



*Brian Lewis House*

# Abbeyfield

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## HOUSE NOTES

*Issue 12 — Spring 2011*

**Brian Lewis House provides very sheltered accommodation for 10 elderly people, in the heart of St Clements, Oxford. Residents live independent lives, in en-suite rooms, and enjoy home cooked meals together as part of the community — a lifestyle which combines independence and comfort, with security and flexible daily support.**

**A huge welcome to baby Patrick and to our new House Manager, Clare.**



Chaowadee and baby Patrick, just three weeks old.

Isn't he gorgeous? At last baby Patrick arrived, weighing in at just under 9lbs at birth. Equally welcome is Clare Barden our new House Manager, who took over from Chaowadee in March. Clare has been working at the Pilsdon Community in Dorset — a rather larger community than Brian Lewis House, which she has promised to tell us more about soon — but is adjusting to cooking rather smaller portions brilliantly!

Clare has lived and worked in and around Oxford for many years, and has just bought a house on the Cowley Road so is not too



Resident Joan and baby Patrick. We're sure that he's always this peaceful!

far away. We hope that Clare will have a very enjoyable time with us, and all look forward to getting to know her better.

A big welcome too to Karen Bipat who joins us as a new trustee this month. More in the next issue.

**Got a problem? Lost your key or need a hand to sort something out? Something to be fixed? Please do have a word with Clare (tel 240474) Jo (tel 790439) or ask at the next Residents Meeting and the staff or one of the Trustees will try to assist.**

Many thanks to Mary Fraser for spotting the news article below, in the Telegraph, recently:

## It's official—a snooze after lunch does you good.

### Siesta can protect against high blood pressure

Having an afternoon nap can help protect against heart disease, a study has suggested. Researchers say that having a 45 minute catnap helps lower a person's blood pressure more quickly after a stressful event. And with the average night's sleep now two hours shorter than it was 50 years ago, researchers claim having a siesta provides a simple way of improving cardiovascular health.

Researchers from Allegheny College in Pennsylvania, USA, conducted an experiment which saw 85 healthy students split into two groups. One group was allotted 60 minutes each day during which they could sleep, the other did not sleep during the day.



Participants in the experiment, the findings of which are published in Springer's International Journal of Behavioural Medicine, were then asked to complete a complex mental subtraction sum designed to raise blood pressure. Students who napped for between 45-60 minutes were found to have significantly lower blood pressure rates during the post-activity recovery phase than those who had not slept. Happy snoozing!

### Enquiries

There is currently one vacancy at Brian Lewis House, and a short waiting list exists for those who want to be considered for future places.

For further information, or to arrange a visit to us, please contact our Administrator, Jo Curtis on:

tel: 01865 790439

Email:  
[admin@abbeyfieldoxford.org](mailto:admin@abbeyfieldoxford.org)

Postal address: The Abbeyfield Oxford Society, 80 St Clements, Oxford, OX4 1AW

When a room becomes free we invite applicants to visit us and find out about life at Brian Lewis House. We look forward to meeting more applicants and new friends in the coming weeks.

### New faces joining us soon

We are very much looking forward to three new residents joining us soon. The first, who has visited us throughout this winter will be moving into the flat, as soon as he has sold his home in Surrey. Currently chairman of the Residents' committee where he lives, Tony is looking forward to playing a full role in Brian Lewis House, as well as being closer to his family in Oxfordshire.

Our second applicant from Headington, just up the hill, remembers Brian Lewis House as a vicarage. He is hoping to move into room 10, and looking forward to bringing several book cases to house his large book collection.

He shared a lovely story about befriending an elderly neighbour in Headington, who used to sit on his garden wall and chat for an hour or so, whilst taking his daily walk—only to discover after some months that his new friend was JR Tolkein, the famous author!

All being well, a further applicant will be visiting us for her trial visit in the next week or two. This lady comes from Plymouth. Having spent a day with us last year and met Chaowadee, she is hoping now to make Brian Lewis House her home, near to her daughter in Oxford, and to sharing memories of Cornwall and Devon, with Joyce!

# Taking medication—keeping safe

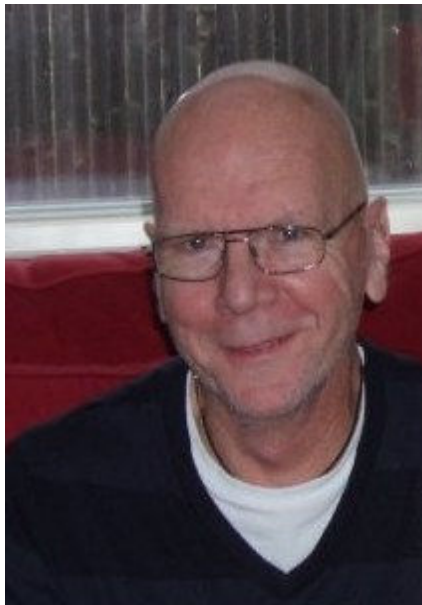
Abbeyfield residents are all “self medicating” which means that you are able to take and look after your own tablets/medicines. To help you to do this, pharmacists are very happy to put your tablets into a dosset box, so that you don't have to remember to take pills from different boxes and jars. Abbeyfield would like to encourage everyone to use one of these, so if you don't have one, and would like one, please do ask Clare or Jo. If you prefer to keep your tablets in different bottles, Abbeyfield have asked us to get you to sign a form for us - we will bring one around soon for you.

We will shortly be putting a lockable cupboard in each bathroom so that you can keep your pills safe. We also have a lockable box in the kitchen, so that if you prefer to keep your tablets there, we can help you to keep an eye on them and remind you at mealtimes, or other times, if you have forgotten to take one. Happy to help!



A dosset box—available from your chemist

# Getting to know you—Trustee Jim Wade



The Abbeyfield Oxford Newsletter/Magazine gives us chance to get to know staff, residents and trustees a little better. In this issue, Jim Wade, who has been a trustee of the society for five years now, and who, when pushed, describes himself as “Laid back, thoughtful and quiet.” tells us a little bit more about himself. . . .

I was born in San Diego, California, where my father was a teacher and coach at a military academy, after he was discharged from the U.S. Coast Guard in which he served during the later stages of the war. My earliest memories are of attending weekly parades of the cadets at the academy with my mother. We lived across the street from the academy and would go to the parades each week and to the football, basketball, and baseball games my father coached. My wife and I went on holiday to San Diego four years ago and went back to the area where the academy was located, and it has been

demolished and replaced with a shopping center!

After graduating from Wittenberg University with a BA in History I taught History and was on the coaching staff at a High School in Ohio. I then joined the U.S. Air Force where I was in Crash and Rescue, driving and crewing Crash Trucks. I spent two years in Florida followed by two years at RAF Upper Heyford near Bicester –which how I came to be over here.

I met my wife while I was here . We returned to Ohio after my discharge where I was a Equal Employment Opportunity Officer with the US Government. We returned here in 1978 and shortly afterwards joined BBC News. I worked in Newsgathering for 25 years before taking redundancy/early retirement in 2003.

I worked in the Television Newsroom, Radio Newsroom , and the World Service Newsroom. The last ten years I was an Intake Editor and Field Producer. I was sent to cover stories in Israel, Geneva Switzerland, Kyoto Japan, Washington DC , Dayton Ohio, Lima Peru, Buenos Aires, and South Africa.

If asked, I wouldn't change anything from my career. I had a fantastic time in news, working with brilliant people and covering some important events, not to mention the travel.

4th of May 2009 would be both the most memorable and significant day of my life. It was the day I was told I had bladder cancer and that I would have to be treated for it. The next two months were a build-up to major surgery on my birthday on July 20th when I had major surgery for the removal of my bladder and my prostate, and lymph nodes around my groin. I was given an Ileat Conduit and now have to wear a stoma bag. It was a massive change to my lifestyle and life.

I don't have a favourite particular book, but enjoy immensely anything written by Allan W Eckert or Stephen Ambrose. Eckert is an Ohio author who has written several "faction" novels about the settlement of the Ohio Valley. His writings are very rich in detail and bring the area to life 220 years ago at the earliest settlement of the Ohio Valley. He once described a Native American attack on settlers: the Native Americans attack in canoes coming out of a river where it flows into the Ohio River. This river junction is still immediately across the river from where my family lives and everytime I see that spot I think of the incident. Stephen Ambrose is a historian of the highest class. His books on the 2nd World War are particularly well written and full of insight, particularly his book on D-Day.

I joined the Abbeyfield Board in 2006 after deciding I wanted to do some volunteer work. I registered with a volunteer resource agency and was put into contact with Abbeyfield . I was interviewed by Charles and David Wood-Robinson and felt so at ease and comfortable that I had no hesitation at joining.

The most pleasant memory I have is when he hosted a group from Abbeyfield International who were having their annual meeting locally. They were all so impressed by the House and the residents all enjoyed having them visit. They were representing Abbeyfield Societies from Belgium, New Zealand, Canada, U.S. amongst others.

The head of the Abbeyfield Society International and the Executive of the Abbeyfield Society were also there. It was a very successful visit and they all went away with a lasting impression of Brian Lewis House; they all commented on how they could feel the friendly atmosphere as soon as they walked in the door. And that's very much how I see the Oxford House too: A pleasant, caring community, with which I very much enjoy being involved.



# 51st Annual General Meeting of the Abbeyfield Oxford Society 20th April 2011

On a Wednesday evening last month, trustees, residents and friends gathered together for our 51st AGM. The evening began with a moment's silence for absent friends. The Chairman then presented his review of the year, culminating with a farewell gift for Laidon Alexander who stands down from the Committee of Trustees after two and a half years. We are delighted, however, that Laidon will stay on as a volunteer at Brian Lewis House and hopes to continue to arrange our in house entertainments, and to visit our residents weekly.

In his report, the Chairman drew attention to the fact that dividends on the Society's investments have kept us in profit over a number of years, but that the charges to residents have not always covered the costs of running the house. This will be looked at closely as rents are reviewed this summer, but Charles also announced a new fund to be set up by the Abbeyfield Oxford Society to assist any residents who may find difficulty in meeting their fees. The Abbeyfield Oxford Society is a not for profit organisation, and fees will always be kept at the minimum level necessary to maintain standards in the house, whilst keeping prices accessible to as many applicants as possible.

The evening concluded with Hester Hand, Trustee, battling valiantly with our new DVD player and TV, to show us some wonderful pictures of her recent holiday on the Nile, with most interesting explanations. Refreshments at the end of the evening rounded off a pleasant, if a little sombre, gathering.

## Entertainment galore!

A lovely evening was enjoyed by residents, trustees and friends on 18th May, as the Meadow Lane String Quartet performed one of Mozart's six "Haydn" Quartets for a gathering of residents, trustees and friends. For some of us, it was our first ever string quartet — how lovely to still be having new experiences and trying out new things together! The performance ended with a glass of wine, refreshments and some very pleasant conversation on a lovely spring evening.

Next week Mark Powys-Smith returns to sing to residents, and the following month we look forward to a visit from the Lygonian singers and our annual garden party on Sat June 18th, with the lovely dancers from the Oxford School of Thai dance and another international feast/ refreshments for family and friends. Clare will be organising games (croquet on the lawn) and Charlotte a raffle, so there is plenty for us all to look forward to.



## Joan Elizabeth Toyne 1917—2011

After 10 very happy years at The Abbeyfield Oxford Society, staff, residents and trustees gathered on Valentines Day, 14th February at the Oxford Crematorium, to say goodbye to Liz. Rev. Bruce Gillingham spoke of Liz's love of life, her travels and her enduring spirit. How fitting that it was held on a lovely spring day, with snowdrops, one of Liz's favourite flowers, filling the garden here, and the roadside banks as we drove to the service. Over 40 people crowded into the small chapel, to say goodbye and to share memories of Liz, including many Abbeyfield residents, staff and trustees, friends from Adderbury, friends from Oxford and of course, her daughter Jeannie, son-in-law, and Granddaughter, Victoria.



Liz enjoying the dancers at our summer garden party, June 2010

Liz's family kindly asked for the collection from the service to be donations to the Abbeyfield Oxford Society and we will be consulting on the best way to use these to commemorate Liz, once they have arrived. It is hoped to plant a cherry tree in the garden too, in her memory.

## Beatrice Mary Whittome 1916—2011

All too soon, in March we returned to the Oxford Crematorium to join the Whittome/Johnson family in saying goodbye to Mary after just three weeks in the John Radcliffe Hospital. Mary's son spoke warmly of her love of music and books, which she had shared with all of her children, of her wartime experiences, and of life and travels living in Zimbabwe, Richmond and Devon. Again the chapel was full, with standing room only, as we remembered Mary's love of bridge, her marriages and love of her family.

Simon Johnson, Mary's oldest son, who has been such a regular visitor and part of Abbeyfield Oxford for so long, hopes to continue to visit us and has promised some fresh vegetables from his allotment as soon as they are ready, as well as a poetry or short story session for those who are interested. We look forward to continuing links with Mary's family.

## Brendan Ryan 1927—2011

And then sadly, March saw six of our staff, along with friends from Oxford, travelling to London to join Brendan's family at St Paul's Knightsbridge, the church with which Brendan had been heavily involved for many years. Sean, Brendan's eldest son, led the tributes with a warm series of memories of his father. He described how, typically, Brendan has left his favourite umbrella as a family heirloom, to be passed through the generations, but never to be opened, as "no-one will ever be able to fold it up again neatly enough!" We're sure that the fact that it was pouring with rain as everyone left the church therefore raised a smile or two.

A further tribute from Mark Ryan recalled Brendan as someone who did not find family life easy but who was nevertheless, the best father anyone could ask for. He also reminded us all of Brendan's love of a glass of scotch or can of beer, and so after the service family and many of Brendan's friends retired across the road to one of Brendan's favourite hostelleries, The Wilton Arms.

Needless to say, these three residents are a huge loss to all of us. They are much missed, and are still very much part of our memories, at Brian Lewis House.