



Brian Lewis House

Abbeyfield

Brian Lewis

HOUSE NOTES

Issue 8 Autumn 2009

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New Chair for the Society as Jim Wade sadly steps down



Charles Ellis, new Chair

In our spring newsletter we gave a summary of Jim Wade's Chair report to the April 2009 AGM. Very soon after that, unfortunately, Jim had to stand down from that role and as a trustee, due to ill health.

Jim joined the Society as a trustee in May 2006 and was unanimously elected Chair in January 2007. He was our very first American to take up the role! This followed a long career working at the BBC. Jim brought to the Chair's role all the qualities needed, including energy, enthusiasm, warmth and dedication. He also cared for people – and it showed. His enthusiasm and energy drew him quickly onto the North Thames Regional Council.

We are delighted that Jim is now making a recovery from his illness. All the residents, staff and fellow trustees miss him and look forward to seeing him again soon.

In May 2009, Deputy Chair, Charles Ellis, was duly elected as the Society's new Chair. Charles has known Abbeyfield Oxford since 1996, when his own mother was a resident at Brian Lewis House for a while. He joined as a trustee in 2000 and also served on the Regional Council between 2004 and 2007.

Jim brought to the Society a fresh vision of how it might develop and provide a better service to the local community. Charles shares that vision and is confident that the Society will remain strong both financially and in its delivery of service to its residents.

Summer sun, song, poetry, and much more!

The last few months have seen a welcome increase in the number of social and cultural events for BLH residents to enjoy.

On Saturday 13th June, to tie in with national 'Abbeyfield Week', the Society held its annual summer garden party. As in previous years, a mixture of residents, staff, relatives, trustees and friends were able to enjoy the splendid garden at BLH as well as tucking into a wonderful buffet laid on by the staff team.

Other recent events have included:

- * A couple of song recitals
- * A talk by Rebecca Jones of overseas-development charity, Opportunity International, about her recent visit to India to visit supported projects there
- * A poetry reading session – where several residents offered readings or recitals from memory. Very impressive!
- * A talk by resident Mary Whittome's son, Simon, on his sailing part way around the world



Well done to all for the great food served at the summer garden party!

Several other events are in the pipeline. Thanks go especially to trustee Laidon Alexander for co-ordinating much of this programme. If you have an idea for a suitable event, please do let us know.

Farewell to Padma Bailey

After too short a stay of only nine months, Padma (or Pat as she was known) has left BLH to return to Colombo, in her native Sri Lanka. Much of her family is based there and, despite many years in this country, Pat has decided that homeland is best.

On her final day all the residents and some staff and trustees joined her in a farewell drink. On the previous day Pat had played her last game of Scrabble with Mary Fraser – showing how her sharp mind and bright personality had enriched the House.

Everyone in the Society wishes Pat the very best back home and we hope to hear from her in the future sometime.

Room Vacancy

There is currently one room at Brian Lewis House that is available for occupancy. Please contact our Administrator Jo Curtis on 01865 790439 for further details.

Change of Society's Administrator.

Sad farewell to Jean

Jean Moir has recently retired after 10 years working as the Society's Administrator. Adding to several other expressions of thanks and good wishes received over the summer, the Society formally thanked Jean at a short presentation at the end of the May Trustee meeting.



Jean with Charles and Brendan at the May Trustee meeting.

In a short speech on behalf of the residents, Brendan Ryan recounted how Jean's career prior to joining the Society had included working 14 years in the NHS and teaching English as a foreign language in east Africa. Jean had been a great asset to the House over her long time with the Society and he thanked her on behalf of all the residents for her kind support and service to everyone.

Newly elected Chair, Charles Ellis, also said a few words on behalf of the trustees. He had become a trustee at about the same time as Jean had started with the Society and looked back on the excellent job Jean had done in that time, including doing so much to help the Society achieve the 'Abbeyfield standard' of quality. He commended her for her great character and positive spirit in serving the Society.

Two bouquets were presented to Jean and everyone wished her a wonderful retirement.

And a welcome to Jo

Jo is our new Administrator, who started this summer.

Jo lives in Wolvercote, north Oxford, having moved from Cirencester eleven years ago. She started her working life as a secondary school teacher and then switched to a second career in administration, working in the Environmental Department of Oxford University.



Jo at Brian Lewis House

Jo is married to Ian, with two boys, aged 6 and 9. It is quite a sporty family, with much of Jo's time spent cheering her sons on at football, cricket, and other sporting competitions! The family also loves spending time on beaches, surfing and rock pooling, with Cornwall and Dorset being favourite destinations.

We wish Jo every success in her new role.

If you would like further information about Brian Lewis House and the Abbeyfield Oxford Society, please give Jo a call on 01865 790439 or email jo.curtis@abbeyfieldoxford.org