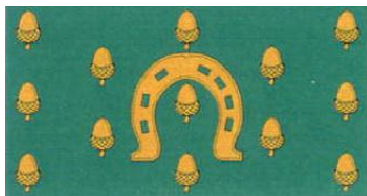


# Rutland Reminders

Therapy through singing for people with dementia

Newsletter No.2

August 2011



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## **Our first year**

There is an increasing public awareness of the large number of older people experiencing memory problems. The loss of short term memory and associated communication difficulties has been highlighted in documentaries on radio and TV. These endorse research evidence that long term memory, often associated with music and poetry learned when young, can be recalled even when short term memories fail. Rutland Reminders offers an opportunity for Guests and Carers to meet to share memories through singing favourite songs from their young days, listening to poetry, and chatting over tea.

## **The sessions**

We meet at “Brambles”, the social centre at Prime Life’s Rutland Care Village, from September to December, and from March to, July, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month, from 3.45pm to 5.30pm. In our first year, which began in September 2010, we held 14 sessions and were joined by Guests and their Carers from across the county. We celebrated Christmas at our December meeting, with carols and gifts for our Guests; we completed our first year with strawberry teas at our July sessions.

## **Who are we?**

### **..... a view from a Carer who is also a Volunteer**

“We have been living with my mother’s Alzheimer’s for about eight years, so when I saw the poster in AGE UK’s window about a singing group for people with memory problems I made contact at once.

I knew something about this sort of “singing therapy”, which is why I was so excited about the group’s formation, and we were not disappointed. My mother and I have been going along since the sessions began and, while nothing will bring her memory back, the combination of words and music helps her to reach memories I never knew she had. When she does sing the words she knows them all; it’s as if she reaches the end of a line and the next unrolls before her; sometimes she’s happier to provide a dum-de-dum-de-dum accompaniment. The sessions are just about long enough for her to be reasonably engaged. Although she sometimes needs to be persuaded to get into the car, when we arrive, sitting in the circle, she will say “I like it here. Do you get tea as well?”

For carers, accepting the words “dementia” and “Alzheimers” can be difficult. Rutland Reminders is a place for us to do something together, to meet others, compare experiences over tea and biscuits, and realise you’re not on your own. For me that’s as valuable as bringing my mother to a place she has become familiar with and singing along with her.

I recently became a volunteer too. We are a varied group: some have had a family experience of dementia caring, others want to do something to help with this hidden condition. We are all CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) approved for working with vulnerable adults and have had an excellent training session, looking at how both we and the people we support cope with changing situations, with valuable advice and useful strategies suggested. Volunteers also meet to practise the songs and have an opportunity to support each other and to learn more from a growing collection of magazines, books and CDs.

Participating in the sessions reminds me of the camp fires when I was a Guide; there’s the same kind of enjoyment from doing something together with others and making a fabulous sound. You might be amazed to hear that a group of people with no particular pretensions to choral singing can sing simple rounds in four parts without turning a hair, but we can. Now my mother ends Frère Jacques with the French “Din Din Dong” rather than “Ding Dang Dong”, which is how she taught it to me nearly 50 years ago”.

### **Future developments: RR Outreach**

As many people who might like to join us are in residential care and are not able to come to the sessions in Oakham, an Outreach group is offering a pilot session at two Care Homes in Rutland. These will be evaluated when the new programme begins in September.

### **Publicity**

- The Newsletter is circulated to all Rutland communities, via churches, medical centres, voluntary agencies, WIs, libraries, etc.
- Articles and photos have been published in the local press
- Our Chairman has been interviewed on Rutland Radio.
- A speaker is available to talk about Rutland Reminders.
- Our website is well worth visiting: [www.rutlandreminders.org.uk](http://www.rutlandreminders.org.uk)

**Please pass this on to anyone who would be interested.**

**Newsletters are issued twice a year, keeping all in touch.  
Contact our Organiser, Diana Ellard, on 07779 0413889.**

### **Rutland Reminders Calendar for the remainder of 2011**

September 6 <sup>th</sup>	Session A
September 20 <sup>th</sup>	Session B
October 4 <sup>th</sup>	Session A
October 18 <sup>th</sup>	Session B
November 1 <sup>st</sup>	Session A
November 15 <sup>th</sup>	Session B
December 6 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Party for Sessions A and B

### **Our Honorary Helpers:**

Legal Adviser:	Philip Robson of Daltons, Market Place, Oakham
Accountants:	Lamin & White, Dean Street, Oakham
Trainer in Dementia:	Jill Perry
Pianist:	Diana de Wet

### **Our sponsors:**

Jean Adderley;	Sir David Davenport-Handley;
Hambleton Hall;	The Rutland Singers;
The Rutland Trust;	Rutland Lions;
Lands' End, Oakham;	Linecross plc;
Walking for Health	St Mary's Church, Greetham
Melton Mowbray Bldg Soc;	Pryke Hygiene
Reed Plastic Containers, Oakham,;	

**Cover picture:** Charles Lawrence, Chairman, receiving a cheque from Joyce Lucas, Volunteer, and Don Mead, member, "Walking for Health"

*Photo: Stamford Mercury*