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The WellburnPost

WELLBURNFRIENDS

Issue 3 • Spring 2016

FREE

THIS GREAT REGION

*Why it's hard to leave
and easy to miss the
North East?*

THE SEASONAL EATER

*We discover seasonal
eating is about far
more than just taste*



WELLBURN

WELCOME

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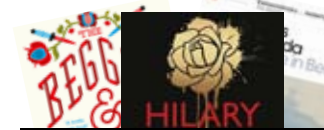
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EDITOR'S
Letter

Welcome to the third issue of The Wellburn Post. I'm delighted that our first two issues have been a big hit, and we've made lots of new friends, from contributors, through to new readers. A big thank you to everyone involved in making this happen, and fingers crossed for continued success.

We're all very excited by this Spring issue! Full of fantastic content, with a little bit of something for everyone. As usual, we'll be reviewing our favourite literary offerings in our regular book corner. We catch up with an ex professional footballer - turned manager, and discuss why, even after so long away, his heart and soul still belongs in the North East.

We also explore the world of seasonal eating and discover more than a few interesting facts. So if you don't know your Peruvian Asparagus from your English Asparagus, you might be in for a surprise. We take you for a trip down memory lane too, as we look back at some memorable moments from 1972. We also have a superb winner for this issue's pic competition. It really is a stunning pic, so don't miss that.

Don't forget, you can also catch up with all of our latest content and past issues of The Wellburn Post at www.thewellburnpost.co.uk Not before you read this issue though, which we hope you have as much enjoyment reading as we've had working on it. Happy reading and don't forget to send us your contributions for future issues. Enjoy!

Rachel x

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THE NORTH EAST'S LARGE VISITOR
ATTRACTION OF THE YEAR 2014



◀ BEAMISH FROM EAR TO EAR

A group of our residents were recently chosen to attend a dementia awareness day at Beamish. The day, kindly funded by J R Hollands was a huge success. Taking place at Orchard Cottage, the residents took part in a day of activities aimed specifically at dementia sufferers. Along with a lot of educational elements, there was also a lot of singing and laughing. Superb day. LC

▶ CLASS IN A GLASS

The residents of Glenholme recently enjoyed an exciting day trip in the mini-bus, exploring the local area. In the morning, they were treated to a guided tour of Sunderland's National Glass Centre. A fascinating place and well worth the visit. Then it was on to Roker beach for fish and chips for lunch, washed down with a nice cup of tea, obviously. Charged and raring



to go, they then made their way for an afternoon at the Railway Museum. A trip down memory lane for everyone involved. A splendid day had by all. RB



▲ A SPRING IN THEIR STEP

The winter snap normally takes its toll on our award winning gardens in some way or another. So it's come as a relief to our gardening team here at Wellburn, that we've had a relatively mild winter. Indeed, we've noticed the team has a certain spring in their step. Literally. The lawns have had their first cut of the year, which marks the beginning of the planting season. Roll on summer and award season. Fingers crossed team. LC

WELLBURN FRIENDS

We've been out and about with our Wellburn friends, working together with our local communities. Here's just the pick of what's been going on....



AT HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE

Nightingale Hall has recently been building a new relationship with the British Army. Military band members visited Nightingale on 22nd December and played traditional Christmas songs to the residents and families. After playing for over an hour, a well-deserved break proved to be a perfect opportunity to chat with the residents about their lives and their careers during the war. After lots of chatting and a beer or two, they continued playing for the rest of the night with some all-time classics, which our residents loved. We're already looking forward to welcoming them back. RB



HOPPING WITH JOY

Rosevale recently invited some very special guests. Local football team, Wigginton Grasshoppers, brought their entire under 7 squad to visit our residents. Their spirit and friendliness lit up the place and had our residents entertained for hours. The children, aged from 3 to 7 years old, had our residents captivated, sharing exciting stories of their season, and other adventures. They were thrilled when we organised a photographer from the York Press to come along and record their day. Budding football stars were featured in the newspaper and our residents were left with a smile. More visits from the Grasshoppers are planned. LC



A REAL TEAMS GAME

Teams Community Centre has been playing a big part in our residents lives at Eighton Lodge recently. With their dedicated team of volunteers, the welcome our residents receive, is nothing short of heart warming. Now, the Community Centre is firmly established as a residents' favourite. Trevor, who is lead organiser and one of many volunteers. He welcomes residents with open arms, and often, he does this by playing musical instruments and encouraging a group sing-a-long. No sooner do the residents return, they ask when the next trip is planned. LC

STAFF INITIATIVES

In focus



Here at Wellburn, we're proud of our talented and dedicated team of professionals. From the chefs to the gardeners, through to the carers and management.

So in the last few months, to recognise their commitment, we've introduced a raft of new employee initiatives. Some are incentive driven and others are there to reinforce, that although what we do is very serious and important, we can have fun doing it too.

One of those initiatives is our 'Star of the Month' award. A monthly award programme designed to recognise and reward our staff, for moments those around them feel they've gone that extra mile for our residents or their fellow colleagues.

We've installed comment boxes in every one of our homes, so everyone can nominate each month.

Every month a top award is given out, with two runner-up awards. At the end of the year, all winners will be considered for our inaugural 'Star of the Year' award.

Other initiatives, have so far

included our first ever 'Deck the Halls' Christmas competition. With each home being asked to festively decorate their home, with the best entrant winning top prizes. Residents are also at the heart of all of our initiatives too. They had a lot of fun helping our homes decorate at Christmas and are encouraged to vote for their 'Star of the Month'.

More initiatives are to follow in the coming year, with our 'Bake-off' competition already proving very popular. We'll keep you posted of these initiatives throughout the year. You can check out all of the latest winners of our competitions on page 7. RB



FLOOD NEWS

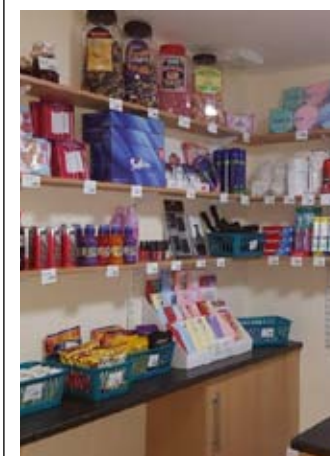
In short

It was good news, followed by bad news for all at Wellburn House in December. After an 18 month closure for repairs, Ovingham Bridge finally re-opened in December. Only for it to close days later after some of the worst floods the area has seen in living memory. The bridge will now remain closed for the foreseeable future.

Friends of Wellburn, including visiting families and friends have been super and continue to soldier on.



No greater testament of their unfaltering spirit has been evident than at our Christmas party. With access almost impossible on foot, the turn out was still excellent. Proving that despite floods and bridge closures, we as a community just find a way to carry on as normal. Heartwarming. LC



TIME FOR A PIT STOP

Our Home Manager at St George's has come up with a novel idea, that the residents are loving. He has given one of the rooms a complete makeover, and transformed it into a shop.

'The Pit Stop', as it's now known by, is now stocking old-fashioned sweets, toiletries and everyday essentials. Of course, we're also selling our in-demand Wellburn cotton tote bags. The shop has gone down extremely well with residents, staff and visitors. Almost time for another re-stock. All profits from the shop, as with the tote bags, will go directly back into the residents' fund. LC

CREATURE FEATURE

Our residents at Riverhead Hall enjoyed a less than normal afternoon, in the company of the exotic. Sam's Safari visited, bringing some of their more unusual creatures with them. Included a Blue Tongued Skink, Python, Giant Millipede and Giant Stick Insect. Even our most reluctant residents were tempted to get more hands on. An incredibly weird and wonderful experience had by all. In fact, we had such overwhelmingly positive feedback, that we've booked more Sam's Safari visits to our other homes. Thanks to all involved. Very memorable. RB



Have your say...

This is our third edition of The Wellburn Post, so we'd love to hear what you think of it. Tell us if there's something you'd like to see in our next issue.

back in the day

Our regular feature goes back in time and picks out some of the most memorable and at times pretty quirky 'back in the day' things. How many of these do you remember?



▲ Etch A Sketch 1960's

The now famous Etch A Sketch first appeared on our shelves in the early 60's. Today's devices such as iPads with their infinite possibilities, makes the restricted nature of the two knobs and the turn upside down and shake function seem almost primitive. But this 'toy' was advanced for its time and has since sold millions world wide. The term 'Etch A Sketch moment' is currently being considered for submission to the Oxford English Dictionary. We'd like to forget many things, but not the Etch A Sketch!



▼ Tin humming spinning top 1960's

For those who remember this toy, the familiar humming or whirring sound will bring back memories of childhood. First seen in the 1960's, this iconic spinning top found its way into the hearts of the nation. Just a simple push and pull motion on the handle and it set the spinning top into action. Later models would play music, but we're paying homage to the original.

Have your say...

If you've got a favourite thing from the past, let us know and we'll add the best suggestions into our next issue

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANSER

There's plenty going on in and around all of our homes this Easter. From arts and crafts, egg painting and singers, to Easter parties and film afternoons. All are welcome, and we'd love to see you all join in the fun.

We are also running an Easter campaign across all 14 homes. We'll be asking for donations of Easter eggs, which we'll then send across to our two chosen hospitals.

The lucky recipients of your generosity, will be the RVI Hospital in Newcastle and York District Hospital - two fantastic hospitals that continue to play a massive part in our communities. If you would like to donate an egg please call 0191 2293530 to find your local home or visit our website for more details. LC



IN THIS YEAR - 1972



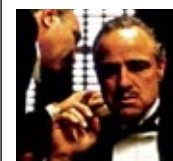
For many in the North East, the year started off with hardship. In this year on January 9, the National Union of Mineworkers held a strike ballot in

which 58.8% voted in favour. Coal miners across the land, including thousands in the North East began a strike, which was the first since 1926, that would last for seven weeks.



The above could easily have been one of the questions, if your specialist subject was coalmining in the UK. September 11 saw the first ever episode of

Mastermind. Hosted by the late Magnus Magnusson, with his now famous catchphrase, "I've started so I'll finish."



Now widely regarded as one of the greatest films of all time, The Godfather was released in this year on March 24. After an initial luke

warm response, Marlon Brando's Don Vito Corleone has now achieved cult status, and the film itself has become an established classic.



▲ Sony Walkman 1980's

Today, we have iPads, iPhones and a myriad of other choices, but back in the early 1980's, if you wanted to listen to music on the move, this was your only option. Sony revolutionised the music industry, allowing people the opportunity to listen wherever and whenever. All hail the Walkman.



TECHNOLOGY In focus

We continually invest in so many areas of our Care Home business. From renovation through to maintaining our award winning gardens.

But one arm of investment that might go unnoticed by many, is our commitment to exploring how technology can benefit us and our team.

This year, we've already invested in dozens of tablets. Primarily going to our activity coordinators. Now, they're able to use them as a hub for their day to day responsibilities.

As Sarah Fearn, activity coordinator at Rosevale puts it. "Before we received our tablets, we'd have to share the office computer for browsing and emailing. Now, we can do so many different things with them. For example, at the touch of a screen, we can browse the

internet to find great day trip locations, plan our journey, book tickets for venues. We can also now take photos of our day trip and upload them instantly to Wellburn's social media accounts. It really has made such a difference to the way I do my job. Things have just become so much easier".

There's also benefit's to be gained from a management point of view, as MD Rachel Beckett points out, "With 14 homes spread out across all four corners of the North East, it's sometimes impossible to be in two places at the same time. I'm a people person and value face to face interaction with my teams. With the tablets, when I'm unable to get out in person, I can now at least facetime our coordinators and that's a huge plus. Having that face to face is just so much better than a phone call".

Rachel also goes on to explain that Wellburn are currently looking into developing their own interactive app. "We're always looking into innovative ways to improve on our already first class service. This year we have some very exciting plans, so watch this space. When our investments bring benefits to both our team and residents. That's very cool." HL

COMPETITION Winners

Our In Focus section on page 5, covered the news that we've introduced a whole raft of staff initiatives and competitions over the last few months. So it brings us a great deal of pleasure to announce the winners. Thanks you to all those that took part and good luck for future competitions. RB

Star of the Month winners:

Jan - Tracy Carrick, St Georges
Feb - Christine Green, Eighton Lodge

Deck the halls winner:

Whorlton Grange

Bake off winner:

Eighton Lodge (pic below)



JUDGES HOUSE

When Norma Burns was asked to help judge 'Deck the Halls' she was delighted. Having been with us from our very first year, it was an opportunity to visit all of the homes she knows so well. She enjoyed catching up on all the latest news and future plans of each home and seeing familiar faces of staff and residents. They all made her feel very welcome. Norma and the other judges had a brilliant time. Well done to Norma for judging and to our winners, Whorlton Grange. LC

WEEK NOT WEAK In short

Here at Wellburn, we understand more than most about the importance of nutrition and hydration. In later life it becomes even more important, which is why we threw our full support behind Nutrition and Hydration Week. This year, it was held from 14th to 20th March. We ran a range of different events in our homes from worldwide tea tasting, fruit kebab and lemonade making, to food demonstrations. To find out more about how the way we eat and drink can improve our quality of life visit nutritionandhydrationweek.co.uk. HL



A BROUBAHBAH

Imagine our surprise at Riverhead Hall, when some unexpected guests arrived unannounced. A flock of sheep from a neighbouring farm had found their way onto our grounds and were helping to mow the grass and prune the roses. Our resident gardener John is always looking for help, but even he couldn't have imagined it coming in this way. After notifying the farmer, and much to our residents amusement, we were all treated to a truly comical, but ultimately successful sight of him running around waving his arms chasing the sheep. It did get us thinking that perhaps we'd stumbled on a more eco friendly way of keeping the grass down. Maybe not. LC



Ooh, one last thing...

We're always looking for new exciting content for issue 4. So if you've got something going on or something to tell us, please send them via post or email and we'll run the best submissions.

THIS GREAT REGION OF OURS

*We talk to ex-professional footballer **Alan Dowson**, about the region he still considers home*



Alan Dowson is the epitome of the 'local boy done good'. His origins lie in the same Gateshead streets as the town's most famous footballing export, Paul Gascoigne.

Now a successful manager at Hampton and Richmond Borough FC in the Ryman Premier League – English football's seventh tier – Dowson has had a long journey in the game since leaving the North-East to carve a career as a professional footballer.

Along the way, he played for Fulham, Millwall and Bradford City, as well as more local teams such as Darlington and Gateshead and is now building a reputation as a dynamic young manager in the lower leagues.

However, like many ex-pat Geordies, Alan never forgets his roots and his

connection to the area where he was born and raised.

"Sometimes we're all guilty of taking the region we grew up in for granted," Alan admits. "I left the North-East when I was 16 to join Millwall's academy. I just wanted to be a footballer and I was prepared to travel as far away from home as needed to achieve it. With the bright lights of London ahead, I didn't look back. Now, 30 years later, my mind goes back to all those places I left behind."

"It's a strange feeling. I've spent more of my life away from Gateshead," he adds – though you wouldn't know it from his untouched-by-the-south accent. "I live and work in a beautiful part of London with parks and the Thames close by. But my heart and soul will always belong in this wonderful region we call the North-East of England."

"There are so many things that you can take for granted when they're on your

doorstep. They're the same things that I don't have and miss."

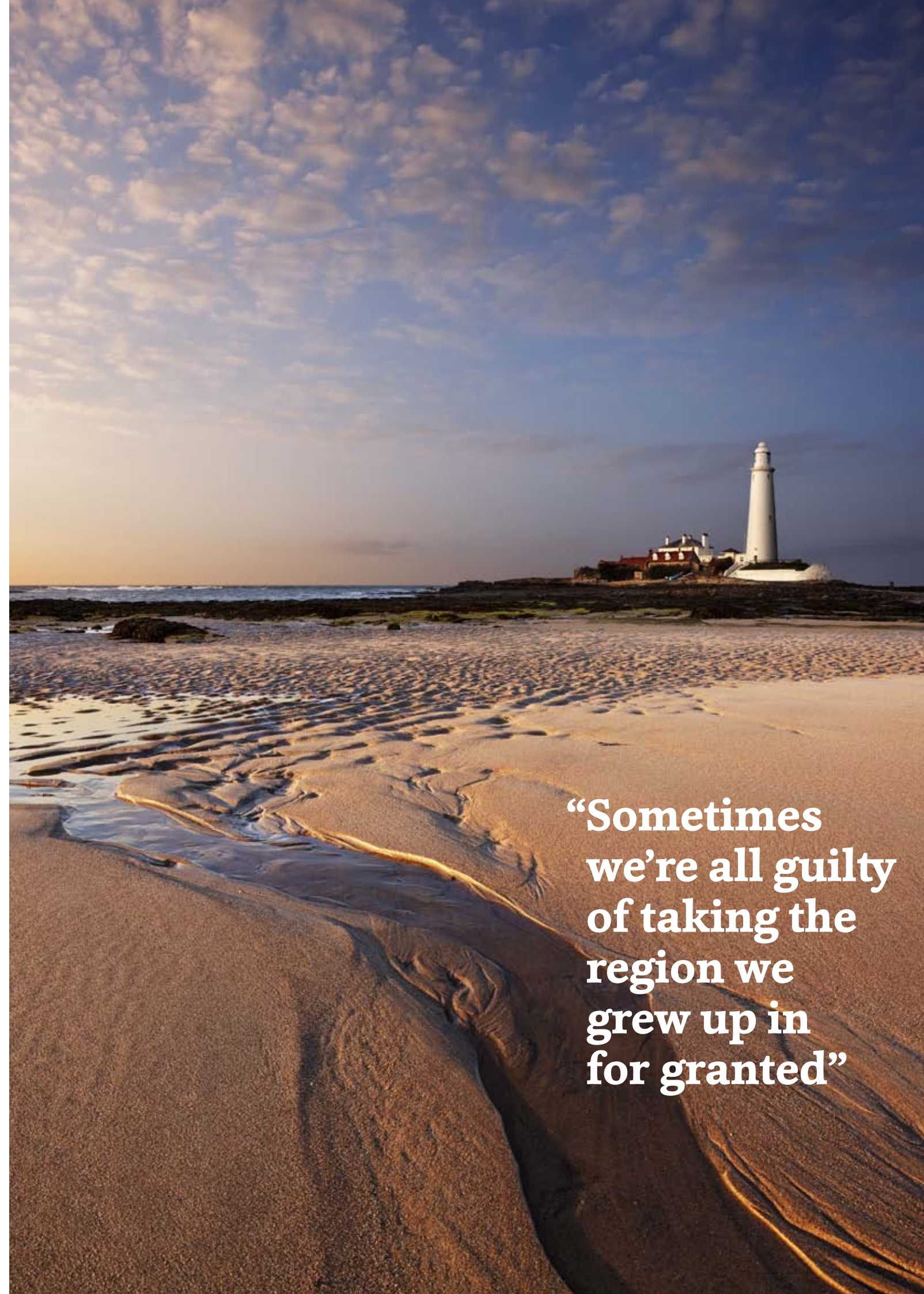
Childhood playground

Alan has little time for wistful reflection at present. As we went to press in mid-March, the football season was revving up for the season run-in and Hampton and Richmond have a big prize within their grasp. But understandably, football is the starting point for his childhood memories and recollections.

"I grew up next to Saltwell Park, which is one of the biggest parks in the North-East, and I just have such happy memories of it. We used to go there every day when we were youngsters and have a kickabout with Paul [Gascoigne]. I went to school on the other side of the park so I'd walk through it every day."

Saltwell has certainly changed, though, since the 1970s and 80s, when Alan made it his playground. ►

"Sometimes we're all guilty of taking the region we grew up in for granted"





The North-East has produced many fine football players and managers, and one more is closing in on a potentially great achievement...

With only a handful of games left to play, the surprise league leaders are five points clear and favourites for the title, having been bottom of the league the previous season. Leicester City, right? Wrong. Hampton and Richmond Borough FC – managed by Gateshead native Alan Dowson. In a story with strong echoes of the unlikely title bid being played out to the delight of neutrals in English football's top flight, the Beavers (as Hampton and Richmond are nicknamed) have risen from the bottom of the league, when Dowson was appointed in September 2014, and shocked many non-league observers by standing on the brink of promotion to the Conference South. "We were rock bottom when I got the job and I don't think anybody expected us to be where we are now," he says. "Do I think we can win it? Yes. Do I think we will win it? I haven't a clue. We'll give it our best and see where we end up."



◀ "It was a bit run-down, back then – just trees and scruffy fields," he says. "Now there are walks and more things for kids to do, with playgrounds, crazy golf. We had to make our own entertainment!"

The development of Saltwell Park has been a source of local pride, with £21m of lottery money put into the renovation of the park and Saltwell Towers, the splendid, Grade II-listed gothic mansion at its heart. Awarded the title of Britain's best park in 2005, Saltwell has become one of Gateshead's principal tourist sites and now attracts more than two million visitors a year.

It's part of a regeneration of the area as a whole that Alan notices each time he returns home.

"A lot of the old places have been knocked down and new houses built. You definitely see a lot more lights around the place. The Tyne Quayside was a bit run down in the old days, to be honest – but now it's all changed for the better down there."

That particular stretch of urban regeneration now forms one of the most characteristic vistas in the North-East, with the shimmering shape of the Sage Arts Centre and hulking Baltic building alongside the 'blinking eye' Millennium Bridge, plus thriving restaurants and bars by the waterside.

Further afield

Beyond Gateshead and Newcastle, of course, there is much history and beauty to enjoy in the region. Alan has particularly fond memories of school trips to Bamburgh Castle, up the coast "Going to Bamburgh was great – it used to get us out of school for a start! So it was a real treat to go up on the coach. We'd go there every year and the castle is amazing to look at."

Quite so. Bamburgh's soaring volcanic outcrop has a fascinating history of fortification dating back nearly 3,000 years. Settled by early British tribes, it was a key fortress for the Romans, Anglo-Saxon kings and during the Wars of the Roses was the first castle in Britain to be destroyed by gunfire. After centuries of disrepair it was restored to its present magnificence by the Victorian industrialist Armstrong family in the early 20th century, so whether your interest is history, or just to view and walk around a remarkable piece of English heritage, it's one of the jewels in the North-East's cultural crown.

Other local treats Alan cites include the gorgeous landscapes and seascapes around Whitley Bay, and the Beamish Open Air Museum. Since 1970, Beamish has been teaching visitors about the lives of the working people in the region from



previous centuries, through meticulous historical recreations.

People power

These, you feel, chime particularly with Alan, who is proud of his roots and remains in touch with them to this day.

"I'm a working-class boy. My dad worked at Vickers [defence factory] from when he was 14 years old until he retired at 65. When I go back I'll always go to the working men's clubs because that's where I grew up – I'll see 10 or 15 mates who I knew from school."

And that's one aspect of North-Eastern life that Alan says hasn't changed much since he left nearly 30 years ago – the sense of community.

"Now when I go back, I'm always made to feel welcome, which I really



appreciate," he adds. "I'm a working man's lad and I always will be." As the old saying goes – you can take the boy out of the North-East.

Our region

Getting the chance to interview Alan, also reminded us here at Wellburn, just how privileged we are. With homes covering all four corners of the North-East, we really do have it good.

For example, our Craghall home, in Jesmond, is within easy reach of Alan's favourite city of Newcastle.

Travel a little further south and head into North Yorkshire and you'll find some of our flagship homes, including Grimston Court. Located near the historical city of York. This region of ours truly is great and we're proud to be a part of it. ■

Our resident wellbeing expert **Michael Jimmison** explains why getting out and about is vital for us all

Spending just 30 minutes per day in the sun can greatly increase your amount of vitamin D, which helps your bones to form and repair, reducing the risk of osteoporosis. Fresh air increases the amount of Serotonin in the brain which helps to improve your mood and sense of happiness.

As we age sometimes it's just not possible to be as active as we would like to be, however we can still reap the rewards of fresh air. Below are some ideas to help us keep active and enjoy our time spent outdoors:

TIP 1

A gentle walk

Whether it's a long walk at the coast or a shorter stroll around a country park, there are plenty of great locations on our doorstep.

TIP 2

An afternoon in the garden

You might wish to try your hand at a bit of planting, pruning or potting, but on the other hand you may prefer to relax in the garden with a good book, either way you can still take in the sunshine whilst taking advantage of the fresh air. At Wellburn we know the advantages to spending time in the garden, which is why we put so much effort into maintaining our gardens, with most regularly winning local awards.

TIP 3

Try your hand at photography

Why not dust off that old camera or perhaps splash out on the latest digital equipment, either way it's a great way to spend time outdoors and capture some memories at the same time. And remember, if you've got some great pics, you could enter them into our next issue and win £50 worth of M&S vouchers, in our pic competition.

TIP 4

Alfresco Dining

Tea on the patio or a picnic in the park, can be a great opportunity to meet up with friends and enjoy the sunshine, you could also crack open a bottle of the fizzy stuff to enjoy.

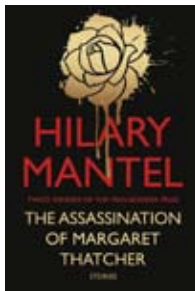
Book corner

Sit back and enjoy a good read about, well, good reads. As we review three more of our favourite literary offerings.



ALONE IN BERLIN
by Hans Fallada
★★★★★

Fallada's *Alone in Berlin*, transports the reader back to 1940, Berlin. The city is paralysed by fear under Nazi rule, but one man refuses to be scared. He starts a very small resistance campaign, which quickly snowballs into a major event. Hunted by the Gestapo, a murderous game of cat-and-mouse begins. Our verdict. One of the most extraordinary and touching novels ever written about World War II. In short, a masterpiece. MC



THE ASSASSINATION OF MARGARET THATCHER
by Hilary Mantel
★★★★★

Best known for her novel *Wolf Hall*, later adapted into a hit BBC drama, Mantel's offering in this novel is vastly different.

A collections of short stories that are both gripping, stylish, menacing and at times very funny. Huge slices of suburban noir, that live up to her pre-Wolf Hall reputation. Our verdict. At times dark, but always exhilarating. Brilliant. MC



THE BEGGAR & THE HARE
by Tuomas Kyrö
★★★★★

A hugely entertaining and often hilarious novel from Kyrö is both witty and charming. We follow Romanian construction worker Vatanescu's bizarre, laugh out loud journey north, into the cold, unfamiliar land of Finland. With his one aim to buy his son a pair of football boots, the story also has touching and at times highly emotional moments. Our verdict. A journey you'll feel like you've made alongside our hero. Brilliant from start to 'Finnish'. MC

Interested?

All books are available to order online at [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk). If you've read a book that you'd like to recommend for book corner, please let us know: thewellburnpost@wellburncare.co.uk



LETTER OF THE ISSUE

Dear Wellburn Post

We moved our mother from another care home to Whorlton Grange care home in the middle of November last year. She had been at her previous care home since mid-June and we had several discussions trying to improve her stay there. It became apparent that her quality of life was not improving.

Since arriving at Whorlton Grange she has settled in extremely well and is beginning to accept it as being her home. We now feel the massive pressure on us has been lifted and have peace of mind knowing that she is being cared for so well. We find all of the staff caring and very approachable, nothing is too much trouble for them. When we walk into Whorlton Grange it doesn't matter who we see, all of the staff seem to know how Mum is getting on and they keep us informed as to how she is. Mum always says she enjoys the food and that the staff look after her very well and she has no complaints. There are always plenty of activities to take part in if she wants to, although she is often just as happy to sit peacefully in the quiet courtyard lounge. On some days, she just wants to stay in bed or spends time in her room. We are happy for her to do that as this is something she did at home quite a lot. When she stays

in her room the staff check on her hourly to make sure she is ok.

One of the things we like about Whorlton Grange is that there are lots of different areas to sit in. There is a main lounge where most people tend to sit, lots going on, people coming and going and the television is on. There is another lounge between the main and courtyard lounge, it is quieter than the main lounge. Mum likes the peaceful courtyard lounge and we often sit in there when visiting her. We are looking forward to the better weather when we can use the various seating areas in the gardens, they look very inviting.

She enjoys having her hair done when the hairdresser visits and also has regular massages. The staff will often put polish on her nails as she can no longer do that herself. We are delighted that we made the move to Whorlton Grange and have no hesitation in recommending it.

Bob Johnson, West Denton

Have your say...

If like Bob, you have something to share with our readers, send your letters to us in the post or via email, making sure it's no more than 300 words long.

THE SEASONAL EATER



We explore the benefits of seasonal eating, and discover they reach beyond our palettes.



The vast majority of us will have grown up in urban areas, with little or no awareness of when and where various foods are produced. Imports from around the world ensure that supermarket shelves look the same week in, week out.

A recent BBC poll has revealed that fewer than one in 10 of us know when some of the UK's most well-known fruit and vegetables are in season.

Today, the year-round availability of everything from Peruvian asparagus to Dutch tomatoes is pretty much ubiquitous in UK supermarkets.

In the great scheme of our foodish shortcomings – the obesity, the steady rise of ready meals, our unwillingness to cook – does it really matter if people don't know when a broad bean is in season? Can seasonal eating make that much difference, and if so, how?

Fewer than 1 in 10 of us know when our fruit and vegetables are in season.

Taste

When it comes to taste, common sense will tell us that something is in season, grown locally and not flown half way around the world will inevitably taste better. Also, food, like humans and other living organisms, has a natural body clock that invariably makes seasonal food taste better. Quality of flavour is and should be high on the list of why it might be worth being in touch with the seasons.

A pale January tomato isn't exactly food for thought. A strawberry at the Christmas table seems ridiculous. But is it? If you could find amazing tasting strawberries in December, perhaps we'd feel differently. But we don't because there's no better example of seasonal taste than strawberries. Historically, we've aligned our palettes to what is available to us at the time. It's only a recent



phenomenon that has unbalanced this equilibrium. Now we can get our hands on pretty much anything, the whole year around.

Beyond taste

Arguments in favour of seasonal eating go beyond flavour, however. The support of localism, inevitably, cannot be ignored. If you were to argue that, in a blind tasting, most of us wouldn't be able to tell the difference between British and Peruvian asparagus. But perhaps all of us, would be able to tell the difference in the air miles that separate one from the other, or the freight logistics involved. And that's before we even cover carbon footprints.



Local support

Here at Wellburn, we work hard to make sure that the vast majority of our suppliers are local, the Post you're reading now is printed in the North East for example. So when our Catering manager Nick Smith looks for ingredients for our 14 homes menu's, he uses the same philosophy. "I'm a big advocate of local food as I am of seasonal food, partly on environmental grounds but mainly because I think it's important that people feel a connection with where their food comes from. Supporting local farmers and suppliers is important to us," says Nick. Perhaps this is the most compelling argument of all, in support of eating seasonally. In doing so, we're simply supporting British producers. Unless we're after blood oranges or pineapples, by shopping seasonally we should, by and large, find ourselves buying British. Irrespective of food miles or flavour.

The reality of supermarkets selling Peruvian asparagus in mid-May is sobering, when it's readily available and in-season from our own British asparagus farms.

In 2012 for example, only 23% of the fruit and vegetables we bought were home grown. We're only a small country, and far from self-sufficient, but we can do better than that. ■

Our resident food expert **Nick Smith** shares his top tips on how to successfully eat seasonally.



TIP 1

Thinking Local

Eliminate the guesswork of "what's in season" by choosing produce grown in your region. By focusing on locally-grown food, you don't have to navigate seasonality - that just falls into place naturally. If the farmers in your area can't grow it, they won't sell it, eliminating the mystery for you. You can try things like shopping at greenmarkets, farmers' markets, or better still, direct from a farmer or farm stand.

TIP 2

Preserve

When you're up to your knees in peas and you can't possibly eat another green bean, it's time to get canning, pickling, and freezing. Preserving ingredients at the height of ripeness helps them keep better and maintains their flavour.

TIP 3

Every little helps

Sometimes, you just really need a tomato in February, or a strawberry in November. As much as we like the idea of being 100% seasonal, it's just sometimes not possible. Will an out of season, shipped across the world peach taste as juicy and sweet as a just-picked one fresh from the tree? Of course not. But when it's all you've got, it's all you've got. But trying to eat as seasonally as possible, as we have shown, is better for you, for us and better for the environment.

REGULARS

After speaking to a man at a dementia café in York, Ian Donaghy's 9 year old son Billy asked "Where are you spending Christmas?"

"Just at home by myself. It's just me these days."

"No-one should have no-one. What can we do about this Dad?" and the idea of Xmas Presence was hatched- a Christmas day more about presence and company than gift wrapping.

Months later dozens of York residents came together for a fantastic Christmas party, thanks to generous local people and businesses.

Xmas Presence was held in the Belfrey Hall, Stonegate, created Christmas magic for around 40 people who would otherwise have spent the day alone.

Organiser Ian Donaghy said "It has recaptured the innocence and fun of Christmas when we were young. This was just a silly little idea but it shows what you can do when you get a handful of diamonds to help you.

"It has really made me realise that happy is the new rich, and the stuff people can do is much better than the stuff people can buy."

Ian who trains staff for Wellburn worked closely with Age UK on the event, focusing on providing a Christmas celebration for elderly people. He said the John Lewis "man on the moon" advert had captured the public's imagination, but he said: "We're



Ian Donaghy

*A view from our homes
through the eyes of
a field specialist*

**"No-one should
have no-one.
What can we do
about this Dad?"**

not sending the bloke a telescope – we're inviting him down for a party!"

John Lewis's York branch donated £400 to the event, Boyes gave £200, Wellburncare donated a huge hamper of toiletries and Asda at Monks Cross provided all the day's food completely free.

Ian said many people organised festive events, but rarely on Christmas Day when feelings of loneliness can be most acute.

We were struck by the widespread goodwill, and hope the event will become an annual one, potentially growing in later years or being replicated in several venues across the city.

The feedback was amazing. One lady said "When my husband died I gave up on Christmas. This is my first proper Christmas in 12 years."

"This is what Christmas is all about- togetherness."

Since the success of this event 5 other communities have expressed an interest to create their own Xmas Presence Parties this year. We can't change the world but we can make an impact on our little bit of it. Loneliness and isolation hate "Hello" and conversations so let's start one today to make loneliness extinct in 2016.

Ian Donaghy is a freelance member of the team and his responsibilities include training and mentoring our staff in the field of dementia care.

COMPETITION



and the winner is...

Congratulations to Brian Smith. His shot of the Groyne in South Shields is simply stunning. Brian is a professional photographer and more of his superb pics can be found and purchased at www.brian-smith.co.uk. A big thank you to all those who entered this issues competition. There was some stiff competition and the standard was excellent. Our judges had a tough job. If you'd like to enter next time, send your pics of the North East to: thewellburnpost@wellburncare.co.uk. The winner will appear in the next issue and receive a £50 M&S voucher.

Hawker publications presents

**DEAR
DEMENTIA**

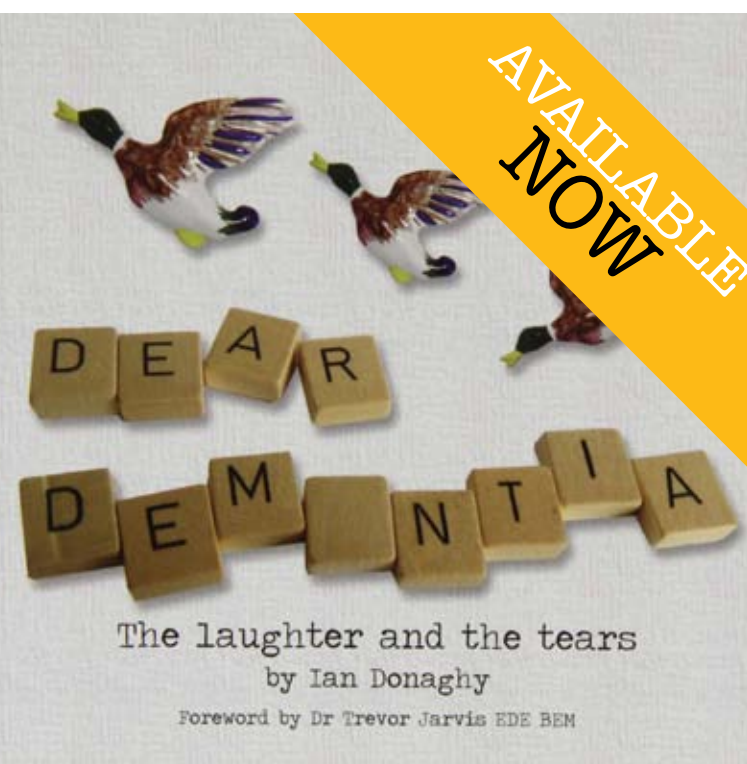
by Ian Donaghy

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Using over 100 illustrations and captions, Ian Donaghy captures the emotion and the reality of living with dementia. Dear dementia : the laughter and the tears has a message for all those touched by dementia - those living with dementia, their carers and all professional staff.

On sale now at any of our homes



Charles McArthur (Charlie) was born in the small Scottish town of Greengairs, North Lanarkshire on 22nd March 1922. He had two younger sisters, and five brothers. Despite the whole family living in two rooms and sharing a toilet with all the other flats, he has fond memories of his childhood.

Charlie's father Alex, was a coal miner and worked the mines until he retired. One of Charlie's earliest memories of his father, was on his first day at school. He remembers waking and feeling the usual first day dread, voiced that he definitely didn't want to go to school. However, his father told him "you are going and that's that" and took Charlie along to the school himself. From that day, Charlie learnt a valuable lesson of just getting on with it. Charlie recounts lots of funny and interesting stories about growing up in a poor mining community, and has no complaints. "It made me the man I am today", he says with enthusiasm.

Charlie was however, adamant that he didn't want to follow his father down the mines, and at 14 became a delivery boy for a local store. He then got an "apprenticeship" as a cinema projectionist, a career which he would later follow into his late 30's.

As with everyone at the time, life was put on hold as war broke out. Charlie and his best friend at the time, joined the RAF. Just 17, Charlie recalls at the time, feeling so tough and grown up. After short postings to Glasgow and across the border in England, he spent much of the war in North Africa.

There, he was trained as an aircraft engineer and at the end of the war had achieved the rank of Sergeant. He was posted to Phillippsville, North Africa, during the invasion of North Africa. He remembers arriving there and being given a weapon. He was an engineer repairing aircrafts, with no experience of guns, let alone battle. The memories of feeling tough and grown up in the enlistment office, seemed a million miles away to Charlie.

That valuable lesson he learnt on that first day of school from his father, of just getting on with it came to fruition. So he did.

He has many stories to tell of his time at war, but Charlie recalls perhaps his most memorable. "At the time, one of the engineering rules, was that if you repaired a plane, you had to take it's next flight out, to prove your confidence in your work. I had just repaired a Lancaster Bomber. During the flight an engine caught fire, and

Life story

In our third edition of 'life stories', Wellburn's *Rachel Beckett* discovers the life story of resident **Charlie McArthur**.



I remember the pilot shouting "prepare to bail out". It was only at that point we realised that we didn't have any parachutes on board. The pilot was superb. He took a chance and turned aggressively, time and again, until the flames were blown out. That manoeuvre was unheard of, and had never been attempted before. He saved both of our lives that day. I'm sure of it".

But war, also brought Charlie and his late wife together. A friend of Charlie's in camp, explained that he'd received a letter from his wife stating that her friend, May, wanted to write to someone in the forces, and asked if Charlie was interested. He was more than happy to oblige. They wrote to each other for the duration of the war, almost every week and sometimes more. They were in love before they even met. Charlie was a great artist, and would send May hand drawn postcards from many of the places he visited.

Charlie and May agreed, that if he made it back from the war they would meet. Of course Charlie did make it back and Platform 1 at Charing Cross Station,

London, was where they first met. It was love at first sight on both sides and they were married shortly after in a church in Peckham.

They went on to have three wonderful children, Anne, Susan and Ian. Charlie recalls, "May always supported me in my work, in the cinema she helped out with clerical work and later, when I was self-employed, she learned how to be a "wirewoman", wiring up technical apparatus."

Cinemas though, were in decline in the late 50's and early 60's and the cinema Charlie worked in closed. A double blow, because, as chief projectionist and caretaker, Charlie and the family had been living in a flat above the cinema.

The "Just getting on with it" mantra once again came around to Charlie's aid. The family moved to Lewisham and Charlie found a position as a prototype wireman in Lewisham. Very soon his talent was rewarded with promotions to chargehand and then to Foreman. Often engaged in top secret work, his duties would often involve working on telephone systems for government offices, including No.10 Downing Street and even on nuclear submarines. It was in recognition of this work that he and May received an invitation to attend the rehearsal of the Trooping of the Colour. They had to get to the parade ground by going through No 10!

Charlie and May began to travel a lot more when the children grew up and left home. Charlie feels they were extremely lucky to be able to see so much of the world together and has many happy memories of their experiences.

When Charlie and May retired, they moved to Cambridgeshire and bought their dream bungalow, where they enjoyed so much of their life together, surrounded by family.

Sadly May died in 1997 and soon after Charlie decided to move to Richmond, North Yorkshire, to be closer to his son and daughter, buying a house five minutes from his daughters home.

Charlie has always been very independent and until recent years regularly walked into Richmond. Unfortunately Charlie suffered his first stroke 10 years ago and has made things more difficult for him. He recently moved into Nightingale Hall and he's already made friends and settled in nicely. Or 'Just getting on with it'. ■


**CONTACT
THE ELDERLY**



Laughter and friendship on Sunday afternoons

Contact the Elderly organises free monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for small groups of people aged 75 and over, who live alone and need a hand getting out and about.

Our volunteer drivers will collect you from your home and accompany you to the local tea party held in a volunteer host's home. You will receive a warm welcome and plenty of tea and sandwiches - it's an ideal way to brighten up your Sunday.

If you would like more information about joining a local group, or you would like to refer someone who would benefit from our tea parties, please call Valerie Walker on 0191 242 0186 or email valerie.walker@contact-the-elderly.org.uk