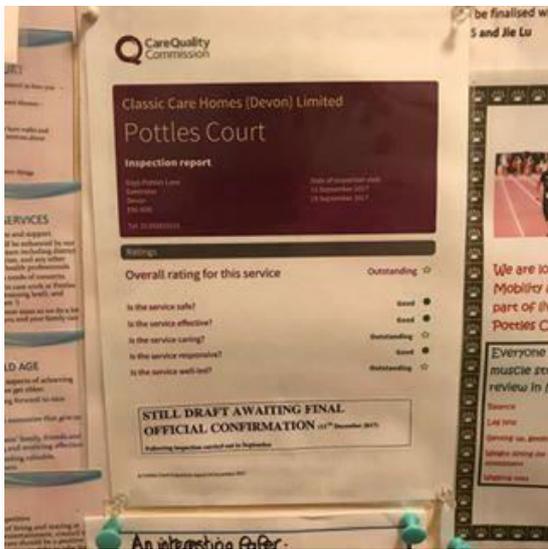
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Enthusiasm, Pride and Being Kind

Posted by: pottles at 14:51, December 14 2017.

It's impossible to contain our excitement about the outcome of our CQC inspection carried out in September. **We have been told we've been rated as OUTSTANDING OVERALL with the highest accolades for CARING and WELL LED.** We have responded to the draft report with one or two minor comments (factual inaccuracies as they call them) but we are now very pleased to be getting ready to pop a few corks and make a big fuss of all involved - TEAMWORK AND FAMILY LIFE being recognised we feel and ENTHUSIASM, PRIDE AND KINDNESS being at the heart of our philosophy and ethos.

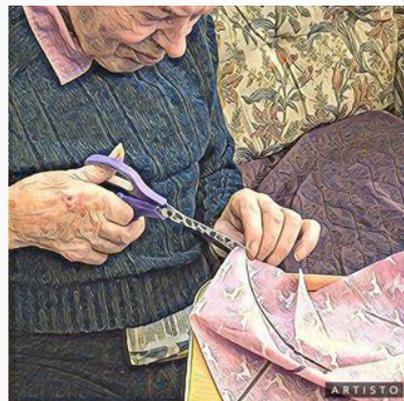


We are however taking a balanced view of this lofty status and not getting too carried away (of the 2% of care homes in England that achieve Outstanding very few have fewer than 20 residents and not many are what we feel are 'homely homes for life' - not palatial just the type of home people have lived in all of their lives).

Our lead director George was invited to talk at a big conference in London on the 5th December - he emphasised the importance of **enthusiasm, pride and kindness** in his talk - the link to his and other presentations here below - worth having a look at and hover and click to view with your mouse - apologies for this computer language but if not sure ask Jan or George for details <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/enhanced-health-in-care-home>

Coming to the more important issues of daily life and goes on at Pottles **it's been a very hectic time as we approach Christmas** - we've had significant mixed emotions having lost 3 residents after short illnesses since our last news update - Deena, Lila and Eileen were with us for a good while and long enough for us to get to know them well - our **Residents and Guests meeting on the 21st November** paid tribute to each of them after full and again **enthusiastic, proud and kind** lives led by each - we know how much Deena enjoyed our regular and sometimes spontaneous singalongs - as a tribute we sang 'Nice Cup of Tea in the Morning' 3 times at the meeting and will do so many times in the future. **We welcomed Ronald, Terrance and June** (and yes - you do spell his name like that!!) - we know what a big step it is arriving at a new home - we are also keen on the word arrival not admission or placement even - arriving at Pottles is about settling in and joining in with things as you see fit.

On the issue of joining in - already **Terry has demonstrated great skill in helping with our 2nd round of Christmas Bunting making ably assisted by Fred** - we were so impressed by the grit and determination of our 2 budding seamster masters we are planning a joint Pottles Cup award ceremony to mark the **'Bunting by the Boys' Outstanding achievement** - you see we will be sharing the Outstanding theme with everyone over the coming months that's for sure !



We've had **our fabulous Festive Fete on the 9th of December** - we had the very versatile Lily (niece of Chris) playing flute and keyboard on the day - We are voting again on best carol - the last 2 years have

had Silent Night top of the pops and we have a plan to have even more Christmas trees about the place than last year (7 to beat!)

Another quirky and so far very popular entertainment is the **virtual tour of the village in our 1964 old Landrover** - 'virtual' being the operative word sadly - too cold, too bouncy and basically we've done the maths and realised we won't all fit in the back! - 17 residents and all the hot toddy's needed to sustain us - lots of landmarks photographed on our newly assembled collage so we can share more with everyone about lovely Exminster. We are also adding some new snapshot moments to our Pottles Family Tree too specially for Christmas.



A few final mentions:

- We've had our annual **Frank Sinatra Tribute day marking** what would have been his 102nd birthday on the 12th December- **Elvis day is on the 8th January** of course so a bit of thinking on his best songs too on that day
- We have been rehearsing a **Shove Ha'penny 'Battle of the Giants'** plan - Ronald, Joyce and Terry all itching to fight it out after our try out sessions - so watch this space - we've got a brilliant home made board and Winston Churchill coins specially for the joust



- We are **planning our 2018 'onwards and upwards' masterplan** with a significant early spring cleaning plan and decoration programme as well as convening our first open forum preceding a staff training session on end of life care on the 18th January - check for details and do come if able
- A final question that emerged at our Residents and Guests meeting in November amidst some incredulity - **what do you call those bits of batter left at the bottom of your fish and chip wrapper when you're finished?** several people argued strongly they are Gribbles!?! - do let us have your thoughts on this to settle the argument

Until next time - we are all planning to be **'Wearing Outstanding Trousers' from here on and happy festivities to all**

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In Conversation with our Home Manager, Jan

Posted by: pottles at 12:38, November 8 2017.

We felt it would be interesting to talk to our **recently installed Home Manager, Jan** about her role and what makes her tick in terms of being the linchpin at Pottles. Jan doesn't feel she is the central feature at Pottles Court however and although in many ways pivotal to keeping things working well she genuinely feels strongly that the true centre of the Home are the residents and their care, needs and their everyday life. Many Home Managers may say this but we can absolutely confirm that Jan really means it. For proof just come and meet her to see for yourself!

Jan doing her famous Santa impersonation - auditions for this year's Santa taking place over the coming weeks



We asked some questions

Tell us about the Job?:

"It's like juggling - there are always so many things to attend to and deal with - small and large things that will keep you on your toes. We live like one big family - residents, staff, relatives, loved ones, visiting colleagues and fellow professionals everyone is an important part of what we do and how we do it"

What's the best bit of the Job?:

"Definitely seeing our residents smile and being well cared for and happy. We have so many people with us who's stories are so amazing- giving them comfort and feeling good about that is really special - there is no better feeling"

What are you most proud of in your work?:

"I knew nothing about dementia until my dad was diagnosed with the condition many years ago - this led me to want to learn more about dementia and that, after over 17 years of working at Pottles Court now, has brought me to the pinnacle of being the Manager in a home that I love, doing work that I love with people I love - it gives me such pride is my achievement. I am not the finished article yet however - still much to learn and much to know"

What inspires you?:

"I know it sounds cheesy but knowing our team are providing positive and passionate care to our residents - seeing the great things going on - often the simple things like sharing a moment, having a joke, dealing with someone kindly and being tender toward those feeling sad - it really does give me a gush of emotion. Being the best I can be is an ongoing mission of mine - I seek and gain inspiration where ever and whenever I can"

There is a lot of talk in care work about Person Centred Care - what does this mean to you?:

"For me its about individual care, noticing, knowing and acting upon very particular things that people like and dislike. Always keeping an open mind to what we see and hear. Being curious and questioning about our approach to each of our residents making sure the whole team share details of things noticed such as one of our core views that 'every conversation or interaction with a residents gives us the chance to learn something about the person we didn't know already' "

What do people say to you about Pottles Court?:

"We are always described as homely - the type of home people are comfortable in and feel familiar with - not hotel style like some care homes promote themselves as - not many people like or want to live in a hotel - they want homely homes for life and that's what we offer. They say we are 'down to earth' authentic with perhaps the 'common touch' - though this could give the wrong impression!! So many comments say how calm and easy going the routine is from residents combining 'downtime' resting and relaxing with being active doing things keeping busy and entertained. We also hear a lot about the atmosphere and how welcoming we are - which is nice. Our recent CQC inspection had our inspector commenting on the gentle regular flow of staff sharing information about care throughout the day. We are eagerly awaiting our finalised report after what felt like a really affirming inspection in September"

Thank you Jan. Have you any final words to add?:

"Just to add a big thank you to the team - I won't list names but we are so lucky to have a great set of staff - we rarely have staff leave, we never use agency as the team are loyal to the Home and each other and I can't praise them enough"

Our next blog in the coming week or so will be sharing many other items of interest such as the eagerly awaited news on who is the new Pottles Cup holder following the Great Conkering Conquering Contest - (extended into 2 bitterly contested weeks in October), our Upcoming Residents and Guest meeting on the 21st November and all the varied and marvellous events celebrations and occasions we have in mind - celebrity birthday quizzes, lavender bag and bunting making projects, Christmas present making and preparations for our Christmas Fete on the 9th December - **watch this space**

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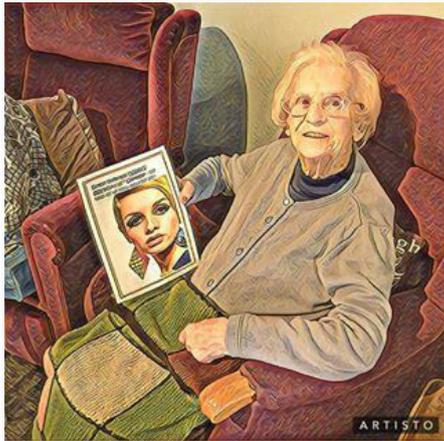
Living Happily Ever After

Posted by: pottles at 15:19, October 2 2017.

It's been a few weeks since our last news bulletin - and what a frenetic time we've been having - we spoke last time of bridging the age gap and **how we include (in safe ways) the very youngest of the young in our Pottles family day to day life** - since then we've had **2 new additions** - Baby Arthur came to meet his great gran Jean at only a few days old - Theo, his big brother, featured in the last blog sweeping as is his part time role with us. We have also had Chloe born to activity lead and carer Lisa - born on day 2 of our recent Care Quality Commission inspection carried out on the 13th and 19th September (more on that later)

We've had several standout moments too such as the **Princess Diana remembered day** marking 20 yrs since she so tragically lost her life, we've had a **Twiggy's Birthday quiz** - Doreen being a bit of a Twiggy expert on the quiet it seems! - see picture below. We've been making cheesy bread, chocolate cookies

and polishing the famous Pottles Cup furiously ready for the **upcoming annual Conkering Conquering Contest during the week 16-21st October** - Willow (aged 6), Pam T's great granddaughter, is in charge of conker catching around Exeter as agreed at our most recent Residents and Guests meeting on the 21st September.



We all enjoyed an afternoon of **country and western classic songs on what would have been Hank Williams's birthday on the 17th September** and also played some of the great Glen Campbell hits reflecting on losing him to Dementia recently. **Fred and Ginger Day took place on the 13th September this year** - with lots of Fred's classic hits and their films to boot.

Returning to our CQC inspection for an update on this having last been inspected in 2015- Louise, our long standing inspector, arrived unannounced (as is the custom for inspections in care homes) on the 13th September. **We underwent a really detailed review of care, processes, observed daily life, lots of one to one conversations between Louise and residents, family loved ones and staff as well as with our management team and a very detailed examination of all of our paperwork. The focus used in the inspection is to consider the 5 key questions CQC measure care by: is the Home Safe, Caring, Effective, Responsive to Need and Well Led.** The final report won't be with us for several weeks but we feel our time with Louise was positive, constructive, emotional (in a good way!) and affirming in terms of what we do and how we do it. We have been reflecting a lot on the experience and thanking all those involved including all the lovely comments made by residents and families - a Huge Thanks to all



A few final mentions here too

- Our so called **Deep Dive into all of our residents care plans continues** -this is where we are checking and testing out all of the wants and needs of our residents and seeking more and more detail from families and staff as well as the person themselves to make sure the day to day issues of importance are tip top - **favourite way to spend time, preferred beverage, proudest achievement, treasured possession, future aims & dreams and what makes me laugh are all part of the plan!**
- October will see a number of our **quirky planned events, occasions and celebrations** - we've also had **4 resident birthdays in the space of a few days** - Ann Marie kept really busy baking cakes for Fred, Barbara (same day), Chris and Isobel - we have **apple ducking** (not for the faint hearted) to mark Halloween coming up - no scary images as we know this can be upsetting, **we fancy a go at Lavender bag making** and also want to do a **Hattie Jacques and Norman Wisdom remembered tribute day** too
- We had another of our **impromptu 'looking good in a hat'** moments that brought some hilarity to a rainy afternoon recently - we might have a go at a staff in comedy ears day to enhance our recently introduced 'tell us a joke at lunchtime' experiment - all optional so no penalties for those not wishing to take part - just lots of praise and kudos for those that have a go !!



The title of this news update is **Living Happily Ever After** - we see this as a central part of living at Pottles Court - they say life begins at 40 - we say life begins for those at Pottles at all and any age - our CQC inspection last time rated us as Good - we feel Good is Good but being better than Good is what we aspire to all of the time. Living happily in a care home involves a lot of sharing, a lot of positivity and a lot of fun we believe - more on this to mention next time so until then...

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Bridging the Age Gap

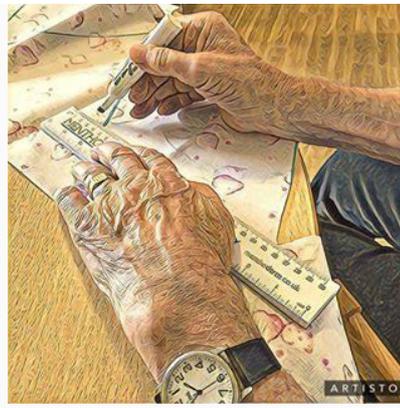
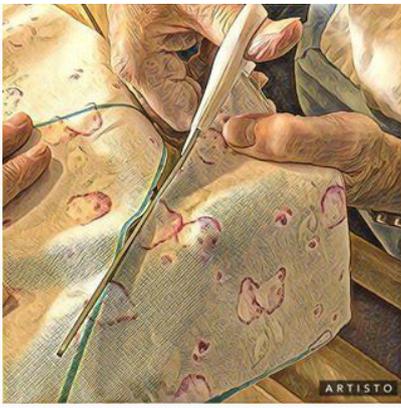
Posted by: pottles at 12:07, August 17 2017.

The recent **inspiring positive stories featured in the channel four programme 'An Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds'** created a real uplifting vibe for everyone watching. Whilst Pottles isn't a retirement village we nonetheless fully agree that bringing young people in contact with older folk has massive benefits for both age groups. We have quite a few regular visitors from what we might regard as the younger generation - Theo - seen below, has been visiting his great gran Jean since he was 6 weeks old - these days he is utterly unstoppable in helping with the sweeping, Willow, age 6, also plays a really active part in not only thrilling her great gran Pam but also helping lots of our residents with things like our Egg Jarping contest at Easter. We have 2 slightly older girls joining us to help with work they are doing to gain the Duke of Edinburgh award and Heather, Barbara's great granddaughter too is eager to get involved as are both of manager Jan's grandchildren. **Young folk R Us** too as the saying goes!. We even have a **voting for the Best Baby competition on the 22nd August** where we will be sharing photos of babies and deciding which we like the look of in another of our light hearted events - we are sure they will all be lovely of course so we don't expect to cause any offence!

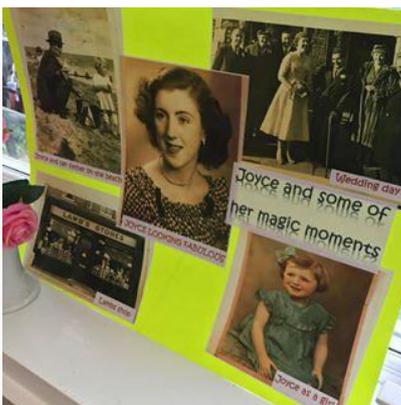


In other news there are lots of things to report on:

- We had the first of what we plan to regard as **Bunting Making Extravaganza's - we maintained our reputation locally as a noisy care home with all the accompanying singalongs - 'Oh What Beautiful Morning' fast becoming a new house favourite** despite it being afternoon when we were doing the bunting and that none of us really knew the verses only the chorus! -see pictures below



- **A recent trip to Norway** by our lead director George has established a link with a Norwegian care home which we are eager to develop with a potential for stronger connection in sharing ideas and models of care - We are having an **open meeting about this on the 30th August at 2pm - all welcome**
- We are looking at having a think about how we might create a residents kitchen area in our dining room under the title '**A kitchen to Call My Own**' We hear about pubs in care homes often but are less sure about these compared to a dedicated area that can feel more meaningful and relevant to our residents - at risk a sounding a little sexist - men historically spend more time in pubs and women (the majority of our residents) have enjoyed time in their kitchens - we do have some men focused events too of course with for example we have just **relaunched our 3rd year of Jumpers for Goalposts footy premier league sweepstake** - a debating point we have had at our **Residents and Guest meeting and will do again at our next one - on the 21st September - 4.15-5.45pm**
- We are holding another **open meeting on the 5th September at 5pm sharing views on the recent Marie Curie Research Centre national study on end of life care in care homes** - we are inviting relatives, friends and loved ones to hear about the report, its recommendations and how they can help us at Pottles make sure we are being proactive about the part of our care we feel is the most important thing to get right - we have some local expert guests joining us at the meeting and our next group of Trainee Nursing Associates too
- We are also leading a **Pain Management Devon Care Kite Mark workshop on the 21st September -2-4pm** with a large number of DCKM members - another often ignored issue we feel is really important to address in our every day work at Pottles
- Our **Magic Moments work** is coming along nicely with some amazing and fabulous photos now adding to our growing number of lovely collages - Liz, Joyce's daughter has given us some amazing pictures - see here below



Next time we will be sharing some work we are doing on **mealtimes in care homes** after helping a PhD student complete his thesis in producing an excellent toolkit for staff in care homes - we are trialling this and will share findings - more detail available on request

We are also commencing work on our **Mobility, Mood and Memory project** adding to the 'weight lifting for beginners' we have mentioned previously - so tune in next time for more news and updates

That's all for now

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Exciting Times at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 15:54, July 16 2017.

Never shy of trying new things out and being at the front of the queue when it comes to innovation we have **just completed our first placement period in hosting 3 exceptional TRAINEE NURSING ASSOCIATES** - they came to us as part of an NHS initiative to enable already experienced Health Care Assistants at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, keen to advance their careers, gain skills and insight into care home work. We think they were great -so keen and a real asset to our care and no doubt will go far. We are very proud to be one of the few care homes in the country involved in the exciting scheme.



We have also enjoyed enough great weather good enough to have our house chickens out and about a bit, doors and windows open and a bit of time in our garden pottering about. Our **'Come on Andy' Wimbledon fortnight turned into 'Come on Joanna'** for a day until we had to console ourselves with a fuss made of 'Fred Federer' - seen below practicing his serve as winner of our in house Wimbledon fortnight sweepstake star !! First domino champ and now tennis Pottles Cup Holder extraordinaire!!

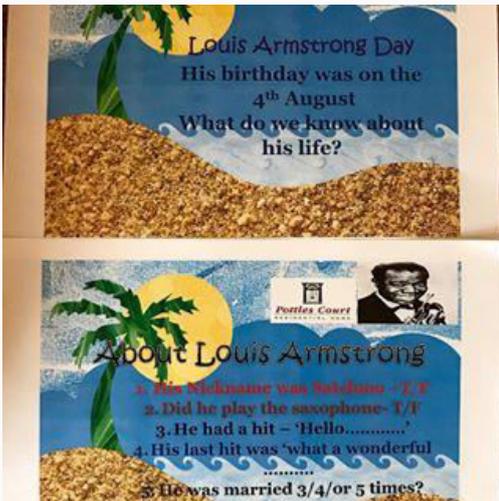


We had another **battle of the cream teas on National Cream Tea Day on the 30th June** - with a large majority of 15 to 2 our residents verdict going in favour of the Devon method - cream then jam - not that inferior Cornwall version of jam first !! not wishing to pick a fight here of course - perhaps a modicum of bias could be claimed?



July has also seen **Yul Brynner's birth remembered with a brilliant afternoon and evening watching 'The King and I' twice** - themes emerging about 'whistling when feeling anxious' and cute children were discussed - if not sure on these you really need to watch this film - it's a classic.

We inadvertently celebrated Louis Armstrong's birth a month early too !! who said he was born on the 4th July we still haven't quite got the bottom of yet but the good news is we can run our quiz about his life and play his really popular music again on the 4th August! - we might even get Director George's cornet in for the day to have a go at **'Summertime and the Living is Easy'**



Some brief Pottles news items here:

- Our next **Residents & Guests meeting is on the 27th July -4-5.30pm-** we will have another group of TNAs on placement and potentially a very Senior Nurse from the RDE guesting and meeting our folk and hearing about what we get up to on the day - fingers crossed
- We have **several of our remembering series events in August coming up** - 100 yrs since the outbreak of the **Battle of Passchendaele** in WWI, 20 years since **Princess Diana** loss her life tragically - and we want to reflect on these 2 sad events in our history. On a more cheery note we have a **Proper Bunting Making Day on the 10th August**, a **Best Baby Day**, a light hearted photograph judging day on the 22nd, not forgetting **our 3rd year of our 'Jumpers For Goalposts' footy sweepstake** launch coinciding with the new Premier League season - Chelsea (Deena and Jamie) to beat!
- We had a full series of **in house training themed around Dementia Insight Refresher updates for staff** - attended by our 3 TNAs - all of our staff now have completed this combined theory, participative and skills based essential learning - all stand a good chance now of winning a mystery prize for completion drawn at the upcoming **Residents and Guests meeting on the 27th** - but what could the prize be? we can't possibly tell you just yet - watch this space for detail on this and the lucky winner in the next newsblog !!

That's all for now - keep tuned in and come and say hello if you want to hear about our work, meet some of our staff and perhaps our residents too - let us know you're coming - **we can offer a version of the**

Dementia Insights session to others to share our beliefs and approach to looking after people with the condition if you ask nicely...

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Sharing the Caring in Care Homes

Posted by: pottles at 11:32, June 14 2017.

As we approach the annual **National Care Home Open Day on the 16th June** we felt it important to say a few things about how we feel about involving and including family loved ones in being part of the extended Pottles family as we like to refer to it. This year's event coincides with **National Carers Week- 12th-18th June** and we are always supporting these kind of events

This year amongst the range of quirky, fun based, entertaining things we are doing is the **DOMINOES ALL COMERS CHALLENGE** with current in house champion Fred - see below winning the latest bout



Our philosophy regarding sharing the caring includes the following:

- **an open visiting anytime policy** - yesterday as a typical day saw virtually all 17 of our residents visited by a family loved one or friend - the open house informality we really like - the visits can offer the opportunity for simple everyday chats with staff too as well as care reviews, progress updates and like yesterday more serious conversations with a recently bereaved family member who despite being early in the dealing with her loss was able to give us lovely feed back saying 'we do EoLC really well at Pottles Court' - as we have previously said in these blogs 'there is nothing more important to get right than End of Life Care'
- **we will always encourage and support family members to help with special extras** - things like offering extra support with mobility and help with some care needs and pampering, bringing in treats like favourite chocolate, perfumes and soaps
- **we encourage trips and excursions too where able and with discussion** - we know generally short local jaunts work best for most but one of our conversations yesterday involved planning for one of our residents going to a wedding 100 miles away at the weekend and how we will have her nails done nicely and her best frock on for the occasion!
- **we have several of our family visitors doing amazing things in the garden** - Sally, Jane and others to name but a few - these efforts were especially enjoyed in the marvellous singalong led by our new best friends *Dawlish Songbirds* in the first visit of many musical sharing's - having gotten us in the mood this was followed by a further singing session whilst watching a house favourite The Sound of Music - there were several ideas about what we should do about the problem of Maria - we should point out we don't have anyone by the name of Maria at Pottles so are certain suggestions were about the Julie Andrews character!



- a conversation had with one of our visiting loved ones did provide the opportunity to talk about **the way the time spent can be mutually most beneficial** - we discussed timings, the best setting eg private space - with the TV helping with background chatter, using mealtime as a facilitating activity, open questions though even these can be a struggle as conversation and response can become more difficult, how staff can offer prompts using photos and updates on what we've been up to of late

a few quick mentions:

- **July will be a really full month of events, occasions and celebrations** - we have our **Wimbledon fortnight** - "Come on Andy" plans, various celebrity birthday remembering series plans inc -**Yul Brynner Day** - with accompanying King & I tribute, a **Louis Armstrong Day** - with another chance for a go on Director George's cornet Satchmo style, a **Natalie Wood Day** with a West Side Story singalong planned and our annual **CREAM TEA CONTENTIOUS BATTLE OF THE METHODS DAY** - Devon with cream first or the Cornwall cream on top
- Just to add to the news on being family friendly at Pottles Court - we are extremely flattered to have had a piece about dementia added to the national John's Campaign website this week. The work they do is so important in supporting families both in having their loved ones in hospital or in a care home and we are big supporters of their work - see link here for details <http://johnscampaign.org.uk/#/post/saying-a-few-things-about-dementia-during-dementia-awareness-week>
- **Singalongs are us in a big way these days** - here in the photo below is Deena borrowing Director George's glasses to get fully vocal during our rousing 'Somewhere over The Rainbow' rendition on the recent Judy Garland Day tribute
- **A final mention of the new and current Pottles Cup Holder top tipster and horse fancier, Bunny**, with her latest success 'at the races' winning The Epsom Derby this time with 'Wings of Eagles' - see her with the cup below



That's all for now - keep in touch and may see you at the Domino event - let us know you're coming though!

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Saying a few things about dementia during dementia awareness week

Posted by: pottles at 14:47, May 18 2017.

At Pottlescourt we pride ourselves on a unique approach to how we look after people living with dementia. It's very much a priority part of the lives of those that live and work at our home. We have been having lots of chats with residents, staff and visitors about the condition and running a series of 'Dementia Insights Refresher' training sessions for all our staff too.

To give you a sense of what we see as important in our beliefs and ethos regarding dementia care here are some of our fundamental principles and values

1- the language we use is really important - not suffering, not a disease not a terminal illness it's a whole system long term condition that is different in every person affected yes certainly memory loss is a feature as is confusion and some difficulty with everyday tasks in its advanced or late stage (generally for those that will want or need good 24/7 care) but as said by those that know, such as Beth Britton the blogger on dementia who looked after her father over many years of his later life with dementia "once you've met one person with dementia, you've met one person with dementia"

2- you can live well in a care home with dementia - you will have choice, fun, be safe, be entertained, supported in staying independent, encouraged to keep all your interests, hobbies and habits! and try some new ones too perhaps. Most crucially removing the worries you and your loved ones may have about risks of being lonely, being anxious, having a fall alone and being isolated, feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities of living at home, paying all the bills, getting to the shops, heating the house, cooking meals, taking medicines, attending to all your personal care needs, dealing with an increasingly complicated technological world, even putting out the bins and recycling.

3-central to our unique approach are these key points KPOOH and GPOOH. We are very committed to keeping people out of hospital as a high priority. Older people don't do well in hospital as a rule on those occasions where it's absolutely necessary our commitment is to get people out of hospital as soon as is appropriate or possible It's what we believe Also being KEEN & KIND are the 2 K four letter words we strive to embed in the culture and atmosphere of Pottles. These are vital elements to how we ensure our residents with dementia are looked after well and our staff proud and positive

4- dementia we know is a struggle for everyone touched by it. We don't adhere entirely with the images of deterioration, tragic loss and tragedy often portrayed in campaigns and in the media. We see dementia in its advanced, progressed or later stages as a fog where people with the condition are still the person they always were yet perhaps more difficult to reach in the dementia mist. They are still there. Every so often even for those with pronounced features the fog clears and there they are, there you are to them reachable and reached communication may still be hard but those moments we know are powerful and massively important to us as staff but most immense for the person and their loved ones when they occur

Our next blog will revert to the more familiar topics and themes of mixed news, updates, reports of what's coming up and what we've been up to so keep tuning in So be strong, without fear and talk well about the value of life when living with dementia. If you want talk to us. We are happy to talk always

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Chats, Chores, Checks, and Care

Posted by: pottles at 18:04, May 1 2017.

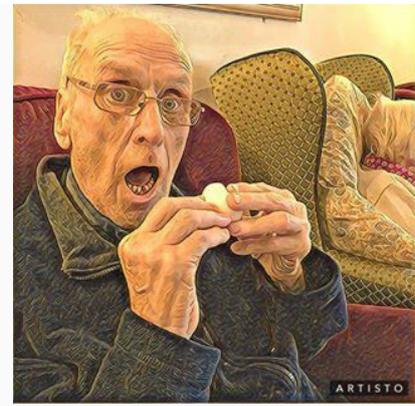
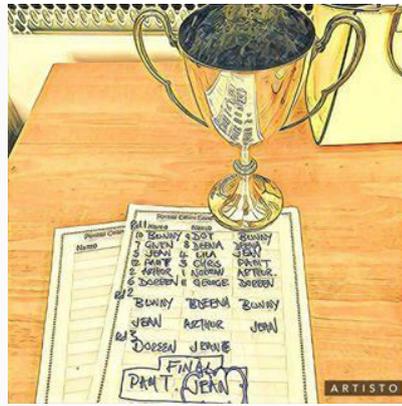
We know the lead nurse at the NHS, Jane Cummings, has **6Cs that set out some priority issues for nurses - they are Commitment, Courage, Compassion, Care, Competence and**

Communication. Although not a nursing home we do have 3 qualified nurses on our staff books - George C, Becki and Jie Lu - we do subscribe to these priorities too and also have our own 4Cs that we want to say a few things about - see if you can see the one we have in common?

- **Chats** - passing the time of day, noticing what's on the TV and musing on it, sharing memories about what music is playing (there is pretty much always music playing about the place), the **'discovery conversation' principle** - every chat gives us the opportunity to learn something about the person we didn't know already, and simply smiling and noticing a person's new hairdo, smart cardigan or jumper is so important - it could be claimed to be simply an example of good manners and politeness but its much more besides - reaching a person in an informal but caring way who may be feeling low, feeling bewildered which can often accompany someone with dementia, feeling alone is an essential priority for us at Pottles
- **Chores** - day to day for us all requires housekeeping jobs to be done, routine is not a bad thing we argue - laundry, cleaning, fancifying bedrooms, sorting and tidying and keeping active and productive is something to be celebrated - our happiness mantra you may recall includes doing useful things and being helpful so we will encourage everyone to remember the other slogan of ours - **'just because I didn't drop it doesn't mean I shouldn't pick it up'**
- **Checks** - in an older homely home there are lots of things to check and maintain - we are on the front foot checking feet and footwear, always keeping an eye on how our folk wearing glasses are managing, keeping an ear out for hearing aids - taking account of the fact that **75% of those living in care homes will be experiencing some degree of hearing loss**. Weights, mobility, personal care issues and changes we will notice with advancing years of our folk and wants and needs will also need regular checks too as will how people are spending time each day and the balance of calm, relaxation and stimulation and entertainment.
- **Care** - it's the central issue that we have in common and one that will give us the greatest satisfaction in our work - at a recent senior staff meeting we talked a lot about being proud in what we do, being kind and the notion of inspiration - last August we did a blog about 'what inspires us' - see link in our index list - inspiring and being inspired at Pottles Court as a senior role model is at the heart of caring well. **our next Residents and Guest Meeting on the 18th May -4- 5.30pm** will address the link between care and inspiration generating some essential points from our residents, their families and our staff

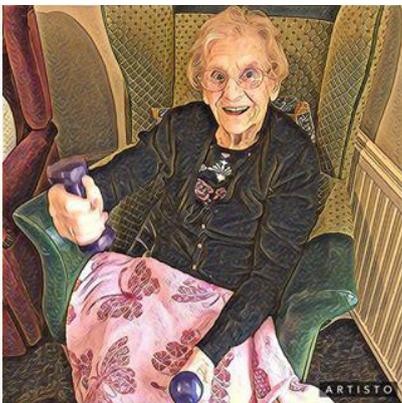
In terms of quick updates - so much to mention

1. **Easter** - Our hard boiled egg Jarping winner this year was Jean with the able assistance of last year's winner Pam's great granddaughter Willow - see pictures - a really fierce and feisty affair for sure - George very ably disposing of his defeated egg seen here too !!
2. **The Lord's Prayer** - we spent a lot of time over Easter reflecting on our memories of the Lord's Prayer - even those not so religious amongst us had stories to tell about reciting the prayer in school assembly's and its meaning and relevance today
3. **Our part in the national Health Education England Nursing Associate Test Site work** - we are really thrilled to be one of the few care homes in the country that are part of this exciting way to help address the need for a more skilled health and social care workforce - **everyone is talking about integration** of both and we have a part to play in helping this happen locally in this scheme - the first tranche of trainees arrive with us in July - so watch this space!
4. We had **World Health Day on the 7th April focusing on Depression** - we spent a lot of time sharing views on things that help stave off low mood and worries that can preoccupy us - we will be making sure we follow up this more during the forthcoming **Mental Health Awareness Week - 15th - 22nd May coinciding with Dementia Awareness Week 14th -21st May**
5. It really is a busy time regarding awareness topics - **the 8th- 14th May is Dying Matters Awareness Week** and we be reflecting on advance care plans and how to make sure we take account of people's thoughts, needs and preferences in a sensitive way



Final mentions here too

- We baked a cake and had the bunting out for **our Queen's 91st birthday on the 21st April**
- Our extended over a week **Bing Crosby remembered tribute** on what would have been his 114th birthday has included some memories of his songs and his music as well as a quiz - far too easy again for our clearly very expert group of previously unknown Bing fan club members !!
- We had a **Shakespeare Knowledge & Memories Quiz** on his birthday and day he died day on the 21st April - the 2 days were 52 yrs apart thankfully ensuring we were given all of his great work - St George's day too of course
- We have also embarked upon an ongoing series of **'Weightlifting for Beginners'** with some hand held weight lifting by our keen and able residents flexing muscles under careful supervision - see Doreen pumping iron here below
- We had **World Penguin Day** tributes on the 25th April amidst much hilarity too - we had no idea Penguins could be so tricky to deal with!
- Our **gardening work has begun too** - see George here planting out Tomatoes in our raised beds - Chives in too and Flower bed overhaul plans agreed with Sally, Eileen's daughter our expert guest champion



That's all for now - more news to follow - don't forget our **Residents and Guest Meeting on the 18th May** - see you then

Meanwhile - keep in touch and get involved - we are always keen to hear from keen, kind and likeminded people interested in what we do, what we believe about care of older folk in 24/7 care and how we go about it

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A Little of What You Fancy Does You Good!

Posted by: pottles at 15:03, April 3 2017.

The old saying goes 'a little of what you fancy does you good' and we subscribe to this idea. At **our last Residents and Guests meeting on the 16th March** we talked about keeping fit and mobile as well as making sure our menus reflect what people enjoy. Plenty of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday were consumed and the potential of an emerging **small cottage industry in producing chocolate cookies** testify to the principle of making sure that regular treats and extras are run of the mill at Pottles. - see Doreen mixing Dough for the cookies here



We raise a glass of various tipples on birthdays as much as on the numerous celebrations, events and occasions we commemorate - **what would have been Van Gogh's 164th birthday on the 30th March** being one of our most recent excuses for a tribute day. The quiz about his life again far too easy for our well cultured Pottles population!

We've marked **St Patrick's Day in March, Vera Lynn's 100th birthday, Classic Care Homes owning Pottles Court for 10 yrs, our manager Jan's birthday on the 23rd** - shared with lots of amazing GB athletes - Sir Roger Bannister, Sir Mo Farah, Sir Chris Hoy, Sir Steve Redgrave and Jason Kenny, we've also had a **'best joke you've ever heard' on Red Nose Day too**

Bunny has become the latest winner of the much coveted Pottles Cup winning the Cheltenham Gold Cup riding 'Sizing John' (well not actually riding Sizing John - but we like to think she had a virtual ride on race day) with a prize on the day of a Tammy Shanter Irish cap on St Patricks Day



Another notable mention in this blog about **a little of what you fancy must be the spontaneous outbursts of singing we are witnessing around the place! - with very little provocation in fact! Deena led the very rousing 'We'll Meet Again' rendition at the Residents and Guests meeting** and needs no encouragement to get everyone joining in with 'I like a nice cup of tea in the morning....' (tea is pretty much available anytime by the way and we know basic tea is preferred rather than any of these fancy ones - we've checked and will be having another Earl Grey, Lapsang etc versus a good old traditional brew)

A few final mentions here

- On **World Health Day on the 7th April** this year we will be **talking about depression** - very common in care homes - evidence suggests 4 out of 10 people in residential care will be experiencing significant low mood - so we will be sharing views and how to allay feeling down, sad and gloomy over the coming weeks commencing on the 7th

- **Grand National Day** - our latest Sweepstake following on from the Gold Cup will be on the 8th - can Bunny retain the cup or will Deena repeat her win of last year? Giddy Up !! - see her trophy presentation from last year below
- **Easter will see lots of things going on** - Lisa, our activities lead has all sorts of plans and we will be repeating our **hard boiled egg 'jarping' knock out contest on Easter Day** - won last year by Pam T - undefeated in all rounds !! - see photo to prove it.



Keep a check on our next news update and don't forget to have **18th May in your diary for our next Residents and Guests meeting -4-5.30pm**

That's all for now folks

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Night Night

Posted by: pottles at 15:51, March 8 2017.

A curious title to this latest news update from Pottles Court but one we feel really is an important topic to talk about. **The time spent at night takes up a lot of our lives** - some estimates suggest more than half of our lives are spent asleep or at least resting, dozing, relaxing or what we talked about recently **'having a power nap'**. **Night times are in many ways an area not explored in care homes** - comfort, warmth, peaceful familiar calming and cared for must be part of what we give priority to. Night staff at Pottles have in recent times massively impressed the whole team just to mention a few examples here; **Kieran**, responding to a really poorly resident administering CPR. He was highly commended by visiting paramedics, **Ben**, gently calming another of our residents as she was becoming very distressed and upset late into the night, **Di**, with a balance of good humour and organisation. All have been so brilliant - we don't acknowledge enough the expertise in good care homes - drop in checks over recent weeks by our management team have witnessed great care and they have joined in with some of the **checks, chores and care at night** and this will continue in supporting our fab staff.



Our night time visits including a wide range of topics and themes discussed in these supervision and coaching sessions have talked about **choices about bedtime and getting up time, managing personal care and needs in the night, using soft lighting for people to see in the night as required** - some motion activated and several of our folk liking **having a radio playing gently for comfort** and as has been a habit for many years prior to coming to Pottles. We have shared the need for special attention for particular needs eg one of our folk needing a drink of orange juice at 3am to address blood sugar levels as an insulin dependent diabetic, another we know will always want to be up by 4am - a pretty early start for sure we might feel. We have reviewed pain management in the night, safe lifting and assisting those requiring support and handover, care plans & documentation (of which there is a good deal) and responding to events and emergencies including any untoward event like a fire alarm - lots of expert knowledge, skills and confidence in the role of night carer - well worthy of celebrating - and to be proud about

A few quick mentions of impending events prior to our next fuller blog in a few weeks:

- Our next **Residents and Guest meeting is on the 16th March -4-5.30pm** - with special guest Laura, medication advisor for the Care Quality Commission - joining us to answer questions about medication in an informal discussion
- We will be marking **Vera Lynn's 100th birthday (20th March)**- Blue Birds over the white cliffs of Dover singsong to boot
- We are **preparing for Mothers Day (26th March)** - again talking about our mums that day - our memories of their cooking, singing, Pinny wearing, how many Mums share the same name for example
- We will be doing some quizzing about **Einstein on the 14th** (his birthday) **telling jokes on the 24th - (Red Nose Day)** and maybe doing a jig on the **17th -St Patricks Day** too just for good measure
- We are planning another of our '**great names remembering series**' **quizzes about Van Gogh (30th March)** - we will be picking his best picture that day - voting throughout the day!

Final mention about 2 new babies arriving - not at Pottles exactly but recent new young fella's we want to welcome - **Oakley** born a few weeks ago to first time mum, Stacey (ex carer now resident hairdresser - see picture of Stacey here with Jammy the cat at Pottles) and **Jasper** newly arrived on the 2nd March to Hayley (regular visitor and friend of Les) - pictures proudly displayed in the office and Les's bedroom



More news very soon- that's all for now

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Getting a Buzz and a Thrill in what we do

Posted by: pottles at 12:31, February 11 2017.

Prompted by some recent conversations with residents, families and on social media **we thought it worth spending a few moments saying something about the buzz and the thrill of both living and working at Pottles Court.** We could be accused of bias of course and certainly as we often say 'its a serious business looking after folk in later life finding it tougher doing things they were very able to do in time past' but the serious will always be counter balanced with the fun, entertaining and downright hilarious. Pottles is a place where we definitely take things seriously but where we get a genuine buzz and a thrill too.

Here are a few key points that underpins our ethos

- **Doing the right things well and having fun at work** - a principle of enjoying what we do and how we do it - one of the essential ingredient mantras being - **'being proud is for us, being impressive is for those receiving or observing what we do'** - it's not possible to be perfect we know but being excellent is very achievable and that's our focus.
- **It's often the little things that give us the best thrill** - observing the common place knowledge of the staff the other day where during lunchtime one of our residents appeared to have finished her meal but leaving the outer half of her food untouched - Ann Marie, our cook, emerged unsolicited from the kitchen to turn our residents plate leading to the rest of the meal being eagerly consumed. When speaking to the rest of the staff they said 'oh yes this is what happens everyday - it's a little foible we are all aware of' - an example of person centred care at its best perhaps?
- **The essential elements of curiosity and creativity** - there are lots of things said about 'what good looks like in care homes' and what those considering moving into a care home should look for - our Director, George, was asked to write a piece about this for **My Home Life**, a nationally recognised body promoting care home life - see the link here myhomelife.org.uk/moving-to-a-care-home-what-matters-to-you/ sadly what is rarely

talked about or included is the need for curiosity about the lives of those we look after and the need for creative ways to ensure there is a buzz about everyday life.

- **On the theme of creativity** -our belief is, however obscure the theme, event or occasion we are always able to come up with something to provide imaginative ways to stimulate, occupy, generate interactions and participation - we had a hoot sharing memories on 'Celebrating the Pinny Day' on the 6th February, we had an entertaining James Dean Day remembering what would have been his 86th birthday on the 8th February (coinciding with Doreen's 92nd birthday too) -see picture of Doreen on Pinny Day below

A few other mentions from us here too

1. We are **finalising our Valentine's Day Wedding Day Collage** - sneak preview of the work still in development below
2. **We are great followers of Independent Age** - another national organisation supporting improvement in care and support for older people - they have produced an excellent guide of key indicators of what to look for if considering a care home for yourself or a loved one - here is the link to the guide <https://www.independentage.org/policy-research/our-10-care-home-quality-indicators>
3. **Our next Residents and Guest Meeting on the 16th March** will have the Care Quality Commission local specialist pharmacist, Laura Picton joining us for an informal conversation with us all about medicines



That's all for now - keep in contact and come and say hello if you are in the area !

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The Fondest of Farewells

Posted by: pottles at 12:42, January 19 2017.

It's always a privilege to look after those in our care. This extends as much to our staff as it does to our residents and families. We feel we look after our staff as much as they look after us all - that's **family life at its best** of course. **It is with genuine sadness that we must say the fondest of farewells to our now departing Home Manager Darryl, leaving for pastures new after 2 very positive and thrilling years at Pottles.**

Darryl has been a tremendous influence on the character, style and culture of Pottles in his time with us - very popular with residents, families and staff always willing to spend time with all needing support, cheering up or simple as well as complicated advice. He has been very **willing to 'roll up his sleeves'** when needed and lead by example. Although untypical of care home managers and not experienced in residential care when arriving with us in December 2014 as a 20 something ex domiciliary care manager, Darryl quickly became an inspirational leader with a **real 'can do' attitude in his manner and approach.** Darryl has been able to balance the back office work on documentation, compliance and the operational aspects of managing a dynamic and progressive care home with making time to get to know our folk in everyday life - taking meals, chatting, joking, overseeing how they are getting on and sharing his humour and liveliness all of which have been very special for us all.

We do deal with loss and adjustment such is the nature of being a **'home from home for life'** for our residents. We have talked about and blogged about long term care and change including end of life and bereavement for those left behind - life does go on, but for us we know, **the Darryl sized hole left behind will be really hard if not impossible to fill**

Some of the most memorable moments however have been those witnessed during staff nights out - particularly on the dancefloor where his antics have caused a great deal of anxiety about incurring serious injury to himself and others.

We will very much miss Darryl but wish him the very best of fortune in the future

Our next news update we trust will be more uplifting - it will include:

- the news on our **New Management Team** plan,
- feeding back on what we have said and done following the **next Residents and Guest meeting on the 25th January - 4-5.30pm** including a suggestion that we **work on a Family Charter for those visiting loved ones at Pottles Court**
- our actions to mark **National Dignity Day on the 1st February**
- what we have in mind to celebrate **Valentine's Day on the 14th February**

So tune in in a few weeks for these items and much more besides

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If you don't look you won't find

Posted by: pottles at 12:44, January 13 2017.

So we enter another year - welcome 2017 with resolutions to both maintain our strong ethos of **safe and fun** for those we look after as well as enhance our reputation as a committed, energised, willing and able team to all those we have dealings with.

We are seeing 2017 as a **'Great Pottles Take Off'** with a fond farewell to our departing Home Manager of just over 2 years - Good Luck in Darryl's onward journey (watch out for our special tribute blog next week) but a warm welcome to our new management team - onward and upward plans to be announced at **our next Residents and Guests meeting on the 25th January 4-5.30pm**

There are a few themes for the new year we are headlining that are to be embedded in our plans and actions at Pottles they include:

- **If you don't look you won't find** - this centres on making sure we are being vigilant in noticing areas that can be improved - whether it's about ways to better manage laundry, how to make bedrooms more personalised and familiar or simply having a clean but homely home - these are all ideas being gathered in specific meetings with staff as well as conversations with all visitors - as said by *Will Rogers, USA* - "*you don't get a 2nd chance to make a 1st impression*"
- **Finding things that are lost** - this has become a topic that has multiple meanings - we are making sure that handbags are reunited with residents as and when they become separated - sadly this can happen - we know it's not ideal but busy lives in care homes mean people sometimes forget to take things with them when hot footing it to lunch for example so whilst not lost they may be mislaid temporarily. The more challenging theme for us however links to the recent **exceptional comments made by Actress Carey Mulligan talking about her 91 year old Nan living with dementia in a care home in Swansea and all she said about the importance of visiting loved ones with the condition.** We talk about the '**Fog of Dementia**' and often talk with visiting family members and friends about reaching their loved one who is and always will be the person they always were but as a result of the progressed features of the condition are now harder to find. **They are still there and even for those with advanced, late or end stage dementia they will have 'moments of clarity and awareness' and break through moments and periods** - often linked to triggers and long term memory prompts. Music can be a great medium to enable these moments. So our ethos includes living a meaningful life with dementia, believing in reaching and being reached even when that becomes tougher and a core view that smiling, receiving care and love is a vital part of our work and the life of those we look after.

A few mentions here to close

1. **Burns Night is on the 25th January** so we will add a wee dram and a haggis if we can catch one to the agenda of our residents and guests meeting that day - we are desperately seeking an accomplished bag pipe player to help us out - please get in touch if available
2. **Chinese New Year is the 28th January** - we will be trying a few phrases led by our Chinese Head of Care Jie Lu over the festive period - year of the Rooster by the way so we may raise a glass to our recently added chickens Mel and Sue
3. **National Dignity Day - 1st February** - we acknowledge this annual awareness raising event though will always contend this is an all year round critical part of what we do - we will be talking about dignity and what it means to us all - it is an individual thing of course with some common strands but well worth exploring in more detail on this day

That's all for now - next blog a Darryl Manning farewell special next week - so watch this space for his parting words about his time with us and ours in wishing him well

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Being Family Friendly at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 15:16, December 21 2016.

After our last news item on 'responding to poor care' it's pleasing to be able to begin this festive news update with a topic of a more positive and uplifting tone - **what it is to be family friendly** that is. We have noticed a fair amount of publicity about the nature of care homes being perhaps less than friendly to families and visitors of residents in their care. We have in fact been asked to say something about this by a few people and agreed that some top tips might be in order.

- **Flexibility** - we don't really have set visiting times - it's an informal pop in, call in, spend time with your loved one and talk to us in an 'open door' way system - we encourage families to come and join in with events and retain links in all ways that can be managed - we had another of our **Residents and Guest Meetings on the 29th November** that was well attended as ever and lots of sharing of ideas and experiences in a spirited and good humoured way
- **Partners in care** - we undoubtedly regard family members as assets to the care we provide - helping

offer insights, preferences and past life stories and details for those of our folk who struggle to remember or communicate aspects of their lives or likes and dislikes

- **Personalising everyday life** - we will often have conversations with families about how we tailor particular day to day habits and patterns to how each resident likes to spend time - we are not about fixed routines other than familiar events like mealtimes unless people want particular things they enjoy at set times - lots of power naps do go on at regular intervals we notice!
- **Retaining and capturing past life events** - we rely on families to help our residents share many of their greatest moments and memories - we still encourage families to use our 'shared lives' guide sheet to build up whole life memorable moments such as school friends, working life, happiest times etc..
- **Understanding and not being defensive** - this is an area that can cause some disharmony between care homes and families - we know how hard it is for a loved one to move into a care home even though almost always there will be a realisation that the time is right - emotions of loss, guilt and upset can often create tension between all concerned - we will always work hard to help the transition and offer all the reassurance we can - we know that making time to talk is vital - expectations about what is possible and realistic too will need regular conversations and we will also be sensitive as well as proactive about how we talk about future care needs and indeed end of life care when the time is right also. **Criticism can be reframed as improvement suggestions and we will always be open to how we can do better** - **we also extend the CQC initiative 'good enough for my mum test' to good enough for us all** - can we feel proud of what we do and how we do it all of the time?
- **Humanistic values** - central to our view on how we ensure a positive and strong partnership with families, friends and loved ones visiting our folk are the so called humanist values - these **pioneered by the founder of person centred care, Carl Rogers** - he talked about **Empathy, Being Non Judgemental, Non Possessive Warmth, Genuineness, Being Authentic, and Positive Regard**

It would be churlish not to mention the impending **Christmas Cheer and festive atmosphere at Pottles** - we had a really lovely very family friendly Christmas Fete on the 10th of December raising over £300 for the residents fund thanks to many really generously donated prizes for the raffle and cakes aplenty baked and sold by residents and staff. Our Family Tree Mural is fully 'Christmassed up' with pictures of our 5 Christmas trees and we are still voting on best carol of 2016 - Silent Night so far as popular as last year

Several Families are booked in for lunch on the big day too and we are finding places to create a great and memorable day for all - **beware however - another visit from Director George with his cornet to create merry mayhem in offering some unrecognisable carols around lunchtime**

We must stop there but there are lots more to mention - how we will **toast in 2017 with a sherry or two, a few fireworks and some new year resolutions** for us all. **We will also be talking about our Manager Darryl's departure in January** and our plans for our new manager and saying more on all the plans we have for the new year

Keep in touch and get involved if you're a family member, might be one, one day or are simply interested in joining the growing 'Friend of Pottles' gang - **A Big Happy Christmas to all our readers and followers**

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Responding to Poor Care

Posted by: pottles at 11:25, November 24 2016.

Many of us will have watched the Panorama programme 'Nursing Homes Undercover' on the 21st November with horror and dismay. It was harrowing to witness the way residents were treated and the attitude of some staff. This has left a terrible feeling of upset and outrage for not just those affected but for all of us who believe in kindness in all we do, all of the time and pride in how we do it. We will be adding the issue of **the difference between great care and poor care** to the agenda of our next **Residents and Guests meeting at 4pm on the 29th November**

It is hard to leave the issue of poor care behind in this news update but we have things to mention worthy of inclusion such as the 5 residents who had a grand old time at **the village Panto last night**, the **Christmas cake baking** going on, the hilarious discussions we've been having about **favourite Carols** as an early planning and preparing for the festivities at Pottles, the **mutual pulse taking** we've been doing on each other during Atrial Fibrillation week (just in case you were keen to know more AF affects lots of older people and is a common cause of stroke - taking a pulse is a simple way to identify those at risk) and lots more cheerful and positive things we've been up to. But the lingering distress of the programme has given us a real sadness and genuine shame on behalf of the care home world for which we are a huge advocate on behalf of.

One of our directors is speaking at two upcoming conferences in Exeter and London and will be sharing the view that **looking forward to life in a happy, safe, caring, and enthusiastic care home when the time is right is something we should all be able to anticipate without fear or anxiety** -

So - a slightly less upbeat news update this time but we felt it impossible not to respond to the issue of poor care in an attempt to reassure others without ignoring the programme or the issue or in any way condoning or making excuses for when people and services get it very badly wrong. **'We still feel no one wants to do a bad job'** setting out to work in order to be cruel or unkind and owners & managers want to instil those values we all aspire to in their staff - **keen, kind, proud, curious, sensitive, diligent, and good humoured doing the right things well** - this is our pledge - We aren't perfect but we are working on being better all of the time. The Devon Care Kite Mark for which we are founder members says - **'It's a journey but we're not there yet'** - but we believe we are a good way along the road.

More cheery news next time

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"A Love Affair in Later Life"

Posted by: pottles at 12:57, November 9 2016.

Pottles Director George chaired at a large nursing conference in Birmingham on the 8th November where he met **Tommy Whitelaw (dementia care campaigner and son of his sadly departed much loved mum Joan who he cared for during the last 6 years of their time together after her diagnosis of vascular dementia)**. Tommy spoke poignantly and powerfully to an audience of around 600 nurses and the atmosphere of held breathe and visible emotions about their story of love was palpable - **at Pottles we talk a lot about pride, enthusiasm and happiness but rarely about the ingredient of love in later life in how we care for our folk** - we perhaps feel awkward about this but thanks to Tommy's words of encouragement we will talk and do more to make a love affair later in life a reality not just at Pottles but in the work we do as part of the Devon Care Kite Mark with other care

homes - so thank you Tommy - for those unfamiliar with his relentless travels telling his and his mums story. check this youtube clip

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36_Y_3y0yXM

We woke today to see that **Donald Trump has become the 45th President of the USA** - we already had plans to have a **Taster Day of Burgers and Budweiser Beer** for those that fancy and spend some time speaking with an American accent to mark the occasion - we tend to be neutral about political things so we say - good luck to him and all and we remain, as we do in all things, positive and optimistic for all that follows.

Some of the topics and themes we are talking about over the coming weeks as the weather chills will include:

- **Pneumonia awareness** - risk factors and prevention
- **foot and footwear care** - we had a really entertaining 'spot the slipper wearer' contest - matching slipper photos with their owners - it was pleasing how well our staff did in this - quite a hoot we thought! - we are always on the front foot re this issue -sorry couldn't resist !!
- **Oral health in care homes recent guidance from NICE (National Institute for Care and Clinical Excellence)** - we think we are pretty good already but never complacent about making sure we use good evidence and advice as well as talk to and check with residents, families and staff how we are doing in getting this right - see link below

https://www.nice.org.uk/Media/Default/Oral_health_quick_guide/Oral_health_a_quick_guide_for_care_home_managers.pdf?utm_content=buffer127a5&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

We have our **next Residents and Guests meeting on the 29th November** - the agenda will include **talking medication, Christmas plans and how to make it the best one ever** and **naming our 2 new chickens** ideas so far include **Sue and Mel** - (Bake Off tribute), **Teresa and Nicola** - (Political option here) or **Ant and Dec** - (despite the gender mismatching!) other options can be considered. We will have one or two invited guest colleagues from local health and social care as well as a follow up from Ross, the researcher, looking at mealtimes in care homes.

Final mentions

1. **Our family tree mural and adding photographs** - we are really keen to create a Christmas themed tree during December - so lots of favourite Christmas pics from families would be really welcome - we will mention this on the 29th too
2. **30th November is our 1st ever Sir Winston Churchill Day** - we have been testing the quiz about his life we have compiled specially for the occasion it would have been his 142nd birthday if he was still with us!
3. A summary of items from our last blog -
 - We had **3 winners in our Conkering Conquering Challenge** for residents, visitors and staff - Doreen, Jill and Jodie - well done each, -
 - **Dogs yet again beat cats in our Dogs versus Cats Preference Review** - poor old Jammy (house cat) - passed over for the 3rd year in a row!
 - **Our Firework display we held on the 5th November and it was hilarious** as our feeble fireworks made very modest pops and fuffs - lots of laughter - not so much 'jumping out of skin' this year! cheaper is better in some ways we deduced

That's all for now - tune in next time - meanwhile do check Tommy's youtube clip and let us know what you think

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What type of chats do we have at Pottles?

Posted by: pottles at 11:31, October 17 2016.

It's always hard to know what to include in our regular news updates (Blogs for those of us keeping up with the new lingo!) - we try to mention lighthearted and serious issues as well as local in-house and global topics that we see are worth sharing. We will be marking the upcoming **USA Elections on the 8th November with an American Themed Day** for example- Ticker tape, Burgers and Stars & Stripes about the place - perhaps a few attempts at 'speaking like an American' too

We spent a lot of time chatting about ordinary things as well as our **1066 tributes leading up to and on the 14th October** - Harold the Anglo Saxon King and his famous demise - was it his mighty handsome moustache that got caught in his chariot or allegedly his misguided cloud gazing whilst French arrows poured down - regardless the good news is we have some freshly foraged conkers from the very spot he was said to have fallen for the **Pottles Annual Conker Conquering Challenge on the 21st October** - all comers welcome - let you us if you want to join in - fully risk assessed of course

Our chats have also agreed on **NO SCAREY HALLOWEEN CLOWNS or the likes as ever on the 31st October** - we have discovered it's **National Caramel Apple Day in America** (keeping the USA theme going) so we might have a go at making toffee apples that day instead

We will be having our **Annual Pottles Firework Display this year on the 4th November after 4pm** - we have a great vantage point from our conservatory and bowling alley - always a lively evening with a glass of sherry or two to enhance the experience

We want to mention two really important national reports well worth checking out if able firstly the **Care Quality Commission (CQC) 'State of Care' report 2015/6** 149 pages long describing the quality of care homes, hospitals, GP practices and Hospices - it tells us that over 70% of care homes are rated as either Good or Outstanding - Pottles we are proud to say is amongst them. The second report by the **King's Fund 'Social Care for Older People - Home Truths'** 98 pages long described the current issues affecting care and we feel is a powerful read well worth checking if you are inclined - we will be talking about both at our next **Residents and Guests meeting on the 29th November 4-5.30pm** - Special Guests to be confirmed - the links to both reports are below

http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20161013_stateofcare1516_web.pdf

http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/Social_care_older_people_Kings_Fund_Sep_2016.pdf

A few quick mentions of things coming up:

1. **Cats versus Dogs day - 19th October** - we all like both (or do we??) but which is best? we'll let you know the results of the Pottles Pet Panel!!
2. **Conkering Conquering Day 21st October** - as mentioned - we have Passchendale conkers from 2 yrs ago, Wasdale Head from last yr and now Battle of Hastings conkers to choose our weapons from !!
3. The **Battle of the Game Show Quiz on the 26th October** - who can remember - Brucey's famous catch phrase for the Generation Game?, the name of the chap that placed the bolt in the Golden Shot ?

Lovely **new carpet** throughout the place and **chickens arriving imminently**- so far the 3 small pecin hens are unnamed so that'll be the first job we think !!

More news in a little while - Christmas to look forward to and introducing a fitness at Pottles series with Posture day on the 10th November - that's our chatting done for the moment

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And so Autumn is upon us at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 02:06, September 26 2016.

Talking about our favourite season is a simple passing conversation to have as we go about daily life yet it generates a lot of feeling, memories and emotion. **The Autumn Equinox was on the 22nd September** and we are still musing on the change in climate, colours in the garden and darker evenings. We had a pretty good summer - **our Fete on the 1st September was a really nice affair** - raffle prizes galore and much cake partaking and entertainment, **we enjoyed a reprise of the Virtual Trip to London** with a talking tour for all from Buckingham Palace to Paddington - the long way round via Big Ben, Nelson's Column, Tower Bridge and Oxford Street - all by way of photos, a light hearted quiz and lots of recollections too. We also marked the **350 years since the Great Fire of London** with some talk about this and one of our customary quizzes - was it Pudding Lane, Custard Street or Trifle Avenue where it began?

We had another **Motorcycle Mayhem Day on the 7th** with talk about old and new bikes - crash helmets to be worn and talk of trips to London - this time for real on good old British classics with side cars and all

National Eye Health Week (19th- 26th September) included a very comprehensive set of activities for all of our residents including in house reviews using our own adapted screening guide, chats with residents & loved ones and our visiting specialist optician service 'VisionCall' - very big thanks to Tom and David - the post assessment debriefing for us was very enlightening (sorry - couldn't resist)

The main 'goings on' in addition to the numerous creative crafts and pastimes led by Lisa our activities lead have included a good deal of brass polishing - with **2 new brasses added from the World Championship Ploughing Festival in York on the 9th September** and accompanying regular lavender hand cream hand massages to follow (it's a messy business Brasso-ing furiously!)

Our Family Tree mural has got underway -inspired by the 5 green star 'OUTSTANDING' CQC rated care home, Peregrine House, in Whitby visited by one of our Directors earlier this year. Izzy, our specially commissioned artist, is adding special framed branches for residents and staff photographs so we will all be easily able to know who's who - just in case we need a reminder - we might include our visiting nurses, hairdresser, chiroprapist and GP, Dr Mann too.

Just a quick mention of some of the Autumnal upcoming events:

- We have a few **celebrity birthdays to add to our 'Pottles Remembers Series'** - Buster Keaton on the 4th, John Lennon on the 9th October and perhaps Maggie Thatcher's on the 15th (being careful as is our way to retain some political neutrality of course)
- On the subject of politics.... well perhaps not! - we'll be having another **Cats versus Dogs Contest on the 19th** - dogs were easy winners last year in the voting - much to the dismay of house cat Jammy ... this is as politically controversial as we get in the main.
- **New Carpet Day -10th October - coinciding with World Mental Health Day** - no direct link here except we are sure the new carpet will be very cheery and give us all a nice pre winter feel good feeling - on a serious note we are aware of the importance of considering the mental health of those living in care homes and will be talking and listening to people especially on this awareness day
- The **10th October will also see a training session on using an AED** in the village hall to enable attenders become competent to use the newly provided life saving equipment in the village - we will have some staff attend this
- Another **Conkers Conquering Challenge on the 21st** - all comers welcome - we still have Northern France conkers from Passchendale and some from Wasdale in the lake district from the last 2 years
- We've **re launched our Jumpers for Goalposts football sweepstake** after Deena (playing as Leicester City) surprises us all with an outstanding win last season

Autumn has a freshness to it that we feel good about - a warm glow even with the rich colours we all enjoy - we are always looking out for ideas on a theme - our **forthcoming Residents and Guest**

Meeting on the 27th September will talk more on celebrating this special season in special ways - keep an eye on this and more on twitter if inclined @coxongear will get you there

That's all for the moment - until next time

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What inspires us?

Posted by: pottles at 08:40, August 23 2016.

We have spent a lot of time **watching and talking about the marvels of the Olympics in Rio** - we have reveled in the amazing cycling - then talking about our cycling memories, we have shared thoughts on the running, jumping, sailing, shooting, boxing and diving as well as Pam netting another 'Gold medal' (Pottles in house cup really!) in winning the sweepstake on guessing the right number of gold medals TeamGB would win - great stuff all round - **we are truly inspired...**

The question of what inspires us in the ordinary day to day working and living at Pottles is a theme we will continue to discuss more and more - our last **residents and guests meeting on the 19th July** had two special guests with Pauline, (Independent Physiotherapist) talking about physiotherapy- keeping active and being fit together with Ross, a PhD student and researcher with a keen interest in meals and mealtimes, talking and hearing about our 'Real Food Campaign' at Pottles and the ongoing 'Big Food Debate' we often have!! We are working on several projects with the local health and research folk in order to enhance our everyday lives at Pottles - inspiring us to share and look in a questioning yet positive way at all that we do and get up to - that, we feel, is the genuine basis of inspiration in real life.

One of the themes we are really thinking about a lot at the moment is the **sleeping in the daytime** question - we have 17 people living at Pottles with an average age of 87yrs - we know that people as they get older after **high octane lives** need a few **Power Naps** to keep them chipper - Churchill was famous for them, so we take a fairly easy going view on afternoon siestas for example - yet balancing active living with resting and ensuring our folk have choice in how they spend time is crucial - so visiting Pottles may mean you see a few **Power Naps** going on - this is not to say recharging batteries does not lead to 'inspiring eventing' soon to follow - perhaps not quite in the Laura Trott or Mo Farah domain but let's wait to see how well they are bombing about the place at 87yrs old should we!

A few quick mentions:

1. We have our **Summer Fete on the 1st September - 2.30 until 5 ish** with a bit of an Olympics theme plus a raffle, a bring and buy sale and a **chance to meet and chat with residents, staff and fellow 'Friends of Pottles' (affectionately known as FoPs - for more information on how to become a FoP contact Darryl or Jan)**
2. We marked **several residents birthdays** with our customary birthday cakes and several family gatherings - one coinciding with what would have been Neil Armstrong's 86th birthday - so walking on the moon discussed that day! - we remembered Ginger Rogers and Louis Armstrong too - both of whom would have had birthdays recently also
3. We had a crackingly good **'Have a Cuppa' Day on the 1st August** - Lapsang Souchong versus Earl Grey versus Builders Brew - a resounding win for the latter vindicated our general preference for the standard issue tea!

Final mentions

- **30th August is our Virtual Trip to London Day** - a special request as many of our folk have never been to London we recently learnt - pictures, a map and virtual walk to be had and some memories from those who have been to our capital will be shared today
- **7th September - another Motorcycle Mayhem Day** - 'big motorbike in the building' is on the agenda - weather and door width permitting - at the very least we will have more crash helmet wearing pictures - we got some hilarious ones from last year so add this to your diary why don't you!

- Last one and a bit of glorying in our outward looking work - after being invited to speak at a London conference on social care organised by the King's Fund with the Care Quality Commission Chief Inspector for social care including care homes, Andrea Sutcliffe in July **we have now been asked to present at the HospiceUK conference in Liverpool in November** with the newly appointed Medical Director at Hospiscare, Dr Becky Baines and **also invited back to talk at the 'Enhancing Health in Care Homes' Kings Fund event in December** - speak to George for more detail on these and other events - <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/enhanced-health-care-homes-0>

That's all for now - keep in touch and come and join in - we are always eager to enlist FoPs to inspire and be inspired as part of the Pottles family!!

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What we learn from each other

Posted by: pottles at 16:18, July 6 2016.

We are **still buzzing after jointly organising a really stimulating conference on the 1st July with around 200 people attending focused on Dementia** - a subject we regard as something we know about at Pottles Court - we speak of the condition often - many of our residents live with Dementia and as was said by Norman 'Norms' McNamara (founder of the global Purple Angel Movement and person living with Lewy Body Dementia diagnosed 8 years ago) on the day - how we speak about dementia is important but a very personal thing. We had workshops and talks from lots of people including Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Inspector of CQC and our very own George Coxon, Director at Pottles Court.

The crucial point from the day was **what we learn from each other and how we must be reflective and receptive in how we learn** - not defensive or complacent, **always eager to improve** - a point Andrea made about the better care homes in the country - those like Eden House in the north east and Peregrine House a little further south - both visited by George in recent times and who we feel proud of on behalf of all of the enthusiastic care homes across the country.

We have recruited a small team of 'goings on' staff - mentioned in our last blog about activities - the 'goings on' will provide additional energy for some regular planned as well as flexible unplanned spontaneous events, occasions and celebrations which will include what we are calling **'discovery conversations' with our folk** - **'every chat we have gives us the opportunity to learn something about the person we didn't know already'**. Yesterday whilst talking about the powerful and moving **'Shrouds of the Somme' temporary installation in Exeter** we learnt that Dot's Mum lost her brother in the battle 100 years ago.

Pottles Court staff are learning all the time about the big things as well as the little things about our work and what helps us to seek to do better all the time - **we are part hosting a Skin Care Kite Mark event on the 21st July** - with a local CQC medication specialist joining us on the day. **We are often carrying out and receiving peer reviews from fellow Kite Mark member residential care providers** and **George is joining a big event in London at the King's Fund to be part of a panel debate on the future of social care on 12th July** sharing and hearing about the work of social care with a very influential list of presenters and policy leads - including Andrea Sutcliffe again - double click here and see the detail of the event <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/new-future-social-care>

The most important learning we do is from those we look after of course, this means:

- Our fundamental view is **curiosity is a good thing** as well as being open minded and always alert to preferences and views in our work
- **Balancing serious details about a person's past life** - upsets, losses, hard times and hardships **as much as the lighter parts of life** - our in house surveys and quizzes and 'goings on' always generate new knowledge - Gwen likes a random (but fully risk assessed!!) sherry often mid afternoon, Deena loves her prize of a magic light up globe won after a series of sweepstake wins, Arthur gets great comfort from

his Budgie' Bluey' who chirrups away all day!

- There is always more to learn and **the power of storytelling creates massive emotion and bonds us all** as part of the Pottles Court family

The July diary of events has lots of things going on - Lisa, Tamsin and Brandon are getting plans up and running from nail polishing to brass polishing, from birthday celebrations to commemorations of great victories like the England 4 West Germany 2 50 yrs anniversary on the 30th July need we remind you and our **Motor Cycle Mayhem Annual Event on the 22nd**.

We're talking about Tattoos too after the famous actress, Judi Dench, talked about her Carpe Diem tattoo to celebrate her 81st birthday and we also have the culmination of both the football Euros without England sadly and the Wimbledon final fast approaching!!
It's all go - this learning from each other business is a full time job!

Until next time

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What a lot of themed days - it's hard to keep up

Posted by: pottles at 12:54, June 25 2016.

We had **lots of discussion about the EU referendum and the 'Pottles Panel' was split at our last Residents and Guests meeting at the end of May** - notes are available and our next meeting is on the 19th July incidentally. It feels like all the news at the moment is about the decision to leave the EU - we will be talking about this of course but also about all the other things going on too.

It's been a season of themed days - yesterday was **National Cream Tea Day** - we have already shared lots of cream teas and voted in favour of the Devon way (cream then jam) rather than the Cornwall method (jam then cream) - we are planning several more attempts to test our conclusions during Wimbledon tennis 2 weeks starting tomorrow - with another of our famous sweepstakes during what we will refer to as **'Come on Andy' Fortnight**.

Care Homes around the country celebrated **National Care Home Open Day on the 17th June** - we made lots of Cheesy Bread and had several visitors by invitation - the desire to share our ethos with others and be open and inclusive in our local village must be balanced with the privacy and choices of those that live at Pottles. We talked this through at our residents meeting too.

Dying Matters Week closely followed by **Dementia Awareness Week** then **Carers Awareness Week** coinciding with **Men's Health Week** was also hot on the heels of **World Health Day - focusing on Diabetes**. We had a bit of fun with **National Hedgehog Day** and of course made a fuss about what would have been **Marilyn Monroe's 90th birthday** on the 1st June and **Stan Laurel's 126th birthday** had he still been with us on the 16th June. We had a really excellent **Father's Day on the 19th June** too - not just with our 6 chaps most of whom are dads but we spent time talking about memories of our fathers with everyone - what jobs they did, how many of them were called traditional English names, and what they did that made us laugh. Blimey - we haven't even mentioned the Football European Championships Sweepstake - where all our residents and staff are rooting for various countries - feels a curious time to be playing in Europe after the EU vote - might be a good time for Fred and Brandon (AKA England) to show we have a strong presence in Europe even if it's only in football!!

Returning to themed birthdays - we will be talking about **Louis Armstrong on his birthday -4th July** and **Ginger Rogers on the 16th** - a film and some dancing may ensue !!!

The really important themed day for us that has sadness and pride is how we remember the **100 year anniversary of the start of the Battle Of The Somme on the 1st July** - we have been provided with a fabulous box set of memorabilia and material from the Royal British Legion and will be sharing thoughts

and reflections during the days around the 1st July - today (25th June) by the way is **National Armed Forces Day**.

A few final points and mentions

- there is still time to book in for the **Caring About Dementia conference at Exeter racecourse on the 1st July** - we have the **Chief Inspector of the Care Quality Commission , Andrea Sutcliffe** joining us on the day as well as lots of other talks and workshops - a chance to meet and exchange ideas and experiences - it's free to people living with dementia, their families or interested members of the public - get in touch for more details
- 30th July is the **50th Anniversary of England winning the world cup in 1966** - we hope to commemorate this monumental day with a fuss at Pottles on that day
- more **Brass Polishing and Gardening planned** - both have been popular and will be part of our renewed 'goings on' plans being finalised as per our last blog - get involved and share your ideas please - always welcome

That's all for now - tune in next time

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A little about 'doing activities' in a care home

Posted by: pottles at 23:25, May 31 2016.

We carried out a **feedback survey with our residents and their families** recently - we do this often to check how we are doing and how we can improve. The comments were really nice - lots of very 'positive strokes' as they say which is pleasing but one area where several people wondered about our approach was activities and we thought we should say a few things about our ethos and values on this important aspect of 24/7 care.

Many care homes have 'activity coordinators' and they both organise and take the lead in 'doing activities' with residents. We have had an activity coordinator in the past and also had existing staff leading on activities too and have been left with mixed feelings about the success of both in embedding a mixed approach to having entertaining, enjoyable, informative and most importantly fun based 'goings on' at Pottles.

We did seek to find an 'Activities and Development Champion' recently but failed to find anyone to take on this thrilling and rewarding role - we are trying again and using a wider trawl this time, however the fact remains, we want a person- if we go this way- who believes what we believe and is right for the role - **our beliefs about the role include:**

1. **Choice** –it's about gentle persuasion and encouraging people to have a go or join in but also accepting people may be sleepy or just don't want to join in - they may rather have 1:1 time or do their own thing or even rest and relax - life stories and life plans can make sure we understand how people want to spend their time
2. **Imagination** – as long as there is a chance of safe fun that doesn't cause offence then we probably can give it a go! – talk to Darryl about it first however - skittles in the bowling alley, Jenga, more horse brass polishing, cheesy bread making and indoor tennis during the approaching Wimbledon week are all upcoming
3. **Traditional pursuits & modern ones too** –quizzes, crosswords, jigsaws and themed days as well as national events, celebrations and occasions – also using technologies we will encourage too - we are often remembering well known names both old and new - Marilyn Monroe's 90th tomorrow sees us watching 'Some Like It Hot' and another go at our Marilyn Quiz too
4. **Creative** – making up a game or seeking views on everyday news and passing things on TV can be a valid way to create energy and enthusiasm - quirky chats about memories and plans we see as worthwhile conversations to be had. In part we like the principle of a structured plan is something to fall back on if something better doesn't emerge when spending time with older people! Organic and

flexible might be a way to see how we work

5. **Age appropriate** – there is a risk of 'infantlising' older people both in activities and environments – caution is needed – respect, seeking views of residents and families as well as team discussion is always recommended
6. **Having a mixed approach** -1:1 time, small groups and large gatherings
7. **Low intensity** – managing realistic expectations – not long, too demanding or attention sapping complex tasks please we say!
8. **Tact and subtlety** when addressing topics eg hearing can be impaired for up to 75% of people living in care homes also those living with dementia can struggle to join in at times and may need gentle one to one time to benefit from support
9. **Having ideas and 'bringing something of yourself' to Pottles** – sharing important things in discussion is a 2 way process we believe - all staff have something to offer - Pottles Court is a family and we like sharing and learning about one another
10. **Using evidence** –being guided by what we know works (but not being a slave to evidence- sometimes great things can work without a strong scientific basis)
11. **Documenting and recording** things in a systematic way is important too
12. **Empowering and enabling** other staff to feel good about leading 'going's on' too is part of the role

Our essential view has 4 essential elements - **STIMULATION, INTERACTION, PARTICIPATION AND OCCUPATION** - these elements will always be at the heart of our approach to activities

We will be including talking about activities on the **7th June -3-4.30pm as part of National Carers Week** and during our **National Care Home Open Day on the 17th June** - Cheesy Bread making day accompanied by the songs of Foster and Allen - by popular request

Other diary notices:

- **The European International Football tournament starts on the 10th June** and will see England, Wales and N Ireland compete - some mixed loyalties on this one at Pottles this time
- **National Care Home Open Day is the 17th June** - invitation only but ask and we might just have you along! - see above for detail
- **Wimbledon Tennis 'Come on Andy' Week starts on the 27th June** - sweepstake and regular strawberries and cream rounds planned!
- We have already discussed how best to mark the commencement of the **Battle of the Somme 100 years ago on the 1st July** - **we have received an absolutely excellent Royal British Legion toolkit** to mark the intense loss and the pride we feel about this event

That's it for now - tune in for our next update in a few weeks - we always aim to 2 briefings each month - if you have an interest come and see us

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'Nothing more important for us to get right' - May 9th-15th

Posted by: pottles at 19:05, May 14 2016.

Every year in May there is a national campaign to **promote conversations and raise awareness about End of Life Care (EoLC)**. Whilst we are very clear our ethos at Pottles is about moving into a care home when the time is right in order to live - commencing a new chapter in one's life to rest, be looked after, get busy perhaps, maybe try new things and take the worries away after living independently and struggling, we are also aware that as a **'home from home for life'** this means just what it says ..for life. The week for us has included our staff being part of a workshop of the **Devon Care Kite Mark workshop on EoLC** and our lead Director joining one of the 3,000 nationwide *Death Cafes* in Exeter talking about issues related to death and dying - we are a little unsure about the title as we know quite naturally people are wary of the taboo of using the D word so our view at Pottles is about sensitivity, timely conversations and being person centred in how we ensure our residents and families are at the heart of how we make sure planning for long term needs are individualised.

In discussion with one of our very well regarded [Palliative Care Consultants, Dr Becky Baines](#), we shared views on the way we raise EoLC in what are often described as 'difficult conversations' with the importance of both being intuitive and able to be genuine and empathic too.

Coincidentally **we lost one of our longest lived residents this week** - not long after her 94th birthday and after over 10 years living at Pottles Court. The enduring reflections being the great character she was, her larger than life personality, feistiness, and how well loved she was by all - her legacy will ever be one of her strong will, great smiles, bright eyes and being something of a rascal at times. Describing her absence elicits both intense emotion but equally great pride in how we looked after her.

Talking with Becky we were in agreement (witnessed by 2 young medical students embarking upon their no doubt bright and dynamic careers) that **acknowledging the features of reaching the end of a person's life is important** and the way we talk about this Becky rather flatteringly described as "lovely" - we recognise people in later life **may become more sleepy, become weaker, perhaps more quiet, more frail, less responsive and begin slowing down with their systems and engagement with those around them being less able.** [Dr Jo Hockley, a fellow at Edinburgh University and ex hospice Nurse Consultant](#) wrote recently about stages of dying - she talked about 1) Peripheral Shutdown, 2) Active Dying and 3) Imminent Dying. Her work and ideas are really worth seeking out as is the [powerful poem by Mary Oliver, In Blackwater Woods](#) which carries a view on life and mortality.

It was said very loudly during local consultations about health and care priorities a little while ago **"There is nothing more important to get right than End of Life Care"** and we entirely agree - our belief is that being able to do this well, calmly, compassionately and with skill and pride is a privilege.

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Spring is Sprung at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 11:55, April 29 2016.

We know it's still a bit nippy out there and we've still got the heating on much of the time with our crocheted blankets and fiddle muff hand warmers at the ready but we have also **begun setting some bedding plants and putting out bird feeders** next to our lovely new shed in the garden. We've had **some new residents too and a claim that they arrive with green fingers!** which we aim to put to the test now that Spring has arrived.

We are very proud to have transformed the lives of our newbies after what for many people can be a difficult struggle with everyday life dealing with ordinary living challenges - getting to the shops, cooking meals so as to eat well, keeping warm, taking medicines, personal care needs, keeping up with the ever changing technologies about basic things and remembering which bin to put out and how!! - **We subscribe to the principle 'take the worries away' and look forward to 24/7 care in a 'Good' if not better than good care home when the time is right**

We have lost some of our much loved residents during the early part of 2016 who have had full and positive later parts of their lives with us - we say benefiting from our philosophy of Pottles being a **'Home from Home for Life'** and our 'Remembering Residents No Longer With Us' book has had some poignant and powerful reflective additions of late.

We do not shy away from talking about the tough stuff at Pottles; we often refer (carefully and sensitively) to End of Life Care at our regular **Residents' and Guests' meetings (next one 24th May 4-5.30pm incidentally)** We will be taking stock on this during **National Dying Matters Awareness Week 9th to 15th May** - our Devon wide Care Kite Mark group have a workshop with input from the local Hospiscare team on the 12th and we are having an in house training session and discussion on the 11th too.

It's Dementia Awareness week 16th - 22nd May so we want to make sure we are sharing what we believe about the condition and how our approach empowers people, creates a positive calm as well as energised balanced life for those of our residents living with dementia. We will be doing a **'first word**

you think of when you think of dementia' constructive conversation review that week - what is your first word? Many people understandably will think of a negative word but we have a lot of positive ones too - **If interested please join one of our Directors at the Alice Cross Day Centre fayre on the sea front (The Den, Teignmouth) from 10-2pm on Saturday 21st May - he will be with the Volunteering in Health team on the day**

We also have a few notices on upcoming events and a very busy schedule of things to get involved in

- 2nd May - **Bing Crosby Remembered day** - it would have been his birthday - but do you know how old he would have been?
- 3rd May - Another open to all **Diabetes in Care Homes informal review meeting** at 1pm with the acting regional DiabetesUK lead Annika Palmer - if you are interested in coming get in touch
- 14th May - **Eurovision sweepstake as is our annual tradition this year from Stockholm** so a Swedish Quiz is planned for that day too - Abba may get a mention we think as well as a full day of Abba songs on the record player!
- May is also **Footy Frenzy period** with our 'Jumpers for Goalposts' tournament coming to a close - with Doreen (Arsenal) and Deena (Leicester City) battling it out at the top - **FA Cup Final on the 21st May** will have a first goal scorer sweepstake too

few quick mentions here

1. **It's the 4th year for National Care Home Open Day on the 17th June** - we are always careful about how we invite and involve local people to come and say hello - consent, privacy and good humour being the key words - we are very much part of the village and will be talking views and ideas on how to mark this day properly
2. **We've added a new bedroom** and have already had someone keen to move in - we are a family of 17 residents and 20 odd staff - some more odd than others !!
3. Our **next Residents' and Guests' meeting mentioned earlier on the 24th May will reflect on our varied events passed** - The Queens 90th, Deena winning the Grand National - she says she'd never won anything before and was thrilled to be presented with the Pottles Cup, Shakespeare birthday quiz etc.. **We will also be talking about the EU debate - are we innies or outies?** - we have promised a non biased discussion before the 23rd June - its so important that people in care homes have their views heard

last but not least:

- we have sampled the very famous genuine **Grasmere Gingerbread** from the lake district and also real **Bakewell Tart** from Bakewell in the Peak District in recent weeks - both went down very nicely - we have pictures to prove it!
- **National Carers Week is during the 6th - 12th June** - we are keen to make a fuss about this too

That's all for now see you next time

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Posts

Nobody's Fool on All Fool's Day

Posted by: pottles at 12:54, April 1 2016.

We didn't have any pranks or Tomfoolery on All Fool's Day this year but we did have a bit of laughter - mainly about our **Van Gogh's birthday quiz** and our **inaugural Easter Hard Boiled Egg Jarping Championship**. Pam was crowned South West Champion (in the absence of any awareness of other regional challengers).

Our last blog was a long one so we want to be a bit more concise this time- particularly as with the Queen's 90th, the Grand National, Shakespeare's 400th anniversary of his birth and Eurovision coming up soon we want to save some of our news updates to coincide with these upcoming events.

We are however keen to reflect on a few important themes and invite contact and involvement of those with an interest

- we've been doing a series of staff meetings, supervisions and training events on diabetes matters - **our Diabetes Fundamentals programme**- 1:4 people in care homes have the condition according to DiabetesUK - we have only 3 of our 16 residents living with diabetes but we know it's a growing issue and staff need to be aware and able from eye care to hypo's prevention, foot care to dietary needs - so lots going on regarding this - for more details get in touch - **It's World Diabetes Awareness Day on the 7th April - that's knowledge testing day at Pottles Court with spot prizes for people able to reflect recent learning!**
- we're still involved in '**skilling up' the team via our working as part of the Devon Care Kite Mark** - this is not just going to meetings and talking about what we do and how we do it - it's about sharing to learn, being reflective and receptive to ideas and instilling values such as being proud of our work, embedding kindness and humour as much as respect and safety in our day to day work - **Pottles staff led the work of the last Long Term Conditions Kite Mark workshop** on the 17th March with lots of fellow member care home staff at Exeter racecourse - we will be doing peer reviews about best practice on this too - we did some peer reviews on fall prevention too in local homes in March as is the manner of our credible supportive ways of helping others as much as developing best practice.
- Our next **bread making afternoon is on the 21st April** - the Queen's birthday - we want to lead up to Shakespeare day (St George's day as well of course) with a combination quiz of facts and details

Our next **Residents and Guests meeting is on the 24th May -4-5.30pm** items will include what we have been doing during Dying Matters week and Dementia Awareness week as well as plans for Carers Awareness week too - so many really important issues with dates all happening so close together

Final quickies

1. We are deeply **sceptical about prizes and awards for care work** being given out here and there - perhaps because so far we haven't won any! - but we also haven't actually entered any either due to this not really being top of our priority list ! - we have however had our Kite Mark work included in the Thomas Pocklington paper on 'Models of Change in Care Homes' <http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/Resources/Thomas%20Pocklington/Documents/PDF/Research%20Publications/rdp-14-models-of-change-in-care-homes.pdf> it's also a good read if you can spare the time
2. We have also done **lots of work with the local Research experts** at the university (the PenCLAHRC team) and are now getting involved with the local Academic Health Science Network - so if interested watch this space - we are being encouraged to present a paper at a conference in Copenhagen later this year - so how about that then !!

That's all for now - tune in in a couple of weeks for our Queen's birthday special and some thoughts on the power of a cup of tea!!

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[Living well in a care home - what does this mean?](#)

Posted by: pottles at 11:47, March 6 2016.

There are a lot of **fears about coming into and living in a care home** held by people that feel 'being put in 24/7 care' is a last resort and something to resist at all costs!. Unsurprisingly we would beg to differ about this view and actually make a big fuss in various places to both **reassure and**

encourage people to plan for round the clock homely care in a suitable care home when the time is right. But what are the things that make for a good care home? - Here are a few things we think are important:

1. **atmosphere**- we say 'it's a serious business living and working in a care home' but we also want it to be based on fun and laughter. Our staff moto is about **doing the right things well whilst having fun at work** - feeling proud in being kind, thorough and reflective about how we look after people in our care. We really do aspire to provide a family atmosphere with a lot of genuineness and mutual positive regard all round we believe
2. **balanced life**- calm and fun we say - having the ability to spend time resting and relaxing as well as being busy pursuing hobbies and interests and perhaps trying new things - indoor golf on 29th February (leap year day) had people hitting golf balls for the first time ever! - we have the photos to prove it!
3. **being safe but not being restricted from having choices about day to day living** - having independence and the confidence to do what you want is very important at any age. As we get older and when living in a shared house there is a risk that routine can undermine these freedoms - we are always reflecting on this for all of our residents - from getting up to going to bed - care homes are sometimes called institutions - we are not one of them we can assure you - regular things do happen but in a good way - our shared and multi coloured cups and mugs testify to this we think - some people like the same mug others vary theirs often!
4. **entertainment** - many people in a care home don't really want lots of hullabaloo and rattling tambourines all day so we have a careful view on our approach to activities - we like regular light hearted quizzes, celebrations and special occasions, we do have a lead senior staff member who does lots of things but also have all of us involved when time permits - we have some outside visitors doing various things with us too - singing, visiting animals and regular mobile clothes shops too - **the Queen's 90th birthday on the 21st April will coincide with Charlotte Bronte's birthday too so we will be doing things on that day** - so too will we mark Shakespeare day on the 23rd April - he was born and also died on that day 52 years apart - he died 400 years ago this year
5. **private space and time as well as company** - we are a small home with only 16 (soon to be 17) bedrooms and don't claim to be palatial - some homes are and this may suit some people who have lived in surroundings of opulence and grandeur. We think having a 'homely home for life' with spaces to be private and communal areas to chat and join in with things is what we want
6. **my views being taken seriously, respected and acted upon** - we mentioned person centred care in a previous blog - it's a term often used - it's a personal thing too about what it means but it certainly includes respect, being heard and being understood
7. **if I have a change in my health and care needs - making sure my views and those of my family and trusted friends are followed and adhered to** - we mentioned home from home for life - we try really hard to avoid people having preventable hospital admissions - falls are common for older people - 1 in 3 people over 65yrs is likely to fall in any given year and 1 in 2 over 85yrs so this is one of our biggest risk factors - we have a good reputation for how we work with this and other similar health care themes - End of Life Care is the part of our work that arguably is the most important part to get right and we regard this as always emotional as well as crucially powerful - we talk about this with sensitivity and work closely with health care and specialist support including hospice services to do this well.
8. **ultimately we are about happiness in a care home** - it's not always possible to be happy all of the time - we aren't being too unrealistic here but our 4 core elements we will repeat again here that underpin our values and beliefs
 - o **positive anticipation with things to look forward to**
 - o **reflecting on past life achievements and memories with fondness**
 - o **giving and receiving affection**
 - o **having a meaningful life and being helpful to others**

What else has been going on and what's coming up?

- we've had a busy February - we had a **Peer Review sharing practices about fall prevention** with another care home (The Mallands, Abbotskerswell) a fellow member of the Devon Care Kite Mark - we also Peer Reviewed Pinhay House in Lyme Regis sharing on the same topic - if you want to know about the DCKM please get in touch
- we've invented 2 great new activities - **'Chocolate Button Betting'** marking what would have been Elizabeth Taylor's 84th birthday on the 27th Feb with light hearted 'pick a winner' at Newcastle and Kempton races and also **'Find The Double Dominoes Challenge'** which was quite hilarious. Both we will be repeating many times over

- **Cheesy Bread making day was fantastic** - lots of mess, lots of kneading advice! but very tasty loaves of various sizes and shapes - including heart shape ones too !
- we had a **Valentines Day Extravaganza** on the 14th Feb including love songs aplenty and several romantic meals had by all
- Our **Staff Training session covered the Mental Capacity Act, Safeguarding, Standards and Fall Prevention** and **the session next on the 15th March (2-3.30pm) will focus on Stroke Prevention and Management with Hayley - Nurse Practitioner for Stroke Care at the RDE** sharing her work and top tips on the issue
- we've been **sharing memories about our mums leading up to Mothers Day on the 6th March** - our memories have included what type of cook our mums are or were and whether they had a favourite hat they liked to wear - we've discovered lots of our mums liked to sing and were great knitters!!

So many more things to mention but we best stop there for now!

Don't forget the **next Residents and Guests meeting at 4.00-5.30pm on the 15th March** - special guest local researcher at Exeter University Ross Watkins talking and listening about the importance of mealtimes in care homes

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So what are you doing for Leap Year?

Posted by: pottles at 17:37, February 7 2016.

Tradition has it that we should be **doing something special, daring or unusual on the 29th February when it comes round** - so what have you got in mind? For us it'll be indoor golf and skittles followed by a round of hot sausage rolls - we are still consulting on what else we can do to mark this 4 year occurrence. We don't anticipate proposals of marriage by any of our women folk - but you never know!

It's Chinese New Year tomorrow - Year of the Monkey so we are tasting authentic Chinese tea courtesy of our in house Chinese Husband and Wife team of Jie Lu and Jimmy - the dumplings went down a treat despite some apprehension about unusual foods - one to repeat more than annually we think. We are also **making a fuss about James Dean's birthday** - so how old do you think he would have been on the 8th February? - we'll tell you later

Valentine's Day too is upon us - we've got several romantic dinners planned for couples and will be making sure everyone has a lovely day remembering loved ones, past special days and how we are looking forward to events, celebrations and occasions ahead - as you know we believe happiness is in part based on things to look forward to.

An update on a few of our ongoing activities here:

- Our **'Jumpers for Goalposts' sweepstake** for the 2015/6 football season has surprise leaders Leicester City (ie Deena and Jamie) topping the league and Aston Villa (ie Thelma and Sammy) bottom of the pile! - lots to play for still however
- Our **'Million Mile Challenge'** capturing and sharing memories of our travels around the globe is coming on well - Karen our activities lead is gathering photos and tales of tropical islands as well as short hops down to the shops to reach our million mile goal
- Our **'Best Foot Forward' foot check project** in an ongoing area of interest - foot care is a vital part of keeping well, keeping mobile and actually we think looking our best!! - our visiting chiropodist is part of this but so too are we all - our involvement in a local and national schemes with DiabetesUK is sharing ways we can keep foot care high on care homes agenda's

Locally it's been mentioned about **Mental Capacity Awareness Week starts on the 8th February** - although **Mental Capacity Action Day isn't until 15th March** - there are 5 key principles -

1. **always assuming people have the ability to make decisions,**
2. **always supporting people to make decisions right for them,**

3. people are entitled to make unwise decisions if they wish,
4. we must seek to always act in the persons best interest,
5. any action we take must be the least restrictive.

We are talking about this in more detail at **our next Residents and Guests meeting at 4pm on the 15th March** - so make a note and come along - let us know you are coming though

Afew quick points for you:

- **Fall prevention in house staff training - pm on the 11th February** - we are part of the Devon Care Kite Mark collaboration and will be being peer reviewed on fall prevention practices on the 26th February too
- **Another cheesy bread day -pm on Friday 26th February** making the famous cheesy loaves with owner and director George is always a messy affair - dough gets everywhere and flour has been found many months later in places flour should not ever get to - but the bread is well worth it - helpers welcome and flour sweepers urgently needed on the day
- **A Day at the Races on the 27th February** -we are working out a plan to have a virtual day at the races with a bookie and light hearted (non serious) betting - no money involved just horsey cakes if Annmarie (our cook) can rustle some up! - **we will be watching the classic film 'National Velvet' on that day to mark Elizabeth Taylor's birthday too**

James Dean by the way would have been 85 yrs old tomorrow - how about that then!

Until next time Ta Ta for now

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Clark Gable's birthday and National Dignity Day ?

Posted by: pottles at 11:47, January 22 2016.

Not many people know that **National Dignity Day coincides with Clark Gable's birthday** - 1st February of course. We've talked about both of late - each year we make a special fuss about dignity though it's not really a once a year event - it's an everyday occurrence. We talked about this at our most recent **Residents and Guests meeting on the 19th January** - we had a full sitting room talking about all kinds of issues as usual welcoming Deena our newest addition to the Pottles family.

Dignity we agreed is one of those words that gets talked about a lot but can mean different things to different people - choice, respect, privacy, not being patronised, seeing the fun and humour in the little things about everyday life without causing offence or upset - being sensitive and mindful of people's 'little ways'. We did agree that **favourite and comfortable clothing** that we especially like is important and when attending to **personal care needs** we must be very aware that dignity considerations are most important. Thankfully we felt we do pretty well with this one it was said - no complaints - our chaps sometimes like going without a shave now and again it was said so that's fine too. We are also conscious of the **assumptions we make about peoples lives** and how easy it is to get it wrong eg a person's personal and intimate relationships - always aware of that one for sure.

Our meeting included **agreement that having the TV on a lot of the time isn't really a bad thing** - even if people aren't really watching what's on - we did agree to make sure we didn't have unsavory day time TV on and use our 'magic box' to record classic films and serials and favourite programmes too. The consensus was that our culture of ambient music (often themed) around the home is a nice thing too

Dolly Parton's Birthday was celebrated but we didn't attempt her classic 'Jolene' at the end of the meeting instead opting for a rousing '**Bring me Sunshine**' rendition - a house favourite

a few quick updates on what's coming up over the coming weeks

- **Burns Night on the 25th January** will see some haggis and tatties being had as well as a wee dram of whisky for those brave enough - we will offer a prize to anyone wearing tartan that day and make a big fuss about anyone playing the bagpipes on the day
- **Simon and his animals are paying us another visit on the 26th January** by popular request
- **Chinese New year on the 8th February** will see China tea being sampled - we've already had a very good go at 300 Chinese dumplings prepared by our in house Chinese expert team of senior carer Nurse, Jie Lu and caretaker husband, Jimmy
- **Valentines day on the 14th February** will have another sharing of special memories of valentines days gone by and share some photographs too
- We did wonder about a '**Gone With The Wind**' showing to mark **Clark Gable's big day** - we decided to do a quiz about him instead as a film over 4 hours long just too much to contemplate !!

We are planning another cheesy bread making day on the 26th February with owner George doing another batch - perhaps with some help from others and we are very eager to get a **Country and Western Day organised with a musical epic battle of Kenny versus Tammy** theme so watch this space

so... that's it for the moment - if you have anything to say or questions to ask just get in touch - our **in house staff care theme training events have just been agreed - these sessions can be adapted to include visitors and 'Friends of Pottles' so ask for more details**

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Welcome to 2016 at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 17:47, January 4 2016.

The New Year is upon us and we got underway with a celebration of **65years of The Archers** - several people at Pottles are long term followers and our light hearted quiz was a source of amusement and entertainment - we talked about favourite characters and memories of past episodes too. Next up later this week is a singalong to some of Elvis's greatest hits marking what would have been his 81st birthday on **Elvis Day at Pottles on the 8th January** - combining this day with the big match at 8pm of **Exeter City v the mighty Liverpool in the FA Cup on telly** - a giant killing on the cards we hope. We are hoping for a good result on the night as we lost a much loved resident over Christmas who was an ardent Grecian fan.

In terms of other themes as we enter the New Year there are some big topics to mention

- **visiting a person in a care home with advanced dementia** - this has attracted a lot of national press attention - we feel very strongly that although loved ones can find it hard to communicate and converse in the later stages of the condition we know the contact and emotions of love and humour they experience from others are powerful and important for both the person being visited and visitors. We are drafting a 'helping guide for visitors' to share at our next **Residents and Guests meeting on the 19th January (4-5.30pm)**
- **what makes a great staff team ?** - we had an exchange of contacts with one of the clinical leads at the local Hospice (Dr Becky Baines) sharing views on what the key elements are. We thought this might be worth mentioning following exceptional efforts not just over Christmas but throughout 2015 by our staff team Becky talked about Resilience and team work and we agreed - our staff have a great diverse set of skills, calm and good humoured as well as curious, a kind and

sensitive manner and are reliable, motivated about what we do and have a strong sense of the value of living well into older old age. This is another topic we will be discussing at our upcoming residents and guests meeting on the 19th

We want to say a **huge thank you to all those who visited over the festive period and those who contacted from afar** - the atmosphere was lovely - lots of seasonal cheer and merry making - lots of laughter and hustle & bustle but not too much thankfully

What else to look forward to at Pottles over the coming weeks?

1. **Burns Night this year is on the 25th January** - a few wee drams of single malts to be had and an attempt at piping in the haggis if we can catch one ! they are a bit rare in these parts
2. **Dolly Parton's 70th birthday on the 19th** will include a rousing attempt at Jolene for sure on the day
3. Winnie the Pooh, Eeyore, Tigger and all will get a special mention on '**Winnie the Pooh day on the 18th January** - we know we have fans amongst us young and old & young at heart - AA Milne was born on the 18th 1882 but Pooh and friends were publicly born 90 years ago in 1926 and we want to do a bit of reminiscing on our memories of these special characters today
4. It is **National Dignity Day on the 1st February** - we always are on the front foot on this subject and our in house staff training and supervision sessions on this day and during February will be talking and listening on this critical topic - thoughts, ideas and constructive views on this will be very much encouraged - we can always do more and do better we believe -we really like the SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence) short films on this and will be referring to them with residents and staff during February particularly

Finally - **It's Chinese New Year on the 4th February so we will be making a small fuss about welcoming the year of the monkey** - no monkeys involved as they aren't everyone's cup of tea but some genuine Chinese tea to try instead - our 2 Chinese staff will be with family in China on the day sadly but we will get their advice about what tea to get and how to prepare it!! pop in if you want to try some - let us know you're coming though

That's it for now - Happy 2016 to all readers

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Overwhelming Emotions at Christmas!!

Posted by: pottles at 11:46, December 20 2015.

We had our Pottles Court Christmas party on the 13th and the place was buzzing - so many people came, so many families, so many generations, so many deeply **emotional outpourings** about the home, our staff, the atmosphere and all the Christmas trees around the place!!

One of the things we did at the party was spend time talking about everyday life at Pottles - getting the balance right, doing things and having quiet time, being entertained and being busy, having a laugh and dealing with serious things when they arise like future health needs, medication, seeing the nurse or doctor as and when. We had an informal group discussion with several family members who described the home as "really homely" - "welcoming, relaxed, a credit to the owners" and one of the directors at the party had some seriously vigorous hand shaking and hugs from lots of people - **emotions were powerfully expressed for sure!**

Christmas is an emotional time - we can often forget that with all the effort to have a lovely time it brings with it a sense of sadness about our past and those we have lost - **we will always make sure we reflect on the emotions linked to fond recollections** - **one of our core beliefs about happiness in older old age at Pottles is about remembering and enjoying our lifetime of memories.**

We had an amazing **Care Kite Mark Christmas Jamboree on the 16th with members of the 50 plus care homes from across Devon** - Annmarie, our treasured cook, entered one of the 'festive cakes' into the Great Care Kite Mark Bake Off - [emotions were running high during the voting](#) - whilst we didn't win - **we were commended as OUTSTANDING by the senior CQC manager who attended the event! - well done Annmarie.**

There are lots of Christmas festivities planned over the next 2 weeks - more carol singing, Laurel and Hardy remembering's on Christmas eve, open house on Christmas Day for visits and we have even said **if anyone is alone at Christmas and wants to come and say hello and spend a little time with us they would be very welcome - give us a call if this might be of interest-** becoming a Friend of Pottles is a plan well underway. [The emotions we don't want to have for people are distress, loneliness and upset](#) - so we want to do our bit in the spirit of kindness and seasonal goodwill to address 'hopes and fears of all the years'.

Christmas afternoon will include some attempts by residents and staff at our traditional 'Badly Played Carols on the Cornet' led by our very own 'Les Dawson of the Cornet', owner George - hoping for some improvement on last year!! - we have invited any one free and willing to join us with any instrument at their disposal - [we think emotions for this in anticipation for some may include fear and trepidation sadly!](#)

We described our 'Good' CQC inspection at Pottles in the summer as 'emotional' which it was - [emotions are powerful parts of being alive](#) - we believe reaching out to people who struggle in later life with health difficulties including acknowledging anxiety, stress, worry and sadness is what we do well at Pottles Court. We are equally, if not more, **focused on promoting happiness, thrill, pleasure and pride in life at our 'homely home'**

So final words here [HAVE A VERY HAPPY AND PERHAPS EMOTIONAL CHRISTMAS AND A NEW YEAR FULL OF ALL SUCCESS IN REALISING YOUR DREAMS AND WISHES](#) - if you can make time to **become a 'Friend of Pottles'** get in touch and come and bring something of yourself to the home - we have a pretty great time a lot of the time.

'24/7 care when the time is right - take the worries away not just for Christmas but for all year round'

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[All our festive goings on](#)

Posted by: pottles at 01:58, December 9 2015.

Yes it's official... we are **attempting a new record for the number of Christmas trees you can reasonably get away with in a cheerfully festive care home.** So far we are up to 4 - one in the lounge, one in the dining room, one in the hall and one in the bowling alley - we do sometimes play golf there but rarely bowling it must be said. "It's beginning to look a lot like [Christmas](#)" as the song goes - it's beginning to look a lot like Santa's Grotto too as someone recently remarked!

Our festive fair is on Sunday 13th December - carol singing, a raffle and raising a glass or two plus much more so please come and join us - 2-4pm with a possible extension if you fancy. We will also be repeating our **'Old Blue Eyes' quiz and celebrity remembered tribute to Frank Sinatra who would have been 100 had he still been alive on the 12th**

Last year we made a fuss about **Laurel and Hardy on Christmas Eve** and we are planning to do the same again - so bowler hats loaned or donated would be very much appreciated - we will be doing a quiz of course and have their whole box set of films to work through all day

Our **Home Manager, Darryl has celebrated his first year in post** and we have had a full review of the changes and achievements for the year - these include our very positive CQC inspection, our full house occupancy - so sorry to say there's no room at this inn currently and no stable round the back either - and some environmental improvements that have added to the calm and fun atmosphere enjoyed by those who live and work at Pottles - well done Darryl!

Christmas day will be a bustling affair we expect families and friends will be joining us throughout the day - we will be **sharing memories of Christmases of our past** - perhaps with mixed emotions remembering those no longer with us - memories of hanging stockings, sledging in the snow, having a special breakfast, watching a favourite film and tucking into turkey or nut roast for at least one of our residents.

As well as Christmas we are doing much more too - see below for some news items and updates

- **We have joined a national debate with other care homes and experts on responding to a person with advanced dementia when they feel upset** about, for example, not being able to find a loved one long since deceased - using tact, kindness and gentle reassurance, understanding and perhaps interpreting the meaning of the need to find comfort we feel are part of our responding approach
- We have newly agreed **dedicated time for activities from one of our senior care staff** with the very enthusiastic help from Charlotte, a young volunteer planning to pursue a career in medicine after she completes her college studies as well as help from one of our directors who always enjoys joining in too - current projects going on include the **million mile challenge, family and past life collages for all and our best foot forward campaign** - details on these can be shared on request

a final few mentions for:

1. Our next **Residents and Guests meeting is on the 19th January at 4-5.30** - not the 14th as originally planned - we will be talking about new year resolutions, our local farming tradition and how to promote Pottles Court's history as an old farm house and also the usual range of serious and light hearted topics too
2. We're having a few **themed days in January too - Elvis day on his birthday** - 8th January, **Fruity Friday at least twice in the month - cheesy bread making again and plans are afoot for a skittles event**- going back to our bowling alley - it's about time we had a go at scuttling a few skittles we feel - careful now - maybe sponge balls might be best!

More next time - keep in touch and get in touch too

Have a fabulous season of goodwill and cheer - **if you're alone this Christmas and feeling sad please get in contact and come and be part of the Pottles Court extended party atmosphere** - we'd love to enlist you as a FOP (Friend of Pottles) - we can even give you a welcome pack

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We're Going French this week

Posted by: pottles at 15:09, November 16 2015.

We had already planned **our annual Going French Day at Pottles Court** before the terrible attacks in Paris on Friday 13th November - we mark the arrival of the new wine - first grape with a light hearted sharing of our links and history with France and the French - many of us have visited, speak the language

a little, enjoy the cuisine and feel connected and bonded - we will eat croissants, sip on French wines and talk about solidarity during this week - our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected.

Since our last blog (news update) we have had our firework celebration with ginger beer and sherry, we've had several goes at our '**British Battles Remembered Series**' - **Agincourt, Battle of Britain and of course had our reflective Remembrance Day tributes** - poppies and respectful commemorative sharings of experiences. There is a balance in how we think about tragedy in conflict, how we pay tribute to courage, bravery and loss as well as the pride we feel. Powerful and important we think.

We had another of our **Residents and Guests meeting on the 12th** - we had **Heather from Exeter Living Options telling us about Advocacy** and spoke of the usual range of topics on everyday life at Pottles- the food, entertainments, chores, keeping active, keeping chipper and what's coming up - Christmas of course as well as the following:

- **Christmas Fair at Pottles - 13th DECEMBER -2-4.30pm** - details of how to get involved from Jan, Deputy Manager on 01392 833101
- **Our Million Mile Challenge** - we have a theory that all of those that live and work at Pottles have accumulated 1,000,000 miles of trips and travels during our lifetimes - watch this space for news on this in the next blog!
- **On the 25th November 1963 The Beatles released one of their most popular hits - "I wanna hold your hand"** we notice a lot of hand holding at Pottles Court - we think it's a nice affectionate and tender way to show caring to one another - that day we will be talking specially about hand holding and our memories of having our hands held and holding the hands of others - our mums and dads, our children, the great loves of our lives - we may even do a story about them to share
- Our '**Best Foot Forward**' plans are also taking shape - we mentioned our long term involvement with addressing **diabetes in care homes** and that there are figures that suggest up to 1 in 4 people in care homes have the condition - we have followed up some planning on this coinciding with **World Diabetes Day on the 14th November with a 'foot checking' guide** - we are doing work with Diabetes UK and other Care Kite Mark homes across Devon (of which we are founder members) to share best practice and make sure all of our residents and staff - not just those with diabetes have feet well able to get about the place -

Final mentions -

1. Another **Old Blue Eyes day is planned for the 12th December** - Frank would have been 100 years old had he still been with us so a bit of a fuss that day will be had for sure
2. We are **still packing our Christmas plans with traditional and quirky ideas and events**- last year one of our directors played carols on his cornet and several residents had a go - some were much better at it than him despite never having held a cornet before !! - we are seeking ideas for the best ever Christmas - so come see us and add to the festive atmosphere

That's another instalment for you until next time - thoughts on being strong and our best regards to those in need and distress in France and everywhere

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Happy Halloween however.....

Posted by: pottles at 12:47, October 31 2015.

We did do some pumpkin carving and will be talking about memories of Halloween's of old but we aren't making too much of a fuss - we know that **many people find witches masks, scary spiders and trick or treating a little unpleasant and for those with dementia these can be especially upsetting or confusing** - so instead we are eating chocolate, playing more conkers and doing some garden fireworks on bonfire night. The '**Conkering at 20 paces**' was another bit hit - well several big hits in fact!! great fun had by all

We had our **Great British Battles Remembered on the 30th - Battle of Britain and of Agincourt** - 70 and 600 years apart both ending or taking place in October- 2 quizzes that were entertaining - one or 2 showed how well they paid attention in history lessons at school!

That business we mentioned in our last blog about **bad language in care homes** ! no not BAD language exactly - we certainly don't approve of that - we mean the recent fuss made about people being referred to as 'darling', 'pet', 'sweetheart' of the likes - generally speaking we are very careful about how people like to be addressed - respecting wishes and being polite is good manners but many people do lapse into what we regard as terms of endearment or affection - it's like the ordinary everyday banter in family life - we will always reflect on this and will always check that people don't mind in case they don't like it and provided staff are being kind, well meaning and courteous we will forgive more than condemn if they slip up!!

a few quick notices

- We had our first **Pain management in Care Homes** meeting with other Kite Mark Care Home seniors - we really will be looking in much detail at this and making sure that we are being proactive about the recent report that 80% of people living in care homes experience significant pain often
- **Residents and Guests meeting on the 12th November** - invited speakers will include the local advocacy service who we hope can tell us about their work and how we might link with them more
- we are having another **Going French Day on the 20th November** - coinciding with the first arrival of the Beaujolais Nouveau lots of French things going on that day - seeing who is most fluent, croissants for breakfast and various French wines to sample
- We will be **entering a 'festive cake' in the Great Kite Mark Festive Cake Bake Off** on the **16th December at the Kite Mark Jamboree** - judging will be by a range of fellow members and samples will be shared at Pottles before and after the event - fingers crossed for victory !!

Keep watching and get in touch to be more in touch - careful with those fireworks now !

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Choices - that's the thing and plenty to choose from!

Posted by: pottles at 00:54, October 19 2015.

The few weeks since our last blog have seen lots of things going on - **turns out our favourite cuppa is standard 'Builders Brew'** - none of the flavoured types.. Earl Grey and the likes - we will keep this under review of course and when requested we'll make sure we get a batch in - **Choice that's the thing** - We've been considering the 'pleasing all the people all the time' and actually why not? - we try to avoid the 'can't' word as much as possible although we do have to be realistic - instead of a swear box (bad language in care homes - more on that later!) we are wondering about a banned word box to include can't. What other words might we want to ban? - **Our next Residents and Guests meeting on the 12th November 4-5.30pm** will include words we don't want to hear so make a note in your diary or on your calendar and join us.

When it comes to choices it's true, care homes can struggle to get the balance right - **routine is important as is familiarity with what's what and when's when** so things like lie ins, round the clock

snacks and drinks and clothing preferences like the immortal poetic words of Jenny Joseph in her famous *Warning Poem*, - " When I am an old woman I shall **wear purple** With a red hat which doesn't go and doesn't suit me", need to be considered carefully. Choices and getting this right will be another topic for our meeting on the 12th.

Very very sadly we will be missing Harold (a regular at our meetings) who we lost very recently - he was such a star during his time at Pottles Court and was the instigator of the customary singing that we always ended our meetings with - **Danny Boy, Bring me Sunshine and Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain were particular favourites.** His memory will be everlasting not least for the musical legacy and regular spontaneous singing in and around the house he led. Harold's daughter said such lovely things about his time at Pottles and we feel her loss greatly.

The **annual CQC 'State of Care' report has been published** summarising the progress the care regulator is making as they implement their new regime of ensuring quality in health and social care. We are one of the 60% of care homes that have had at least a 'Good' inspection outcome - we are proud of this and are still striving for even better - one step up would be 'Outstanding' - out of over 500 social care services in the south west inspected only 5 have been rated as Outstanding so far. We can but hope for next time!

A few quick updates here:

- we are **about to offer a 'try out' day of taster massage therapy sessions** provided by one of our district nurses, Louise - having recently been fully trained and qualified we are very excited about this which we hope might become a regular part of the range of choices on offer - that word choices again!
- **Our Glen Miller Appreciation Day was terrific** - of all the 'famous people remembered' series it became very clear that our quiz was far too easy!! so many knew all about his trombone, tunes, his demise and what he had for breakfast on days without a Y in them ! - we were certainly In The Mood on the 16th that's for sure
- **Our manager, Darryl, has a celebration double on this hands** - he has achieved his level 5 *Managers Award* - after several years of study and he also became a *Devon Care Kite Mark Master Class graduate* completing the certificated programme on the 15th October
- we are **very pleased with our new pale green crockery** (very tasteful so don't be alarmed!- pardon the pun!) the choice was guided by evidence, conversations and availability - going down very well with our folk - just like the offerings on the plates too

Final mentions:

1. We have our **'Conkers at 20 Paces' on the 23rd October** all comers challenge in its second year - we have some seasoned imported Conkers from the northern France battlefields used in last years battling as well as some new Wasdale Head conkers freshly brought back from the Lake District
2. Our combined **'Battle of Britain' and 'Battle of Agincourt' tribute day is on the 30th October** - we will have quizzes and optional famous speech renditions on the day - free to attend - prizes for the best impression of a Spitfire and a retreating Messerschmitt - awarded by a residents judging panel
3. We have a number of care themed meetings going on too - we are part of a newly forming **Pain Management in Care Homes Working Group** also a separate **collaboration with Diabetes UK and local clinical experts looking at Best Practice for Diabetes Management in Care Homes** too - 23rd October and 4th November respectively - more information available if you'd like to get involved in either of these

Keep in touch and watch out for the next instalment of the life and times of Pottles Court

Posts

There's plenty to look forward to at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 00:40, September 26 2015.

At the heart of daily life at Pottles Court is the commitment to make sure we are all **looking forward to nice things ahead. It's a central theme in our view on the secret of happiness in older old age** - we have 16 people living at Pottles all of whom may confess (if you were rude enough to ask them) to being of a somewhat mature and distinguished age. We celebrated the Queen's latest milestone on the 9th September - as mentioned in our last blog. We've had our 3rd **'Fred and Ginger day on the 22nd**, and updated on our **Jumpers for Goalposts** football sweepstake, launched a **Raving Rugby World Cup sweep** too and are readying ourselves for **Glen Miller remembered day on the 16th October** and a **Tom Jones versus Cliff Richard top hits afternoon**. So we're making sure we have plenty of topics and themes to talk about and even fall out about as feelings can run high when favourite music gets raised!

Our **Residents and Guests meeting on the 7th September** shared lots of thoughts on important issues as ever - **We celebrated our 'Good' CQC outcome** - talking about what we learnt from the experience and had some really nice things said about our care and work by residents and guests - **We are holding a Questions and Answers open forum discussion meeting at 11.30am on the 7th October** to make sure more people get the chance to have their say.

Returning to upcoming events we are planning a **Battle of Agincourt and Battle of Britain remembered day on the 30th October** - (each of these took place 600 and 70 yrs ago respectively the latter ending on the 31st October with some of our folk having powerful memories of that time)

A few short snippets here:

- **'Have a cup of tea' culture** - we have been musing on the nature of choice and the steady flow of drinks at Pottles - it's a custom to make sure we offer copious drinks of tea (undoubtedly the preferred beverage for most at Pottles) to all and sundry at regular intervals - what we so far haven't fully determined is what about choice of flavours - Earl Grey, Builders Brew, Lapsang, Assam etc.. **tea talk will take place during the morning on the 30th September** and may lead to additional tea options becoming more established.
- We're planning a not so scary **combined Halloween and Firework event with a difference on the 5th November** - we don't quite know what the difference is going to be just yet - but ideas are emerging - apple ducking, ghost story telling, and monster mash music medley's are so far on the agenda!
- A very excellent feature in **The Times newspaper on the 5th September by our new favourite journalist Janice Turner spoke up on the view that keeping fit in older old age** (any age really) **is important** - she wondered about whether care homes should have a gym - we can't quite go that far but are planning some **'wake up shake up try outs'** for those willing and will be having a proper think and chat with everyone about what we can do to take her advice at least in part.
- We are again going to compile a **'Pictures in my Prime'** selection - not to say many of us haven't quite reached our prime yet we feel - nonetheless some of the photographs we have seen of our residents and staff we want to turn into a Christmas Collage - help with this from everyone will be really appreciated - we want to enlist likeminded local people, families, friends and volunteer befrienders to assist - get in touch to help please

So... there we are - plenty going on, plenty coming up !! - next time we will feature more on the care themes we are addressing - our **Pain Management project launched at the Care Kite Mark event on the 24th September** (attended by 3 local CQC inspectors), the **Work we are doing with the Regional Diabetes UK lead** and our **work with the RDE** which continues as previously reported

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Raising a glass to the Queen

Posted by: pottles at 09:09, September 3 2015.

Next week on the **9th September at 6.30pm the Queen becomes the longest reigning monarch - 63years and 216 days on the throne and going strong!**. We will be 'raising a glass' to her achievement and the place she has in the hearts of the nation and more specifically the residents at Pottles. She has a huge fan base with us and we will be recording and watching again and again all the TV coverage (as we did with the Trooping of the Colour earlier in the summer). So come and join us if you can. We've a quiz and a discussion planned to share memories about her life and our lives too over the last 63yrs - some of us don't quite go back that far but many of us do !!

We've launched our '**Jumpers for Goalposts' premiership football extravaganza** - Arthur and Gail doing nicely playing as Manchester City at the top, not so good for Jack and George at the bottom as Sunderland!

Our **Residents and Guest meeting at 6 -7.30pm on the 7th September** has a very full agenda as ever including 'The Big Food Debate', the question of whether keeping chickens will add to our entertainments and family life and also hearing from two special guests Dr Sara Gibbs, a local Public Health Consultant coming to join the debating and also Dr Jo Day who is working with us looking at research ideas - particularly sensory stimulation and what smells we like best ! Lavender versus Rosemary, fresh coffee versus newly cut grass - that type of thing! Smells we feel are very important in care homes so we want to share more on this.

We have made an **exciting link with Eden House in County Durham (This care home has the best rated CQC inspection outcome we've seen)** and we are keen to link with them and share some of their magic and perhaps offer some of our own efforts too - One of our directors was invited to meet the staff and residents on the 26th August and we have since begun trading ideas and plans about activities, special diets and each promoting the pride we feel about the work we do.

One of our directors was invited to speak on local radio on the 29th August about '**living well in a care home when the time is right**' - the conversation included the secret of happiness in older old age, taking the worries away of being lonely struggling with everyday life perhaps and also shared the top 10 things to look for if you are considering residential care for yourself or a loved one. **If you want to hear more on this come to the Teignmouth Community School's Dementia Friendly Event on Saturday the 19th September 10-3.30pm** - we are expecting around 200 people to come and have our local MP there along with 2 GPs, a research doctor, a person living with dementia and our director again talking about how much fun you can have in a care home!

a few quick reminders and news:

- **Fred and Ginger day is on the 22nd September this year** - get your dancing shoes on - we'll be 'dancing cheek to cheek' maybe
- our **Pottles Fete is on the 26th September 2-4.30pm**- raffle, cakes, bring and buy sale planned and much much more
- **Cheesy bread and Parkin baking day is on the 18th September** - will be a floury affair we think as the chef we are using is a messy so and so - he's been in before and caused havoc in the kitchen!
- we did a try out of a **nobbly knees contest recently and the staff did really well** - we may need to award prizes (one suggestion was a referral to the local orthopaedic department for Darryl, the home manager!)

that's all for now folks but keep in touch and get involved if you can

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Planning for an Indian Summer!

Posted by: pottles at 09:41, August 21 2015.

I know we did have some sunny days and were in the garden a fair bit, the tomatoes in our raised beds are proof of this, but as we approach the end of the summer we feel a bit greedy for more time outside. So we are thinking - **sheds, chickens and a late Pottles Court Fete on September 26th - 2 - 4.30pm** - our Fete queen is Deputy Manager, Jan she is hoping for a late flourish of blue skies and sun. Jan is the person to talk to if you want to both come along or help in any way - we'd be thrilled to see you on the day - lots to do and be part of.

An important item is the **much awaited CQC inspection report** - referred to in a recent news blog. Its too early to 'go live' with the outcome as it's still in draft but **we believe it will confirm a 'Good' outcome for us which is really excellent by us** - the draft we have seen is a fantastic read and we look forward to being able to share it when it's ready. On the subject of CQC - **we very much congratulate Eden House care home, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham** for the best inspection report we have ever seen - so good our lead Director has been invited to visit them on the 26th August - a full report and what we can learn from them will be shared on his return

Our next **Residents and Guest meeting has had to have a date change - its now Monday 7th September not the 8th - still 6-7.30pm** - we have a Public Health doctor, Dr Sara Gibbs, joining us after some contact we have had talking about **our Big Food Debate** - if interested please talk to us about this and perhaps come and join us.

A few quick news updates and items:

- Its **Gene Kelly Remembered Day on the 23rd August** - he would have been 103 yrs old today - we are trying out a quiz about his life leading up to the day and watching **'Singing in the Rain'** that day as well as Darryl, our Home Manager, leading some **armchair based tap dancing classes on the 24th -3-4pm** - we've seen him dance and we know this will be a real treat!!!
- **Fred and Ginger Day this year will be on the 22nd September** - music and dance that day too - so come and get involved
- Our **Shared Lives (10 in 10) project has attracted some national interest** - this is where we are spending time talking and listening to one another - staff and residents about our lives in 10 year periods for 10 minutes at a time - we are learning lots we didn't know

A final item is a one we are feeling needs some careful thought and discussion -**There is a lot of concern about care homes nationally and what makes a good one** and some of the headlines we see about the not so good ones. Even The Archers (the long running radio farming family drama) has a feature of one of the leading characters having her mum in a care home and having a lot of guilt about this. **We want to provide some reassurance about what we believe about 24/7 care - come and talk to us** - the principle is **'finding great 24/7 care when the time is right'** - this is the title of a talk **one of our directors is giving at Teignmouth Community School at a big free event on the 19th September** joined by some local GPs, a person living with dementia and a senior professor from Plymouth University

That's all for now folks

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'Jumpers for Goalposts' and much much more

Posted by: pottles at 09:57, August 3 2015.

After lots of conversation about the impending new football season starting on the 8th August we have decided to **launch a 'Jumpers For Goalposts' sweepstake for residents and staff at Pottles** to share a premier league team and then follow them week by week. Regular updates and achievement awards will be announced. We know that not everyone is much of a footy fan but many are and those that aren't may simply enjoy **wearing their teams coloured shawls and hats we are hoping to provide produced by the marvellous Mrs Ridout and her expert local knitting circle.**

We are also **consulting on adding some colourful rare breed bantam chickens to the family at Pottles** - the pros and the cons to be considered will be around the free eggs and amusement they can offer as well as general upkeep and cleaning them out- no cockerels of course to wake us too early or upset the neighbours that's for sure however. We will be announcing the decision at **our next Residents & Guests meeting - 6.30-8pm on the 8th September** where we will also be talking about our CQC inspection report which we are awaiting with much excitement. and trepidation!

Other news updates include:

- **One of our directors has been invited to speak on local radio on Saturday the 29th August** about life in a care home. There will be discussion about not fearing the point a person may reach when 'taking the worries away' about perhaps feeling lonely and struggling with everyday living is becoming harder to cope with and moving into 24/7 care is the right thing to do.
- An item we spoke about at our inspection was **how we capture comments, suggestions and compliments** from residents, families, carers and other visitors - We are always very eager to do more and add more interesting and entertaining things going on at Pottles - its always great to hear nice things said about us and we do get lots of these - so a very big thank you.
- On the subject of entertainments - **It's Gene Kelly Day on the 23rd August** marking what would have been his 103rd birthday - we will be watching 'Singing in the Rain' of course and holding a fully risk assessed tap dancing contest too!
- A date for your diary too could be the **Dementia Awareness event at Teignmouth Community College school on Saturday 19th September 10.30-3.30pm** - talks will be from a person living with dementia and his wife, local GPs sharing their views on the help on offer, a research view from Plymouth University and again one of our directors invited to talk about '**life in a fun focused care home**' when living with dementia. There will be group discussions and an exhibition too - so it'll be well worth coming along - get in touch for more details.

A final very news worthy item that we really need to mention is the heated debating we had about the **Battle of the Cream Teas**. After responding to an article in a national newspaper about the upset caused at a shop in Truro, Cornwall where cream was placed on a scone before the jam (the Devon method rather than the other way round Cornwall system) we decided to carry out our own in house survey. **The verdict we can announce was a 10-1 vote in favour of the Devon method** with 5 people not minding which method. We accept a risk of slight Devon bias but will be talking to Cornwall care homes about them doing a similar study. Maybe we can enlist our University friends to look at this more maybe!?

that's all for now - happy summer sun to all

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We've had our CQC Inspection... and we're feeling good

Posted by: pottles at 10:17, July 24 2015.

All care homes are inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) **our last inspection in October 2014 gave us 'all green ticks'** meaning we were given a fully compliant report which we felt very pleased about. Since then the system has been changed to be more comprehensive and thorough - rightly making sure even greater detail is looked into and more time spent witnessing and experiencing the 'lived lives' of people looked after in residential care. Considerable time is also spent making sure our paperwork, records and systems are up to scratch. **CQC has a rigorous method of appraising care homes - asking if we are SAFE, EFFECTIVE, CARING, WELL LED and RESPONSIVE TO NEED.** Of course we believe we are all of those things but we could be regarded as a little biased - surely not I hear you say.

The inspection took place over 3 days and was emotional - but in a good way but certainly emotional for all concerned as we are very proud of what we do, how we do it and our beliefs about balancing safe, fun, routines and choices and dealing with the realities and challenges of health and care services being under a lot of pressure. Our culture and philosophy is about living well, having fun, getting the balance right and always trying to do better - this is why the inspection whilst emotional (exciting, scary, stirring and causing a lot of smiles - hearing positive feedback at the same time as improvement suggestions) we see as very positive - **Our report may take a number of weeks to be finalised.** We are hopeful it will be at least 'Good' but improvement is a big part of what we do anyway so we will be brave regardless!! So in the words of the great Nina Simone we say "it's a new dawn, it's a new day, it's a new life... and we're feeling good".

Other news

- our last **Residents and Guests meeting on the 14th July** was another brilliant sharing of news and views - we talked about what this person centred care business is all about, we shared ideas on keeping fit, introduced a self scoring system on hearing levels in the meeting to help decide how loud to talk so everyone can hear what's being said and we had another senior research doctor with us leading to some work on smells and whether the herb Rosemary can actually help with memory or not - we'll keep you posted on that one
- **Motorbike Mayhem day** (22nd July) was good fun - lots of chat about how dangerous they are, who has owned one, ridden one, fallen off one! etc.. - we still plan to get a big one in the house but may need to widen the door to do so! - crash helmet wearing on the day was pretty hilarious however
- We had a **Man on the Moon quiz** - marking 46 years since Neil Armstrong said those immortal words - " I was only popping out for a pint of milk, I really need to get this Sat Nav sorted out" which in truth was one of the multiple choice answers that no one chose strangely
- Our great figures remembered series continues too - **Van Gogh died 125 years ago on the 29th July** - we have spent time talking about his paintings and doing several warm ups of a quiz about him in readiness for the remembering day - where he was born, what part of his body he cut off - which did cause a good deal of entertainment amongst us in some of the answers to that one !!

Final advance notices

1. **14th August 2-4.30- an open invitation to families, guests & friends to a facilitated discussion on 'knowing about dementia'** at Pottles - please come - let us know - nice refreshments provided including home made cheese scones and fancy biscuits
2. we are planning a **LATE SUMMER FETE for the 12th September** - weather permitting!! - further details next time
3. Our next **Residents and Guest meeting will be an early evening meeting on the 8th September 6.00-7.30pm**

that's all for now - keep in touch and get involved if you can

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[Working with our local hospital, RDE](#)

Posted by: pottles at 12:34, July 4 2015.

We are very fortunate to have such a great service on our doorstep - **The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (RDE) has been for many years one of the top performing acute health care hospitals in the country.** It was one of the original 10 FTs and has exceptional staff doing fantastic things well. We recognise the importance of 'working together' hence the commitment we have to the so called coproduction work we are doing together on making sure our residents if and when they need hospital care receive it effectively and with the best connection with Pottles.

On 3rd July we had our second joint event - our 'Working Together' workshop at the RDE with lots of care and nursing home delegates as well as some of the senior managerial and clinical staff at the RDE and the local authority too. We focused on admissions, discharges and prevention of readmissions as key areas - the energy and determination to acknowledge that **'We Are In It Together'** in promoting joined up working, sharing examples of when things work well (most of the time that is) and when things could go better. The need to make sure we have clarity on what we can expect from each other at the point of contact is really important - consistency, communication and continuity of care were topics and themes we talked about a lot.

One of our Directors did a presentation about the Devon Quality Kitemark of which we are vigorous and energised members - based on the view we need to share to learn and that delivering best care to happy residents and staff is an ongoing journey whilst always having more we can do. The actions we are taking forward will include:

- Talking with Dr Nigel Acheson* more on how we can **add to the positive impact locally and further afield of great health and social care collaboration** having a direct impact on the lives of older people especially those living with frailty and dementia
- Work was born in the 3 breakout workshops on the day committed to improving the flow of older people coming into hospital whether for appointments or as an unplanned or emergency contact - the idea of introducing an **'Orange Folder Passport'** was proposed by one group and we felt excited to make this happen and share information to improve care. Having a dedicated and visible system to identify patients in hospital who live in care homes and where there can be aspects of their wants and needs that require special attention will be really powerful we agreed
- We will be doing more on a **readmission risk scoring tool** using systems already in place at the RDE but making sure these are communicated to care homes - We talked about ways of providing **early warning support and safety net options** to prevent a recurrence of symptoms or risk.
- There is also a proposal for a wider plan for **'patch geriatricians' to provide so called outreach direct support to residential homes** - very exciting action steps we felt
- There are plans already underway in Exeter with the **Exeter Primary Care Federation of GPs and community nurses to offer more support to local residential homes** - We will be joining in with this plan

Our last meeting was last year but we will be having a follow up event in September and in between **there will be much activity particularly on crucial care area such as fall prevention and end of life care** - both topics we want to make sure we work well together to get right.

We will be talking at **our next Residents and Guest meeting on the 14th July** about this event and are also very keen to involve our residents and families in what happens next regarding promoting the positive relationships with the RDE team so come let us know - get in touch and be part of the improvement action with active participation. After all as we often say **'it's a journey and we're not there yet'**

Quick final mentions:

- We have started a **'shared lives- 10 in 10 project'** where both staff and residents take turns sharing life stories with one another based on telling each other about their lives in 10 year chunks in 10 minutes - this will mean for someone aged 90 talking about 8 decades of their lives - we will be doing this over a number of weeks but already we are learning more and more about each other - it's a really worthwhile experience
- **Motorbike Mayhem Day will see a big motorbike in the home (if it will fit) on 22nd July** - come and look - It's a big'un !!

* Dr Nigel Acheson is the Medical Director of NHS England (south) and ex senior consultant at the RDE as well as a keen follower of our work

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Summertime and the Living is Easy

Posted by: pottles at 00:22, June 29 2015.

Well we haven't quite had the glorious summer just yet but following on from one of our last blogs on music and spontaneous outbursts of singing we are **planning a compilation of summertime melodies to keep the sun shining** even on less blossoming days. We will be doing the Satchmo classic of course both cornet assisted and unaided - we have now **acquired plenty of mouth organs** and will enlist resident Tom to give us a few lessons

Our upcoming **Residents and Guests meeting on the 14th July reverts to 2.30-4pm** with another full agenda already - talking serious and light hearted issues as usual - our everyday life philosophy will be discussed with themes on balancing active time with relaxing time - participating in daily routines, being stimulated and entertained as well as interacting with others combined with private time as required. Living well as we head into older old age is important and is a very individual thing.

There is a lot of **talk about 'Person Centred Care' for people living in care homes- this issue will feature on the 14th with the question - 'what does this mean?'** For us a starting point is being reflective and receptive to the likes and dislikes, choices and preferences, past and present pleasures and the needs and wants of those living at Pottles. Person centredness is a fluctuating thing for us all - we change our views on many things often and therefore our care plans must regularly reflect this. Having freedoms to do things familiar and new as well as have security, certainty and purpose are part of what we aspire to - We are keen to add more to our philosophy on this so please join the debate

We have set up our **Wimbledon Tennis Sweepstake starting on the 29th June** and will share out all seeded players amongst residents and staff - so far no one has drawn Andy Murray (seeded 3 this year). We will be serving strawberries at regular intervals as the competition progresses with cream not rackets of course!!

Final mentions of a few things to watch out for:

- It's a little while off but on the **9th September the Queen becomes the longest serving monarch ever** - we will be planning a celebratory day and are keen to mark this momentous achievement with lots of fun and tributes
- Our **Battle of Waterloo Quiz was really great fun** - no it wasn't Margaret Thatcher in charge of the troops those 200 years ago nor did it take place in Australia
- We have a **joint event on 'Working Together' with the RDE on the 3rd July** where we will include in this bi annual workshop some connected links on important areas including fall prevention and management and also end of life care
- Our **next in house training at Pottles on the 23rd July at 2-3.30 will focus on fall prevention too** as well as sharing views ensuring residents retain choices as much as possible from toothpaste to entertainment

When the summertime really arrives make sure you drink plenty fluids and keep the living nice and easy

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'Telling our stories' - the lives we live and have lived

Posted by: pottles at 10:05, June 15 2015.

There is a risk that as we move into our more advanced years that our life stories become distant and sometimes lost memories. We feel really determined at Pottles Court that sharing the moments that have

made us the people we are is a vital part of life in a care home. A very popular trend at the moment is to tell stories - **The Story Telling Movement** - not just for older people but for us all.

We are reflecting on how we do this particularly for those people who are experiencing life with dementia and some who struggle to both recall important parts of their histories as well as communicate them to others. We are still building up in an ongoing way the principle that **every conversation offers the chance of finding out something about the person we didn't know already** - recent examples include favourite smells - Brenda really liking lavender more than olbus oil, Alan being very smiley about wearing a trilby hat and Doreen being a bit of a wizz at our 5 minute crossword challenge - a '6 in a row' correct answers was quite jaw dropping for those witness to this feat! All of these stories and **discovery conversations are adding to our long term work on a 'This is Your Life' project** with our own in house Eammon Andrews / Michael Aspel staff equivalents.

The TV programme **Dementiaville** on channel 4 over 3 weeks in June has got us all talking about how we compare and how we have for some time developed our own version of reaching people using a combined approach of emotional connection, fluidity of helping people feel safe, happy and calmly enjoying everyday life as well as an emphasis on atmosphere and environment in embedding fun and laughter in our model and approach. The debate on the rights and wrongs of so called Reality Orientation versus validating the reality of a person with advanced dementia's lived experience will rumble on we know but for us it's hard to think there is certainty about this - true person centredness must be about a flexible receptive and reflective approach we think. Our next **Residents and Guests meeting -14th July 2.30-4pm** will talk more about this as will **our singing focused afternoon event on National Care Home Open Day - 19th June** - let us know you are coming

We told a story recently about being 'Responsive to Need' (one of CQC's 5 critical quality headings) where one of our residents with late stage dementia fell in the night and sustained a facial injury - our staff were impeccable in how they handled this incident with a senior carer promptly arriving at our local hospital at 3.20am to ensure both a 'hand holding' support was provided and an escorted return 'home' was achieved by 8.30am. These are the types of stories we want to share - where things go well in dealing with an issue or event - **stories tell of the good times, the not so good times and are often poignant and powerful - but certainly well worth telling and learning from.**

Don't forget -

- **Waterloo day - 200 years since the battle of Waterloo - 18th June**- we did a trial run on our quiz and both staff and residents were pretty rosey about this monumental part of our history - no excuses on the day itself we trust!
- Open in house training session on **Pain Management and Positive Atmosphere for staff residents and guests - 19th June 2-3.30pm**

thats all folks

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The power of music in care homes

Posted by: pottles at 17:25, May 30 2015.

Perhaps the evidence is variable on how **music reaches the parts other stimulation can't reach** - but at Pottles Court we are seeing an embedded culture that is significantly shaped and influenced in the everyday by music as an integral part of our daily lives.

We have **exchanged views in recent times at our recent Residents and Guests meeting about the value of the songs that evoke powerful memories and immediately take us back in time to bygone days full of emotion both happy and sad** - we acknowledge the mixed emotions for all where favourite songs conjure up tears and smiles that translate into validating the lives we have lived.

Our own version of **Desert Island Discs capturing everyone's 3 favourite tunes is work ongoing** - yesterday we had several unprovoked spontaneous singing outbursts leading one of our zimmer

frame using residents to scoot off to his bedroom to retrieve his harmonica resulting in an absolutely brilliant rendition of 'Amazing Grace' -we didn't really think he was that good! - how remiss of us until now

The **perpetual ambient and changing CD rotation** of Singalong with Max, Tom Jones greatest hits, Nat King Cole, Elvis Day (8th of January by the way - his birthday) - upcoming Judy Garland day on the 10th June - her birthday as well as the 25th February - Beatles Day - George Harrison's birthday give us all immense pleasure and good excuses for much singing. Our **weekly church choir visits** always generates much singing of the hymns we grew up with and are so popular with even the most religiously abstaining of our folk! We also have our visiting volunteer '**Karen and her Keyboard**' bringing inhouse entertainment that gets people jigging and swinging

The soundtracks of all of our lives are special - the work we are embarked upon with Exeter University in the 'Research in Care Homes project' will include the fun and serious side of using music to reach even those hardest to reach as we go further into older old age. We know about the work of Naomi Klein and recommend others look at her work using music too. The '**Singing for the Brain**' movement has groups of chorusers all around the country too so we are simply endorsing what so many are doing already.

We are very sure that **we don't need a 'music therapist' or even an 'activity coordinator' to create an atmosphere underpinned and influenced by melody.** The making connections with each other is sizably enhanced by the tunes we have in common and those that are newly discovered too - even our Residents and Guests meetings have now become a place for a shared finale of a communal singalong - '**Danny Boy**' being a favourite with the next one planned for '**Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain**' the Hank Williams or Willie Nelson version- we don't mind - specially requested at our last meeting with words already printed for those needing them.

Music is a feature of our work on end of life care advance plans too - our 'I' statements reflect the music we want to be help comfort us should our health deteriorate and we don't shy away from considering this too for those willing and able to discuss this.

It's nothing to do with ability more just **opening wide and warbling them vocal chords** -come and bring us a tune if you're in the neighbourhood - Book in for **National Care Home Open Day perhaps on the 19th June** and we can have a proper go at making a big racket! - don't forget to let us know you plan to come - afternoon preferred, give us a call.

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[Busy times with events, celebrations and occasions](#)

Posted by: pottles at 18:20, May 26 2015.

The week of the 18th -24th May saw both **Dementia Awareness Week and Dying Matters Week** as national profile raising campaigns. We talked about both during the week and at our very well attended **Residents and Guests meeting on the 19th May** - Sensitive subjects certainly yet we shared thoughts on the nature of living well with dementia, being safe, having fun and making sure our philosophy of Pottles Court being a '**Home from Home for Life**' is kept high on our list of priorities.

Our **events, celebrations and occasions** included all the excitement of the General Election, lots of 'Cats versus Dogs' good humoured conversations, Eric and Ernie Day, an impromptu best cardigan afternoon (photos to follow) and the arrival of both the new royal baby - Charlotte Diana Elizabeth as well as the new 'Men in Sheds' garden shed which we haven't so far named!. The FA Cup final on the 30th May will have a first goal scoring sweepstake as well as our 2 surviving residents head to head contest battling it out on the pitch with Jean (Villa) versus Joan (the Gunners) - It'll be emotional we think.

Events at Pottles have also included **lots of staff training** on subjects from helping residents needing help moving about (manual handling - though we don't really like the term), skin care, more on diabetes - with 2 staff winning fob watches after the prize draw made by Arthur - who lives with type 2 diabetes picking their completed diabetes questionnaires and lots more too.

Upcoming events during June will include

- **Celebrating Great Staff Day - 8th June this year** - another chocolate tasting testing contest for everyone to join in with
- **Judy Garland Day -10th June** to mark what would have been her 93rd birthday
- **National Care Home Open Day on the 19th June** - where we want to host invitees to hear about our work and chat to staff and those residents who want to be involved.

Final quickies

1. We have been asked to be part of the **Exeter University Research in Care Homes project group** with lots of ideas generated at its first meeting on the 20th May - another event is planned at the University on the 24th June let us know if you want details
2. We are sharing a so called '**Coproduction**' **event helping improve links between care homes and the local hospital with the RDE on the 3rd July** - the themes are avoiding preventable admissions and readmissions and improving information sharing between care homes and the hospital
3. On the **18th June we mark the 200 years since the Battle of Waterloo** - none of us can remember much about the battle itself but we will be having a quiz and watching a film on the day - our new digital recording device will be also recording more Songs of Praise programmes, David Attenborough series and 'days at the races' all requested by folk since its installation - no more dull day time TV for us we think!

More next time keep checking in don't be shy in getting in touch to hear more and get involved - gardeners, knitters and general entertainers always wanted!

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Posts

[We can all relax now and do some gardening!](#)

Posted by: pottles at 17:48, May 8 2015.

Whatever our thoughts on the election outcome we can at least start thinking about other things a bit. **What better than doing a bit of gardening ?** Several of our folk got very involved in planting parsley, basil and peppers as well as some tomato plants and flowers this week.

We've been talking a lot about clean well manicured fingernails but actually have concluded dirty fingernails are not necessarily a bad thing!!!



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Anniversary of our first blog! - 6th May one year on

Posted by: pottles at 13:15, May 6 2015.

Yes it's been a whole year since we began sharing news and views about life at Pottles Court.

It's now 61 years since Sir Roger Bannister broke the 4 minute mile barrier - we recently noticed that his 86th birthday on the 23rd March is shared by 3 other great British Olympians - cyclist Sir Chris Hoy, Sir Steve Redgrave and Mo Farah too.

Our last blog gave lots of detail of various events and activities as ever but we forgot to mention three other events in addition to the **general election fevers** some of our folk are experiencing (trips across to the village hall tomorrow will be eventful we expect although we don't think many people will want to watch news of the swingometer overnight).

We are marking **VE Day ('Victory in Europe', 70th anniversary on the 8th May)** with some conversation and commemoration reflecting on memories we have - although most of our folk were young wippersnappers all those years ago with one of two exceptions it has to be said. Lots to talk about regardless.

We are introducing '**Cats Versus Dogs**' week from the **11th - 17th May** with a good humoured sharing of memories, reflections and a light hearted quiz on the subject - we did a trial run yesterday and dogs were easily winners interestingly - Jammy, our resident cat, appeared somewhat disinterested sleeping solidly through the whole event however.

We are also having a **Morecambe and Wise appreciation day on the 14th May** to mark what would have been Eric's 89th birthday. We are planning a 50p donation to a local charity for everyone attempting (safely!) the couple's famous skipping entry to the stage. The charity will be decided upon by residents at the next residents and guests meeting on the 17th May. We are also offering **2 fob watches as prizes to staff for the first two successfully completed diabetes questionnaires** drawn by residents at the meeting on the 17th too.

Watch out for another news update soon and here's to another year of blogging.

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The work in a garden is never finished

Posted by: pottles at 10:51, April 27 2015.

The work in a garden is never finished much the same as work in a care home. We are on the front foot all the time seeking ways to add value and improve the lives of residents and staff at Pottles. The Weather has certainly picked up and our folk are beginning to get the chance to do a bit of weeding and planting - Jane and husband Steve (daughter and son in law of married couple residents Tom and Jean) spent time recently doing great work together on our herb garden and we have lots of plants ready for setting into our raised beds. Garden mayhem here we come!.

We are **eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new royal baby** - boy or girl we don't mind - we are having lots of conversations about naming the baby - one suggestion - Georgina if a girl we thought would be nice until we remembered young Prince George - could cause lots of confusion in the household with that one we realised.

Today - **27th April is another date for our regular visiting clothes show / shop** - everyone always looks so smart after the event - buying various new seasonal attire - colourful cardigans for the ladies and new socks for our gents mostly.

Our committed volunteer lead **Dawn is doing heaps of 'fix and mend' sessions** for existing cardigans - where on earth do all the buttons go we wonder!? but Dawn does fabulous work on replacing buttons when needed.

The **FA Cup final is reaching its finale** - Joan (Arsenal) versus Jean (Aston Villa) in the final - neither are that keen on wearing the clubs shirt on the day (30th May) but we plan a day of sweep-staking the first goal scorer and making a mini fuss as we will for the Eurovision night the weekend before.

A few brief extras here:

- **Election fever is with us at Pottles** - we have had numerous chats and fuller debates about the forthcoming election - some strong views some less bothered -but we are keen to follow the trends and have a few keen to get across to the village hall to play an active part in the process voting on the day
- We are doing more **polishing of shoes and brasses** at regular intervals - the pleasure and reward in doing useful things is very much part of the culture and ethos of the home - our previous blog on the secret of happiness in older old age sets out the philosophy
- The last **5 minute crossword challenge** was a particularly tricky one - only 11 correct answers 4 less than our best - several of our best crossworders were having a siesta that we believe weakened our first team - that's our excuse anyway
- Next **Residents and Guests meeting - 19th May -6-7.30pm** will have 2 senior research staff from Exeter University joining us prior to the first meeting of the special interest project group on the 20th May where one of our directors has been asked to help this work lots of areas we are hoping to explore - more on this next time - we want to think about making sure our residents and staff are offering views on key areas of life in care homes

That's all folks - next instalment in a few weeks time - watch this space and give us a call to get involved - **Celebrating Great Staff Day 1st June** and **National Care Home Open Day 19th June** - we want your views on each of these too

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What's going on in April at Pottles Court ?

Posted by: pottles at 12:36, April 10 2015.

Well that's a very good question!! and thanks for asking

We've had **Easter and lots of over indulgence in eating chocolate eggs** - we're not seeing many lingering Easter bonnets about the place now but do know that our women folk really enjoy doing such things but less so our men - more on this later!!

We are leading up to several events - as we type this we are readying ourselves for an exciting sporting period - **Grand National sweepstake** tomorrow as well as **FA Cup Semi Finals sweepstake** with 4 of our ladies still in it playing as Liverpool, Aston Villa, Reading and Arsenal - it's interesting that our 5 men at Pottles who have perhaps a stronger passion for the 'beautiful game' have all gone out in earlier rounds to the artful skills of the women!

We also have the marvellous spectacle of the General Election on the 7th May to look forward to and we have been '**talking politics at Pottles**' quite a bit some people getting very animated others less so - but it's an important current event and keeping an eye on current affairs we feel to be well worth the bother - we have news coverage and newspapers to keep us all up to speed on local national and world news with lots of debate going on much of the time.

The Queen will be 89 on the 21st April and then celebrates another official birthday in June - twice the presents and a second yummy cake of course - lucky her - **it's also another big year for her as on the 15th September she becomes the longest ever reigning monarch** overtaking Queen Victoria both reaching 64yrs on the throne - we will be talking about this a lot over the coming months too.

We will be making a fuss about **Shakespeare's birthday and date he passed away on the same day 52 years apart 452 yrs ago on the 23rd April** - which of course is St George's day so raising a glass or 2 on this day will be on the cards. We might even talk about some of the Bards best bits that day - our favourite Shakespearian quotes and moments.

Returning to the issue of men living in care homes - we have done a lot of work looking at this and are now embarked upon a special project to make sure we are getting it right for what is becoming a very changing picture of men coming into 24/7 care - we have a lot of material on this issue and will be really keen to enlist others - families and friends as well as volunteers are offering to help our staff team explore ways to keep our chaps happy, busy and feeling they are enjoying life - sometimes up to no good we hope !!

Final mentions for a few brief items:

- **Dementia Awareness week is 18th - 23rd May** - we will be doing lots of talking and listening about this central issue for our work
- We are **doing work with our local hospital the RDE at a 'Working Together'** event on the 28th April aimed at strengthening and building still further the positive relationship we have with the care team - about communication links and keeping and getting older people with dementia and those with frail health out of hospital as much as we can
- We were invited to attend a **Research in Care Homes event with Exeter University** on the 17th March with lots of ideas and schemes we are following up on with Dr Ruth Garside the research lead there
- The **Exeter Dementia Action Alliance** continues to meet regularly for which we are core members - Gina Awad the volunteer lead led a brilliant staff training session for 13 of our staff recently which we mentioned in previous blogs - more links to continue on this one
- We are also **having a lot to do with the newly established Exeter Primary Care -GP Federation** where we are sharing ideas on working better in partnership to make sure our primary care links are as good as they can be to support our residents fully

Much more to mention but will save that for next time - keep in touch and get in touch when and if you can!

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International Happiness Day -20th March

Posted by: pottles at 10:26, March 20 2015.

At our **Dementia Friends training session** yesterday, led by local DF Champion Gina Awad attended by 11 of our staff and one of our family members Clare, we talked about **International Happiness Day** and also did a round of 'what makes us most happy at work' - A common theme was making all efforts to create a positive and good humoured environment and atmosphere for both residents and staff. The feedback we get tends to confirm that we don't do badly in achieving this. So happy *International Happiness Day* to all - We want more thoughts and suggestions on how we grow still further on this as a core aim.

Since our last news update blog we have celebrated several birthdays and anniversaries including **Classic Care Homes 8th year at Pottles** celebrations raising a glass to ongoing determined and positive work to provide safe and fun based everyday life for our residents.

Our **Residents and Guests meeting on the 17th March** was again a raucous affair with a full agenda of news and items of interest -

- We debated the recent CQC (Care Quality Commission) guidance on the **use of cameras in care homes** and agreed the drawbacks outweighed the benefits.
- We talked about **feeling proud in our work** and core values of kindness and being reflective and open to ideas in order to meet people's wants and needs.
- We were very positive about the **'real food campaign'** and our cook, Anne Marie's offerings.
- We **welcomed Richard White** the newly appointed local council lead manager for care homes and shared thoughts on how we can work well together
- We shared many **ideas on plans for the coming weeks as the weather gets nicer** - garden work and volunteering by several of our guests - thanks for that and planting and potting etc.

Our next Residents and Guests meeting is planned for an evening 6-7.30pm on the 19th May - even our early to bed folk are okay about an early evening meeting to enable more of our family guests to come along

We organised a big **'Diabetes in Care Homes' event on the 18th March** attended by 30 fellow Kite Mark care home staff from around the area - we had Dr David Strain (Consultant Diabetic Specialist at the RDE) do a presentation and answer lots of questions and also a regional manager with Diabetes UK tell us about her role and themes about diabetes. Up to 1:4 people in care homes have diabetes and good care and management is essential. Our approach is one of being proactive, working with our primary care colleagues - Dr Mann our lead GP and our community nurse team as well as making sure our staff are confident about signs and symptoms of the condition.

We are sharing the **organising of a further 'Working Together' event with the RDE staff on the 28th April** - We have good links with the local acute hospital team and although we do all we can to avoid people needing hospital care when it is needed we want to be sure we work well together - minimising length of stays and ensuring good communication.

A few quick fire mentions to end:

1. We have had much fun of late trying to decide the most popular name for our house cat Jammy - the theme of **'what's that cat called again!'** has created an hilarious discussion about cats we have owned and what the best name for a cat is - Tiddles, Cheetah, Fido, Tidmus, Spike - to name but a few - don't worry Jammy will remain Jammy at least to many of us that is!!

2. It's worth mentioning that our carer **Kayley won the prize of a half dozen free range Araucana chicken blue eggs in the staff dementia awareness quiz** -drawn by Les at the residents meeting -well done Kayley - big scrambled egg plans this weekend we think
3. We are planning a **fish and chips in newspaper day** over the coming weeks - let us know if you want to register a place - cost price to guests - any surplus will go into the residents garden potting shed / 'Men in Sheds' development fund

More next time after our Easter extravaganza!

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'8 Years at Pottles but who's counting'

Posted by: pottles at 01:44, February 26 2015.

As we fast approach our **8th year anniversary** we try to take a moment to reflect on how far we have come - so much to be proud of so much still to do - as is the way of aspiring to be better all the time - the feedback, comments and conversations we have with residents, families visitors, and health professionals are always positive but we are still looking at improvement and ways to do more -

This very day (25th February) we had our first **Beatles Day** - marking what would have been George Harrison's birthday - a quiz on the basics about the Fab 4, lots of singalong classics and a few people having a go at our improvised **Drumming Lessons Ringo Style** that we quickly realised was causing an almighty din!

We have begun a **Real Food Campaign** too - making sure our new menus and recently appointed new and very energised cook Ann Marie serves up food we really look forward to eating - real food - colour on the plate, traditional dishes with lots of expressed favourites discussed and agreed at our regular residents meetings - **next Residents and Guests meeting on the 17th March starting at 2.30pm**

We are **doing a full review of our paperwork and care plans** - This is a very important part of the care we provide and we feel excited about how we do this although many might feel paperwork to be a chore - we want to make sure details show how we strive to meet the wants and needs of our residents - care and support based on **getting the basics right as a starter with fulfilling lives, being safe and having fun just as important.**

Our coming weeks will see more active living - Spring on its way - tool workshop plans, 'SafeGardening' project in mind and more raised beds and getting out into the early year sun in mind -

Lots of spontaneous singing breaking out - a recent survey at Pottles has given us a list of several favourite musical considerations - certainly country and western extravaganza is on the cards - the powerful and poignant Glen Campbell Oscar winning song 'Im not gonna miss you' may feel too tough to hear but is well deserving of the award.

One of our directors is one of the founder members of the **Devon Quality Kite Mark movement** - This work has focused on supporting learning with fellow passionate residential care providers across Devon including peer reviewing one another's homes - we received a recent review and then our staff reviewed an Exeter care home in the same week - **there is a 'Diabetes in Care Homes' event on the 18th March** we are inviting other care staff as well as our own to hear about best care for people with diabetes - this will include a senior consultant at the RDE and a regional lead from Diabetes UK too

A final mention to a session that can be open to anyone interested - We have local **Dementia Friend Champion, Gina Awad** guesting at our next in house training session at **2.00 - 3.30pm on the 19th March** where all staff and visitors wanting the come along will become one of the 1,000,000 plus dementia friends as part of this national initiative - get in touch for more details and come if you can.

So much more to mention but we'll save if for next time - keep checking in!.

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'It's a serious business living and working in a care home'

Posted by: pottles at 11:18, February 9 2015.

Recent press attention and media coverage has again highlighted poor care in some care homes. Whilst reporting only a small proportion of care homes, these reports do cause alarm, upset and anxiety for those both considering 24/7 care as a positive option for themselves or a loved one as well as for those already in a care home.

Our sadness and frustration is that we, at Pottles, feel we are utterly committed to 3 central themes in how we live and work with our residents and staff. These are:

1. **PRIDE**
2. **KINDNESS**
3. **FUN**

It is a serious business living and working in a care home and we do feel at times it can be tough - in the immortal words of the poet Craig Anderson 'old age doesn't come alone' (1959) so for us we want to make sure we spend enough time doing the serious work but as much on the fun side of living well as we live into older old age too.

Our last blog mentioned lots of news and upcoming events as we greet 2015 - we've made a strong start from raising glasses on Burns Night to singing Tom Jones and Elvis songs and are now **heading for a Valentine's day to remember**. Our wedding days and special day photographs collage is coming along nicely and Darryl, our manager, is preparing some special Valentine's treats for us - not sure yet what he has in mind but we're sure it'll be a memorable day!

Staff training for our in house topics are now set for the year with a bonus for those attending all the topics - the '**Getting the Basics Right**' will address all the core areas in an ongoing way - Nutrition, Hydration, Skin Care, Personal Care Support when needed, Pain, any Long Term Conditions any of our folk are living with, Fall Prevention, Sleeping Well at night, Mobility, Medication, Staying Well and Being Happy and enjoying a Meaningful Life. The list is full and extensive and is underpinned with addressing Dementia as a common strand as we are a specialist home for people living with this condition although some of our residents don't actually have Dementia.

A few final mentions

- our next **Residents and Guests meeting is on the 17th March**
- we are organising a '**Diabetes in Care Homes**' event for our staff and those from other **Kitemark homes on the 18th March** with Dr David Strain - lead diabetic specialist consultant at the RDE presenting
- We celebrated '**End of Sweet Rationing Day**' on the **5th February** with lots of sweets and a quiz (not ignoring the previous item on diabetes of course!) - in 1953 post war rationing ended in Britain
- The **Chinese New Year begins on the 19th February** - we have one of our seniors and her husband part of our staff team and will making the Year of the Sheep fun enlisting support from ONEHUTFULL - local shepherds to help with a **sheep spotting afternoon** - no real sheep visiting sadly but you never know ?!
- we are introducing an **Annual Beatles Commemoration Day on the 25th February**

So get in touch if you want to know more or better still come and join us and help with our plans and ideas - we have a **knitting extravaganza and mouth organ orchestra plans in mind** - not necessarily as part of the same event however

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The year is well under way at Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 01:14, January 27 2015.

Only this week did we manage to get our **third TV fully installed in the conservatory** having had it ready since before Christmas such has been the hecticness of the year so far - we had a really **excellent Elvis Day on the 8th** - most people knowing a fair bit about his life, his hits and his untimely demise. This week saw a **spontaneous Tom Jones singalong** breakout leading us to want a fuller appreciation day in the near future - suggestion was a battle mighty between Tom and Cliff Richard - hard one to call we feel. Our bi monthly **residents and guests meeting on the 13th had a guest attender volunteer from Healthwatch** - who we are supporting in helping them learn more about living well in care homes and how fun and safe are key themes.

Burns night was suitably marked on the 25th with a wee dram for those that wanted and a wee quiz about Scotland covering the difference between a neep and a tattie

Our upcoming **Valentine's Day Extravaganza** will include a collage plan of as many wedding photographs or treasured pictures of special friends as we can muster - we have several already framed all looking fabulous

We are **awaiting a delivery of old tools from our friends at Men in Sheds**(the AgeUK supported project in Cowick St for retired men keen to keep their skills up doing brilliant restorations of tools) they have kindly agreed to link up with our menfolk (and women folk too) to let us help their great work

We have made a very peculiar link with the OneHutFull chaps hoping to enlist them in a **sheep spotting event at Pottles Court** in February or March - it sounds like a real hoot ! The OHF work involves supporting Dartmoor White Face Sheep and sheppard's. The chaps are holding an event at Exeter Cathedral on the 17th-21st February launching an awareness raising campaign - our event is the first part of what we want to do this year as a way of recognising the local farming heritage of our area and that Pottles was once an old farmhouse - more news on this soon

We are also approaching the **8th anniversary of Classic Care Homes Ltd owning Pottles Court** - its been a really good few years with plenty of thrills and not too many spills - we are very keen to mark the occasion with a few memorable moments remembered

Last few mentions -

- we've had a few offers of support from people keen to spend time **befriending** residents - chatting and sharing views and thoughts - we like this idea very much so will be trialing this over the coming months
- our **5 minute crossword challenge** has become very popular and quite a laugh - we got 13 right last time - improving all the time!
- **1st February is National Dignity Day** - we are talking and listening to views on this and will share opinions of what getting this right means for all of us at Pottles - help with thoughts if you can
- we've done some proactive reviewing of **dental care and now hearing loss assessments** - often issues that can be missed so we are following on from the work on glasses and eye awareness so successful recently

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Welcome to 2015 at Pottles

Posted by: pottles at 11:57, January 8 2015.

We enter 2015 with a **sense of excitement and anticipation of great times to come**. Our Christmas festivities combined lots of fun and classic festive cheer with some quirky amusement and downtime for us all. With our local church choir singers as well as various attempts at 'Silent Night' on the cornet by several of our residents - (some more successful than others it has to be said) we can safely say it was a good one. We celebrated nicely and in style and now set out our new year resolutions about meaningful and purposeful everyday life in the context of enjoying day to day pleasures.

A few news items to get us started here:

8th January - we have introduced 'Elvis Day' - The great man would have been 80 years old today - so we are doing a tribute day with some of his biggest hits, a quiz and possibly an Elvis impersonator or 2 - if we can persuade our new manager to wear the gear!

25th January is Burns Night and we will be sampling single malts and trying haggis to mark this annual knees up - volunteers to do a highland fling are being sought so if able and have a kilt please get in touch - bus fares and knee warmers can be provided for anyone willing and able to come along.

We will be doing some **staff training on 'getting the basics right' in January** too - this is not to say we aren't getting the basics right already its simply about making sure we don't lose sight of the ordinary everyday 'quality of life' issues like personal care support where needed, foot care - shoes fitting properly, teeth care, glasses being clean and, if needing to be renewed, this happening as required. The 2 sessions on the 15th and 22nd can be repeated for relatives and friends and we will be talking about this at our **upcoming Residents and Guests meeting on the 13th January - 2.30pm - 4pm**

Two final items for now are the approaching **National Dignity Day on the 1st February** - we are wanting to make sure we spend specific time that day sharing in general conversation and discussion what we mean by dignity and how and why it's so important perhaps checking that we are making sure we are getting this right in our day to day work with our folk - another topic for the meeting on the 13th too. Lastly to mention **we have hosted a meeting with our local Healthwatch volunteers in December talking to them about residential care and dementia (we are also part of the newly launched Exeter Dementia Action Alliance)**. A Healthwatch representative will be joining our meeting on the 13th to hold an informal Q&A about their work and role and how we can help them support and enhance the lives of those living in care homes across Devon.

In the immortal words of Mel Blanc (Disney cartoonist and animator) **"That's All Folks"** - for now at least

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'The festive programme and more to boot!'

Posted by: pottles at 20:17, December 9 2014.

We are really **thrilled to have our new manager Darryl fully installed and raring to go!** Darryl has joined us from Newcare, a local home care service, who we know well. We are very sure the enhanced management team will not just be about great 'back room' administration but also about lots of frontline involvement - so onward and upward we say.

The coming few weeks are a lot about leading up to a Christmas to remember - **already with 2 Christmas trees in the lounge and a scattering of decorations around the place** we are getting into the festive mood with lots of Xmas spirit, carols and plans

We have lots of things booked in to look forward to:

- **Karen with her keyboard** doing some festive ditties at 3pm on the 16th
- **Paul Stevens having a singalong** before our residents Christmas party on the 18th
- our local and regular **local church singers will be holding an in house carol service** on the 22nd

- we are introducing '**Dad's Army Day' on Christmas eve** - with a light hearted quiz, activities, fond memories of the series and watching a few favourite episodes - so dont panic dont panic ! - its almost Christmas
- Christmas Day will see **one of our Directors helping with presents and doing the 'customary sherry round' attempting some carols by cornet - the key word being 'attempting'** it must be said

A few other news items include:

Frank Sinatra day on the 12th is another of our annual events - Old Blue Eyes would have celebrated his 99th this birthday this December so now he is sadly passed - we celebrate his big day for him with some songs, a film and a quiz

We have invited the newly appointed local **Healthwatch team to come and meet us to talk about thier work and discuss what being a Devon Quality Kite Mark Home involves and means.** We will be spending time on the 15th December and hope to have some of our folk (those that want to) meet the volunteers who will in due course be visiting care homes around Devon.

We have introduced the '**5 Minute Crossword Challenge**' - it's a regular team effort to answer as many clues as we can in 5 minutes from which ever crossword we can lay our hands on - not too long but quite a hoot its been so far - 11 words to beat next time!

Our next '**Residents and Guests meeting' is on the 13th January at 2.30- 4pm**

A final thought as we say **Happy Christmas to all** is to follow up the goodwill many fellow Kite Mark care and nursing homes have shown in saying if you are alone, feeling sad or know someone needing a bit of TLC and cheering up then please get in touch - if we know you're out there and want to come and spend time helping or being helped - please get in touch

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Posts

Hot topics at Pottles -it's all go as we head for Christmas!

Posted by: pottles at 10:53, November 26 2014.

The big news is the arrival of **Darryl, our new manager due to start on the 8th December** - Darryl did manage to come to meet residents and families attending our 'Residents and Guest' meeting on the 11th November (more on that later) which was really brilliant. We are so pleased and excited to have Darryl joining us and we will be making sure all those that can and want to, meet him to share thoughts, ideas and plans.

Our Remembrance commemorations were both sombre and powerful - our screen printing exploits produced some lovely fabric poppies - one framed the others shared about the place and the 2 minutes silence on the 11th hour of the 11th was emotional - no bad thing we feel - a big thanks for the poppies and the poignant TV coverage

Our 'Residents and Guests' meeting on the 11th covered our recent CQC inspection, garden project thoughts, everyday life at Pottles - having fun, staying well and safe, upcoming diary dates and events and of course Christmas planning - **Our next meeting will be on the 13th January -2.30-4pm** - a draft agenda is already posted in our lobby - items of course can be added

We are hoping to persuade a **few key 'friends and partners' to offer some guest blogs over the coming months** - our Chiropodist, our local RNIB service leads following the world sight day activities we saw in October leading to several of our residents kitted up with new specs and also our visiting mental

health nurse colleagues so watch this space - **we are also hoping to have one or two family members share some of their thoughts and feelings about being part of the Pottles Court world and 'team supporters'**

A few more diary dates for you

- **'Stir up Friday'** - 28th November - making Christmas mince pies and perhaps a pud or two
- **Frank Sinatra Day 12th December** - old Blue Eyes would have been 99 if still alive so we like to sing a song or 2 of his on this day every year
- **Voting for everyone's 'Favourite Carol' will be taking place over the coming week or two** with winner taking pride of place on the Christmas day play list
- **Dad's Army Day on Christmas Eve this year** - memories to share about this iconic sitcom recently celebrated as a big favourite for many of our residents
- There will be many more Christmas activities too - **our visiting Church singers doing their annual carol service** and at least one hilarious resident party with a taster session on favourite tipples

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Autumn arrives at last !

Posted by: pottles at 15:16, November 6 2014.

Not wanting to necessarily celebrate the arrival of the winds and the chill of autumn its worth noting that with the seasonal changes comes great outdoor colour and a time of the year when **we want to cosy up and get ready for the winter with frosty bright mornings and Christmas to look forward to.** Our plans at Pottles are for a cheery time kick started with our garden firework display last night (5th November) - we spent time before we made all the racket talking about our memories of building bonfires and marking the gunpowder plot in bygone years.

Further seasonal upcoming events will include a **rerun of the conkering challenge** we held on the 24th October - great fun had by both participants and observers - photographs soon to be on our website - the matter of consent to share them is a one we need to consider of course.

We are having another **screen printing afternoon on the 9th November** - last time lots of people joined in producing printed tractors mostly - celebrating our farming heritage and story (Pottles Court is an adapted old farm house).

Our next **open residents and guests meeting will be on the 11th November at 2.30pm** lasting around an hour and a half - details of the current items for debate can be obtained from Jan Sprague (acting manager)

We are delighted to be able to confirm that our **CQC inspection on the 3rd October has now been finalised and has given us a fully compliant 'Bill of Health'** for which we are really proud and pleased with - words like 'Fantastic' were used in the report and whilst we don't plan to rest on our laurels at all we are very grateful all our staff and to those who gave us such great feedback and said such nice things such as our residents and families, our local GP Dr Mann and the community nurse team also.

We **hope to be able to provide news on our search for a new registered manager very soon too** - meanwhile the team are working brilliantly to maintain our positive, balanced, fun based atmosphere and spirit hopefully to soon be complemented with our new day to day leader

Finally, and in readiness for a cosy Christmas, we are awaiting delivery of **12 lovely new armchairs to go with our recently bought small sofa and matching chairs** - we're feeling a bit festive already!

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News and Views from Pottles Court

Posted by: pottles at 09:48, October 23 2014.

It is our aim to do regular updates on news near and far regarding our work and the things that touch and affect us. With this in mind here are a few items of note:

- The **recent CQC (Care Quality Commission) report - 'Cracks in the Pathway'** - this report attracted a lot of interest as it causes headlines suggesting that 9 out of 10 care homes and hospitals provide poor care to people receiving their services- The truth is the CQC report was quite balanced in saying there is a lot of great care and brilliant work going on and sadly headlines often will only talk about the not so good stuff. Our response at Pottles is to feel a little frustrated about the negative reporting on such a useful report and use the report to strengthen our resolve to always be looking at ways to do better, all of the time - this is where you come in - have a look and let us know what you think -
http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20141009_cracks_in_the_pathway_final_0.pdf
- **The Kings Fund Environmental Assessment Tool - 'Is your care home dementia friendly?'** - we are using this to work with residents, relatives, friends and guests to gain feedback and look at having discussions about balancing safe, fun, having choices and age appropriate settings for our folk - have a look at the tool and talk to us -
http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_pdf/is-your-care-home-dementia-friendly-ehe-tool-kingsfund-mar13.pdf
- We have our **Conker Day on the 24th October - 'Conkers at 20 Paces' with conkers from Passchendaele, Belgium** - the scene of great losses during the WWI battles - We want to continue to acknowledge the emotional impact of this tragic loss of life and the 100 years commemorations since the outbreak of the first world war in ways that can reflect our pride and sadness.
- **Upcoming residents and relatives meeting - 11th November** - see previous blog on this - the Kings Fund tool as above will also feature at this meeting
- **How we look after people from minority groups or who may be at risk of experiencing discrimination** - as part of the Devon Quality Kite Mark movement we are always sharing best practice through our peer review process with other care and nursing homes. One area we are looking at is *what happens to people coming into care homes who could be at risk of discrimination?* This could include ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or identity, people with a history of long term mental health problems or those with a learning disability. We are even aware that smokers or pet owners can be disadvantaged when coming into 24/7 care - we have begun to do some work on this with the Exeter based Intercom Trust and our NHS and Local Authority led Care Home Quality Collaborative so... watch this space and give us your thoughts on this please.

Also

We had our **recent CQC inspection that we believe went really well** - we are awaiting our confirmed position which we will share - and hopefully celebrate loudly !

5th November will include some fireworks but no major bonfire sadly - we just don't have the space! we will have some warmed cider though so let us know if you can come

New lounge chairs are being ordered - some of the current ones are looking a bit tired and well used for relaxing and snoozing - which of course is no bad thing !!

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Residents and Guests meeting on Remembrance Day -11th November

Posted by: pottles at 15:31, October 12 2014.

We will be holding an **open meeting for residents, family members, friends and guests at 2.30pm on the 11th November**. We alternate every 2 months between resident only meetings and open meetings so let us know if you are interested in coming as a guest.

Items to include:

- progress we are making in appointing a **new Home Manager**,
- our **very positive recent CQC (Care Quality Commission) inspector visit**,
- and also **one of our Director's recent trip to the WWI battlefield sites in northern France** bringing back a lost brass bomb cap that has already provided much discussion and evoked lots of feelings of pride and sadness regarding the sacrifices many made for king and country. The meeting happens to coincide with Remembrance Day and we will be marking this day with a pause for reflection too.

We will be **thinking about Christmas plans** and what can enable this Christmas to be a real event to look forward to and feel is the best one ever - ideas will be very welcome.

We have a selection on **Conkers brought back from trees in the heart of Passchendaele in France and plan a conker contest on the 24th October**- we will be doing a full risk assessment but will resist wearing too much protective clothing if we feel it may spoil the fun!

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Working in partnership with our community nurses

Posted by: pottles at 08:55, October 12 2014.

How community nurses help to keep residents well at Pottles Court.

We are **extremely lucky to have a very kind, caring and professional team of nurses visiting our residents at Pottles Court** on a regular basis.

The Pottles Court care team, including representatives from the community nursing team, meets at regular intervals.

This enables us to **share pathways of care and discuss general issues that may affect our residents** at Pottles Court.

The community nurses, who are part of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, **provide assessment and nursing care for residents** as and when required, such as dressings and end of life care.

They provide **advice and support** to our care team and monitor assessments and required checks for residents with long-term conditions.

The care team at Pottles Court is always keen to help our residents get across to the surgery (three minutes away) where able and when attending for routine appointments.

This usually involves the resident popping into the village café on the way back for a chat and cuppa.

Together **we share an explicit commitment to ensure people live well at Pottles Court, have choices about their needs and receive the best possible care and treatment.**

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'What does good care in care homes look like?' - it's about fun!

Posted by: pottles at 11:57, September 28 2014.

The question of what does good look like in care homes is often asked these days - we like the answer 'it's a 3 letter word 'FUN'

At Pottles Court we have spent a lot of time thinking and talking about our values and principles in our day to day lives as well as do some sharing about **how to have everyone - staff and residents feeling happy and having fun.** We aspire to have our staff team '**doing the right things well and having fun at work**' - embedding kindness in everything we do with our folk all of the time.

We believe also that 90 is the new 65! so living a balanced life means choices as well as things being done for you, active as well as relaxed, hilarious living with laughter and fun as much as being safe and all the serious stuff being properly attended to.

A moment to say what we think about the secret of happiness in older old age - we like the idea that there are 4 key elements:

1- **Positive anticipation** - having things to look forward to - trips, entertainments, occasions, nice things to eat and a glass of sherry or wine or favourite TV programme for example.

2- **Being able to remember positive past life successes and memories**- these can be emotional of course but can also give us warm feelings of fondness and amusement and validate and create a sense of value when shared and remembered.

3- **Giving and receiving affection** - contact with family, friends and loved ones we see as vital however it's not always easy or possible so closeness and genuine care and kindness is a priority.

4- **Helping others and having a meaningful life** - we often see our residents helping and supporting each other and the staff - getting a good feeling from this - we all need to feel useful and that we are contributing to the happiness of others so we try where we can and where appropriate to enable this to feature in everyday life for our residents too.

Don't forget - dates to know about

- Barefoot Selfie day October 1st
- Fred and Ginger day October 9th
- starting our Brass Polishing Marathon this coming week too

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Keeping up with all the news !!

Posted by: pottles at 12:43, September 15 2014.

We said in our last blog that September was going to be busy and it is already pretty hectic with mixed news to report.

Sadly **our manager of just less than 2 yrs Ingrid West is leaving us for a manager job at a bigger care home closer to where she lives.** Ingrid will be very much missed after bringing a calm and comfortable style of management to Pottles Court as well a number of feather boas for residents entertainment !! - all of which have been very much appreciated. We wish her well and will be planning to keep a link and keep in touch.

On a more cheery note - **our fabulous scarecrow creation - a world war battle scene -WON FIRST PRIZE in the local village competition** pitted against very stiff opposition - a huge thank you to all who voted for us and also to the building team of staff (Kayley and Dawn as leads) and all residents and construction engineers involved. Our fete also was a real success and raised over £200 to go toward our garden workshop and men in sheds masterplan.

Our screen printing day on the 14th was a big hit with lots of tractors (Fordson Majors in fact) produced on a variety of backgrounds all adding to our intention of marking our local and historic farming culture. The next screen printing day will be the 9th November where we will focus on 2 themes Christmas and Remembrance Sunday.

A final few quick mentions for the **next cheesy bread baking day on the 19th, the brass rubbing and polishing day of the 30th** and a **'barefoot selfie day' on the 1st October** for staff and residents to join in with this fundraising project - all voluntary and based on raising money for the millions of people without shoes world wide - it may help our visiting podiatrist with her foot care work too

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A busy month of September

Posted by: pottles at 10:02, September 8 2014.

We reverted to the 6th September for our fete combining it with the village scare crow competition which we are thrilled to announce WE WON !! -we are so proud and pleased at this achievement. The winning scene will become a semi permanent feature in the home and viewing by appointment will be very much encouraged.

We have a **screen printing afternoon on the 14th - 2-4.30** with Laurel from the well known retro / upcycling workshop 'Arietty' in Fore Street Exeter and we will also be having **another cheesy bread day on the 18th and brass rubbing and polishing competition on the 30th** - both events should be a real hoot- the bread making has been really fun and we know we have several competitive staff and residents taking part in the brass polishing!. We are keen to invite anyone caring for a person with dementia in the area as its **National Dementia Carer Day on the 14th** too http://www.awarenessdays.co.uk/ai1ec_event/national-dementia-carers-day/?instance_id=3214

Our **next residents meeting will be on the 16th from 2-4pm** - the list of topics will include our recent coverage of memories of the outbreak of WWI, planned and upcoming activities, the event we are presenting at with the RDE nursing team on the 25th titled 'Working Together between Hospital and Care Homes', and our recent shared care meeting with our community nurse colleagues - I'm sure we will talk about our new cook and how we can take full advantage of his wealth of experience and ideas for menu improvements also.

One of our directors is chairing and presenting at a **conference in London on the 23rd sharing the work Pottles Court has been doing on quality kite mark development** for which we are very excited to show case to a national audience.

Our efforts to get our **'men in shed' style workshop in the garden** are making some progress and we are very keen to enlist willing and able local villagers to offer advice and input as well as any old tools

needing a bit of a makeover - we have the desire and expertise! (well we have desire for sure) give us a call - 01392 -833101

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New date for the Fete - 13th September

Posted by: pottles at 10:36, August 12 2014.

We've decided to move our summer fete again so as not to clash with the **village Scarecrow extravaganza on the 6th September - last year Milly, our entry, came second** and we want to do what we can to go one better this year - assuming we can devote all the time, energy and expertise to the job of upgrading Milly ! not an easy job and she was so brilliant. Our plan for the 13th will be to invite all and everyone to join us from 2-5pm to pop in and check out the table top sale, have a cream tea and have a go at knocking out a tune on a mouth organ - we are still keen to organise a masterclass workshop for our residents and staff. We will be having an official christening for our super dooper new dishwasher too - names will be submitted by residents and the winner will be decided after a vote by all those attending the fete - we may do the same for our cooker, microwave and kettle if successful!

We will be recruiting people to join our **Screen Printing Afternoon from 2-4pm on the 14th with special guest workshop lead Laurel from the Fore Street based 'Arietty' workshop centre** in Exeter - again this will be an informal open to all session. We hope to do lots of interesting and amusing creative things with Laurel on a regular basis.

We are really hoping you can have the weekend of the 13th and 14th September in your diaries and on your kitchen calendars and come and get involved

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Residents and Relatives Meeting - 14th July 2014

Posted by: pottles at 18:49, July 14 2014.

We held one of our **bi-monthly residents and relatives meetings** today. The agenda was action packed as ever covering some common and less common themes for us all. We had 11 attenders- some dipping in for a short while (the meeting was from 2.30-4.30 in the end) and the range of topics included **family trees, lefthandedness** (we have the obligatory 1:8 ratio as with national trends) and the **pronunciation of Topsham** to mention some of the less common topics.

We did address **menus and food** - mostly satisfied customers with suggestions to add more salt, 'colouring up the plates' with more veg and the beef stew debate continues. We are having a **2nd bread making afternoon this Friday - 2-4pm** with one of the Directors after the success of the last one. We also talked a lot about **atmosphere and environment** as well as every day life living at Pottles

The **garden workshop and summerhouse plans** are still progressing although slowly and most people fancied doing **more garden related activities**.

Other headlines were - the upcoming **WWI commemoration 100 year since its outbreak plans** (4th August), celebrating Audrey winning the world cup last night playing as Germany in the Pottles World Cup Sweepstake, **hairdo's and the secret of a good night's sleep**.

Suggested improvements also included a date and year clock to add to the large traditional clock in the lounge, **Trying out Bingo** - by popular request and how possible might it be to get everybody into a **1964 old landrover for a tour of the village** ! - we decided that a virtual tour might be best however

One of our residents set a challenge about discovering why her father's nickname was 'Goof' - we aim to do some detective work prior to the next residents only meeting in September (date to be agreed after the **6th September Pottles Court Summer Fete**) - we agreed that family, relatives, friends and advocates plus special guests can be extended special invitations too however

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[Dementia Friends open meeting -9th July 6.30-8pm - at Westbank Health Hub, Exminster](#)

Posted by: pottles at 06:57, July 2 2014.

In association with the **Alzheimer's Society Initiative** to give people an understanding of dementia and the small things people can do that make a difference, the team at Pottles Court are part of an open event on the 9th July talking and hearing about dementia.

There have been **long established links between Pottles and Westbank and much work has gone on to establish 'Exminster as a dementia friendly village'**. We have shared ideas on how we can promote better awareness of the condition, help people feel able to seek and get help if needed and for those with dementia - live well.

There remains a lot of anxiety, myths and uncertainty about dementia and the event will be an opportunity to share views and opinions in an informal way as well as **become one of the 1,000,000 dementia friends that the Alzheimer's Society initiative is seeking to achieve.**

For further details please **contact Gina Awad on 07941459439** - Hope to see you there

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[Pottles Court Late Summer Fete - date change to 6th September](#)

Posted by: pottles at 11:27, June 19 2014.

After great success with our 2 Hog Roast events last year we are announcing our upcoming **Pottles Court Fete - on the afternoon of the 6th September**

We haven't yet finalised details but you can be sure it will be worth pencilling it into your diary. We would be thrilled to have villagers both come along and meet us all (residents and staff) and better still, **join in with the planning and perhaps volunteer to help make it a fantastic, memorable and hilarious day** - we are really getting behind the principle of the best care we all want when we live in a care home is mostly about having fun - so why not come and be part of the party planning group - give us a call - 01392 -833101

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Excellent service at the RDE

Posted by: pottles at 11:09, June 19 2014.

We do our very best to only trouble the local hospital when absolutely necessary and are very committed to KPOOH and GPOOH - keeping and getting people out of hospital that is. Older people go to hospital too readily sadly mostly when living isolated lives not getting the care and support they need and deserve, however one of our residents had a short stay at the RDE recently after feeling poorly. The 'Pre Return to Pottles' assessment we carried out visiting Culm ward recently was an example of exceptional shared care and exemplary joint working where staff were very friendly, supportive, professional and gave time to both our assessing staff and our resident covering all current needs and onward care options. We often hear negative comments about health and social care front line staff and we wanted to say something about when we experience great care Thanks so much. We have already made sure the senior clinical and management are aware of our views too.

One of our directors the day before had been involved in an event addressing 'The Perfect Discharge' led and attended by lots of clinical staff at the RDE. It is pleasing to feel that the planning and meetings that go on are really making a difference at the frontline

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May 'Resident's Meeting' key points

Posted by: pottles at 13:14, June 7 2014.

We had a residents meeting a few weeks ago and several big topics emerged

Balancing being safe and having fun - having fun it was felt sometimes requires a few risks needing to be taken - recent indoor soft ball tennis activities can testify to that !!! - the vote from this meeting was let's have more fun please

We agreed on a big review of menus and having a makeover on the range and choice of foods - interestingly unanimous opinion was for no foreign foods please so alas no more curry, pastas and frogs legs (we hadn't actually introduced the frogs legs just yet but it seems they are off the menu from here on).

Activites and entertainments - we have a wide spread of events coming up - a world cup sweepstake (we are preparing the support package for the person who draws England of course), Wimbledon tennis sweepstake, National Care Home Open Day - 20th June 4.30-6.30 cream tea festival and resident birthday big bash plus more - a vote for more quizzes was overwhelmingly noted- so more quizzes being planned - do you know Judy Garland's real name? give us a call and we can tell you

Using photographs to promote positive living in care homes - all those at the meeting were very happy that we use photographs to promote our work - we discussed consent, confidentiality and capacity to agree - we really want to show the outside world that living a full and happy life in a 24/7 supported 'home from home' is something to celebrate and be proud of - we will need to do this carefully and well but its one we all felt in agreement about

Joint 'Dementia Friends Information Session' with Westbank - 6.30-8pm 9th July - we will be offering an informal 'talk and and hear about dementia' open forum meeting - come along and let us tell you about the condition, how to live well into older old age and help us ensure Exminster is a *Dementia Friendly Village*

Bread Making and dough juggling went down well yesterday

Our next residents meeting will include an invite to friends, families and carers - Monday 14th July 2.30 -4pm

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How do we commemorate WW1?

Posted by: pottles at 12:57, June 2 2014.

We have had some discussions at Pottles with staff and residents about the most appropriate way to acknowledge the fact that on the **4th August this year it will be 100 years since the outbreak of World War 1**. We have talked about the tragic loss of life of a generation of Britain's youth and across Europe the lives of so many people too. We have talked about the pride in how people defended this country and the sadness of lost lives too. Whilst none of our residents were alive then many feel a link through family and local communities. So.... **How should we commemorate the date? Please let us have your thoughts.**

This **Friday (6th June) marks 70 years since the D-Day Normandy landings** too - One of our Directors has chosen to do some **cheesy bread making with staff and residents** - this was a special request from our menfolk interestingly at a recent residents meeting!! - So men in charge of bread production perhaps...

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Local collaborations

Posted by: pottles at 17:30, May 24 2014.

A busy week for us all - it was **Dementia Awareness Week** (18-24th May) which provided us with a range of fun and serious activities at Pottles for residents and staff - last night at 2am was an impromptu training session for unsuspecting staff on some key care areas as well as some energised talk about the upcoming '**Celebration of Great Staff Day**' - now extended over 2 days on the **1st and 2nd June** with the headline being a **chocolate tasting test challenge** - In that it was one of our folk who chose the theme we are thinking we will not restrict the tastings to staff only !!

We had a really excellent meeting talking about a variety of ideas to pursue for energised initiatives with our local **Exeter Vale Tesco Community Champion, Debbie** and followed it up with a guided tour of the 'Tesco Experience' interactive display at the Devon County Show where one of our residents was given 5 star treatment which included tastings, learning how to fillet fish and 'guessing the name of the piglet' -we went for Daniel - but not sure of the outcome on that one?

We also had a great likeminded meeting with **Malcolm at the fantastic 'Men in Sheds'** unit in Cowick St, Exeter - I tweeted later about our very impassioned discussions saying 'we anticipate following up our idea sharing with some adrenalin fuelled men in shed care home antics in the near future' - once we've sorted out our new Pottles based shed/ workshop / summer house

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National Care Home Open Day -20th June 2014

Posted by: pottles at 15:38, May 19 2014.

This is the second year of this national event launched to promote the the great work going on in care homes across the country.

We, at Pottles, are really proud of how we provide a safe and fun environment for our folk and how we strive to make sure people spend more time laughing and enjoying life than feeling like just another older person being bored, anxious and lonely - often the experience of people coming to live at Pottles after a long while on their own living alone in their previous home. The themes we will be sharing on the day with anyone interested in joining us from 4.30-6.30pm will include:

TALKING AND HEARING ABOUT DEMENTIA

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS IN OLDER OLD AGE

KEEPING ACTIVE AND BUSY

BALANCING FUN WITH BEING SAFE

We are really hoping to have lots of people coming along - please let us know you are coming so we can get the right amount of scones, clotted cream and jam at the ready - 01392 833101 or 07825 702184

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[Judy Garland Day 10th June 2014 at Pottles Court](#)

Posted by: pottles at 12:17, May 6 2014.

Last year to mark what would have been Judy Garland's 92nd birthday we introduced 'Judy Garland Day' at Pottles Court - we had a very **informal lighthearted quiz, talked about her life and watched 'The Wizard of Oz' of course**

We are doing this again this year - let us know if you want to come and join us - its a classic film of course anyone interested and free on the 10th should get in touch and book a seat - a special invitation to those willing to come in full Wicked Witch of the East costume or even dressed as a munchkin - we failed to attract any such attendees last year but are hoping to do better this year with our new website to advertise more effectively

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[Welcome to the Pottles Court Blogging page](#)

Posted by: pottles at 11:56, May 6 2014.

After some time getting to a point when we can 'go live' with **our website and news from Pottles updates here begins what we hope will be entertaining, informative, and exciting news and bulletins of what's new and of interest to all those curious about life and work factors at Pottles Court, Exminster.**

Together with fellow directors, Ingrid (our manager at Pottles) and one or two special guest contributors we aim to add regular items and links to relevant topics.

For example - we have a wider range of upcoming events, occasions and celebrations and we will plan to share and update our website on with photos (fully consented to by those involved) and short stories about what we got up to and how we got on etc....

Today 60 years ago Sir Roger Bannister ran the first ever 4 minute mile- what an amazing feat - fitting that we should launch our website and blogsite on such a monumental anniversary. Today we are

marking this at Pottles with an activity and discussion theme with staff and residents about records that we feel we've broken in our lifetime !! Should be an interesting afternoon talking about these I suspect.

So - Keep an eye on the website and **if you want to say something with us or about us let us know** - we will always be keen to talk with you about how we work at Pottles, what we believe in and how we aspire to doing better all of the time and making sure our staff and residents are having fun and enjoying life at Pottles Court

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