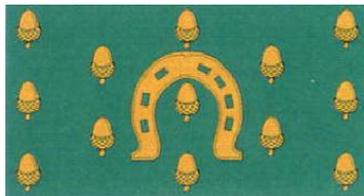


Rutland Reminders

Therapy through singing for people with dementia

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Rutland Reminders Two Years On

Nationally and globally, the rising number of older people experiencing problems associated with memory loss and the ability to communicate is causing concern. Notably, the frequent use of the term “dementia”, previously a word that was avoided, recognises the need to accept the sad fact that 1 in 4 people over the age of 65 is likely to be affected by the condition, with consequent stress on carers. Statistics suggest that there are currently 800,000 people with dementia and 600,000 carers in the UK. Research has shown that although short-term memory fails, memories associated with music and poetry learnt when young can still be recalled. Rutland Reminders, a voluntary group, was set up to provide an opportunity for guests and their carers to meet to share memories through singing favourite songs from their young days, and chatting over tea.

The sessions

In September 2010 we held our first session at Brambles, the social centre at Prime Life’s Rutland Care Village, on the first Tuesday of the month. We were joined by guests and carers from across the county. In the spring of 2011, a second group was set up, which meets on the third Tuesday. Each session is managed by two teams of four: the Organisers, who liaise with volunteers, greet the guests and oversee tea; and the Leaders of the singing. Over the summer a pilot group of volunteers visited the three Residential Homes in Rutland who provide care for people with dementia. This pilot was so successful that monthly ‘Outreach’ visits continue to each Home in turn. Special occasions are celebrated, such as Christmas, when the two groups at Brambles join together for a party, and for a Strawberry Tea in the summer.

Who are we?

We are managed by Trustees, with professional support. We are able to provide our sessions at no cost to our guests and carers thanks to donations from our loyal sponsors. Volunteers are the key members of our team. They all have clearance for working with vulnerable adults from the Criminal Record Bureau, and attend training programmes. Singing ability is not a priority, nor special skills, although some volunteers have had experience of caring for a family member or professional expertise. Their most important asset is a willingness to help both guests and carers. Many carers have found accepting the reality of dealing with even the words “dementia” and “Alzheimers” can be difficult. At Rutland Reminders they meet others carers, compare experiences over tea and biscuits, and perhaps, through hearing a tune or a rhyme, enjoy a memory recalled.

Our Jubilee Celebration

On June 12th, fifty guests, carers and volunteers, many colourfully dressed in red, white and blue, met to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Queen's Accession. Brambles was festooned with flags and bunting and a spectacular tea had been prepared by the Organisers and Volunteers. We sang as many London songs as we could remember, including "London's Burning", which we learned at school, "They're Changing Guard at Buckingham Palace" and "Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner", with old music hall songs and the "Hokey Cokey" for good measure. The afternoon ended with something more patriotic: the loyal toast in Elderflower Champagne and the National Anthem.

During the afternoon memories of the Coronation on TV and of meetings with the Royal Family were recalled. One guest had visited Buckingham Palace three times; on the first occasion her father received a medal; she also met the Queen when she came to Oakham in 2002 during the Golden Jubilee year. Another remembered the Queen coming to the Castle in 1967. Joy remembered waving to the Queen in Oakham – and she waved back; Peter was married in Coronation year; Robert's father worked at Sandringham. No-one could recall a street party in Oakham, but most remembered that it rained. No surprise!

The Outreach group continued the celebration at Tixover Grange, where residents took over the afternoon with personal requests, brief memories of sixty years ago and enthusiastic singing. It was especially rewarding for visiting relatives to see the residents actively involved in the session and also for the volunteers, who were touched by the residents' responses.

Future events

The established pattern continues, with sessions at Brambles on the first and third Tuesday afternoons each month, from September to December and from March to July. The Outreach group visits on the second Tuesday take place every month in succession at Ketton; Manton; and Tixover.

On Tuesday, 28th August, volunteers meet to sing more songs from our new Song Book, published in January 2012.

On September 25th Jill Perry will lead a Further Training session for Volunteers.

Please pass this newsletter on to anyone interested in joining us, as Carer or Guest with dementia, or as a potential Volunteer.

Contact our Organiser, Diana Ellard, ☎ 07790 413889

**Newsletters are issued twice a year, keeping all in touch.
Contact our Organiser, Diana Ellard, on 07779 413889**



Honorary Helpers:

Legal Adviser: Philip Robson of Daltons, Market Place,
Oakham

Accountants: Lamin & White, Dean Street, Oakham

Trainer in Dementia: Jill Perry

Pianists: Diana de Wet and Barry Collett

Our sponsors:

Jean Adderley; Sir David Davenport-Handley;
Hambleton Hall; The Rutland Singers; The Rutland Trust; Rutland
Lions; Lands' End, Oakham; Linecross plc;
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Melton Mowbray Building Society; Pryke Hygeine;
Reed Plastic Containers, Oakham; Rutland Dispensary

Cover pictures: Party to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee,
June 2012 (by Richard Adams)