

Gardening helps you live longer!

Our AGM this year was held at the Merchant Taylor Company's Hall and Dr Brigid Boardman delivered her address on the subject of Digging for Longevity and Health. Dr Boardman is a member of the Royal Horticultural Society and cares for her 97-year-old mother.

Through the process of planting and sowing, older people who garden are always having to look forward, and that gives them the right mind-set to keep them going as well as helping to maintain their physical fitness, said leading academic and gardening writer Dr Brigid Boardman.

'There's something about gardening that encourages people to look forward, rather than becoming wrapped up in the past,' explained Dr Boardman. 'Older gardeners are always looking forward to the next season, whilst most older people tend to live in the past. I'm sure that helps the gardeners towards a longer and healthier life'. We launched a 'Digging for Health'

campaign at the AGM to encourage older people to continue gardening, or even to take it up for the first time, because we believe that the over-powering interest it provides in the open air helps older people to longer and healthier lives. In pursuit of proof of this we mounted a search for Britain's Oldest Active Gardener, and found many people in their nineties still gardening, and hundreds in their eighties.

Mr Leslie Broadbear a 96-year-old gardener from Lincolnshire was awarded the title of Britain's Oldest Active Gardener. He was nominated for the title by his family doctor, Dr Irene Carter, who said, "Mr Broadbear's garden is his pride



Mr Gilbert Shingler, Mrs Flossie Gedney, Dr Brigid Boardman and Mr Leslie Broadbear

and joy. He works in it every day and is very enthusiastic. He often gives me tips for my own garden".

97 year old Flossie Gedney, of Saffron Waldron, Essex was awarded the title of Britain's Oldest Active Gardener in Sheltered Accommodation. Flossie was nominated by Juliette Daniel, Area Manager of the Hanover Housing Association, who said, "Flossie tends the garden area outside the flat she lives in to the benefit of all residents on the estate. Gardening helps Flossie to stay fit and healthy and she's so keen that in the summer months she asks the estate manager not to call her in the morning as nine am is too late because she's already out gardening".

Martin Green, Counsel and Care's Chief Executive said, "We have been surprised and delighted with the response to our appeal for Britain's Oldest Active Gardeners to stand up and be counted. Certainly the people who are in touch with us underline our belief that gardening can prolong active life. As an organisation we have been undertaking a lot of work on the quality of life in nursing and residential homes and of older people at home, and this campaign will enrich that work".



Bryan Breed, a longstanding Council member of Counsel and Care, and his wife Marion, held a successful fundraising dinner on their boat at the beginning of the summer. The event raised over £1,600 for Counsel and Care and was attended by such high profile guests as Mark Eagan, Peter Baldwin and Michael Portillo.

As well as the fundraising benefits the evening attracted a lot of positive publicity.

Peter Baldwin (aka Derek from Coronation Street), Michael Portillo and Davina Hodson, Counsel and Care's Chairman.

Share and share alike...

Do you have share certificates tucked away in a drawer that aren't really worth much but would cost too much to sell?

ShareGIFT, the charity share donation scheme, offers a solution that will put these shares to good use. ShareGIFT accepts shares as charitable donations. It does this by collecting the 'odd lots' of shares until there are enough to sell, re-registers and then sells on the shares donating the funds to registered charities. Counsel and Care has recently become a beneficiary of this form of donation.

If you are able to help Counsel and Care in this way please contact ShareGIFT, quoting Counsel and Care (203429). ShareGIFT will then send you the appropriate transfer form for your signature. You can contact ShareGIFT at 24 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH or by telephone 020 7337 0501 or visit their website www.sharegift.org

The advice line

Problems with paying the fees of care homes dominate calls to the advice line

Worries about finding the right home, and getting the local authority to pay for it is still the major problem facing many callers to our advice line. The summer has seen increased problems in some areas as local authorities continue

to restrict the amount of help they give to older people who need residential care and nursing homes.

Many people are concerned about the effects of free nursing care, due to begin for people paying their own fees, in October. The advice work team produced a briefing sheet explaining the government's proposals to help keep our callers up to date.

We also help people who are living at home to get the right care that they need, by putting them in touch with home care agencies, telling them about their rights to help from social services or giving them grants for essential equipment.

People can also get information from our website and can contact us for advice via email. The numbers contacting us in this way are still

quite small but are growing. We find that relatives of older people, who are working during the day, find using the email easier and more convenient than phoning the advice line and quicker than writing.

advice@counselandcare.org.uk
Tel: 0845 300 7585

Do you know what a care plan is?

Like many other organisations, Counsel and Care produces a booklet giving people clues as to what to look out for and what questions to ask when they are looking for the right care home. Is the home near enough for your friends to visit? Does it take pets? Can you decorate your room? Will someone help you to get to church?

Counsel and Care has been given a grant by the Department of Health so that we can write a guide for the next stage. An older person's guide to care is intended to give everyone living in a home, and their carers, relatives and friends, the information they need so that they can be involved in making decisions about their care, can have as full and independent a life as possible, and can recognise when things are wrong.

The guide will explain the unfamiliar words they might hear, what a care plan is and who should see it, and who might be involved in their care. It will cover resident's rights to vote, when they can choose their own doctor,

and what they can do if they have any complaints.

We are currently consulting with a wide range of people and sister organisations, and would be interested in any comments or suggestions you have about what should be included in the guide.

What to look for in a private or voluntary home is available free if you send in a self addressed envelope marked Factsheet 17. Or, like all our factsheets, you can download it from our website

www.counselandcare.org.uk

Going for gold

We reported in the Spring/Summer issue of News that Peter Ferrari, a Counsel and Care Trustee, would be running the first British 10K Open Road Race on our behalf.

We are proud to report in this issue that Peter successfully completed the race in just under 50 minutes!

Along with Peter, Paul Martindale, a Counsel and Care advice worker, an ex-employee of Counsel and Care and a number of other supporters entered the race on our behalf. We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who ran the race for Counsel and Care and also to our supporters who were able to sponsor Peter. The event, so far, has raised just under £4,000!



The British 10K open Race More of our runners: Paul Martindale, Joan Johnson, Mary Ross and Ray Avars

Action for Eileen

A grieving husband and his daughter have launched a campaign to help cancer patients over the age of 50.

Lisa MacMurdie, the daughter of Eileen Webster, intends to lobby Government for better care for older cancer patients and to eradicate age discrimination within the National Health Service.

Eileen died in 1998 from small cell oesophageal cancer after 'a catalogue of disaster', in London's North Middlesex Hospital.

It is thought that whilst in the care of North Middlesex Hospital, in July 1997, Mrs Webster contracted a "hospital super bug". Mrs Webster's eye became blistered and infected. The family were told this was "just an adverse reaction to the chemotherapy". The family do not believe this statement to be true.

Mrs Webster was discharged in August 1997. At a further meeting with the doctors it was decided that "urgent chemotherapy" was needed. During this time the hospital lost Mrs Webster's file and the "urgent" treatment did not commence until October, some 76 days after the initial recommendation.

By November it became clear that the treatment was having no effect and doctors believed her condition to be terminal; although the family say they were never told this. By this point Mrs Webster had lost the sight in her right eye, her lower eye-lid being badly affected, it is thought due to the super bug. Mrs Webster had also become deaf and developed septicaemia, which the family believe was never treated.

In January 1998 Mrs Webster was admitted to Chase Farm Hospital for a blood transfusion. Ten days later she died, incontinent, paralysed and ridden with bedsores.

It wasn't until some months later that Mr Webster and his daughter discovered a "do not resuscitate" order had been placed on Mrs Webster's notes without their consent.

Mrs Webster's family believe that she was treated like a "second class patient" because of her age. They also feel that they were never fully informed of Mrs Webster's

condition and that she was not allowed to die in dignity.

Lisa MacMurdie and her father have been pursuing complaints against both hospitals for over 3 years now. After launching the Action for Eileen Campaign they feel that they will soon have the answers they need. Lisa MacMurdie plans to instigate an action and support group for cancer patients aged over 50. The objectives are to encourage people to challenge health care professionals decisions and promote discussion and to ensure that patients and their loved ones voices are heard. It is also the aim of the campaign to stamp out ageism within the NHS.

The support group will address personal needs, how to approach hospital Trusts if unsatisfied with treatment or care and generally offer further information and advice.

This tragic case highlights the need for advocacy and support for services such as those provided by Counsel and Care.

Counsel and Care members who would like to support the campaign can write (enclosing an SAE) to: Action for Eileen, 143 Albany Park Avenue, Enfield, EN3 5NY.

Relief from restraint

Comic Relief have joined forces with Counsel and Care to send a positive message to every care home in the country.

Last year we wrote about a new piece of work we were planning on risk taking and the way that care homes use restraint. Since then the project has developed to the extent that now we have raised enough support to plan a big campaign on the subject focussing on how homes can work towards creating a restraint free environment.

Counsel and Care, working in partnership with others concerned

about the care of older people, published its first piece of work on the uses and abuses of restraint back in 1992. In the autumn every care home in the country will receive our new publication; Residents taking risks - minimising the use of restraint. This guide for care homes, aims to encourage homes to reconsider their attitude towards risk taking among residents and the way they use restraint. We want homes to create

the right environment to encourage and enable residents to lead fulfilling lives by minimising the use of restraint, and prevent its abuse. A revised edition of What if they hurt themselves, our 1992 publication, will be published to coincide with the launch of the care guide.

A series of conferences, the first in Birmingham, will take place over the following winter and spring.

The conferences will develop the issues highlighted in both of the publications and will address some of the areas in more detail. We hope that our work on this topic will be as successful, in raising awareness of the way that restraint is used in care homes for older people, as the first campaign.

Do you know someone who is?

- hard of hearing or Deaf;
- has dementia;
- has other mental health problems;
- has complex physical frailties;
- has special communication needs

and is visually impaired or developing serious sight problems?

If so, the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) Multiple Disability Service would like to hear from you.

The RNIB are trying to clarify some of the issues for service users whose needs are not met by 'single disability' services in order to develop a range of information and training resources around these needs.

Some of the queries include:

- Can people with dementia benefit from having an eye test?
- How do you find an optician who is able to test the sight of someone with confusion who is deaf?
- How do you know if someone has a visual impairment if they are unable to communicate?
- How do you get people with dementia and visual impairment to wear their glasses?
- What activities are suitable for someone with dementia and a visual impairment?

If you know of any issues in this

area then please contact: Carmel Perry, Information Officer, Multiple Disability Service, RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA. Tel: 020 7388 1266 extn. 2406. Email: cperry@rnib.org.uk

Training update

For some years now we have been funded by the Scottish Executive to enable us to continue our programme of training for managers and staff of residential care and nursing homes. Mostly working in partnership with registration and inspection units of local and health authorities and occasionally with a group of homes from the same locality these sessions have been part of our programme of work aimed at improving the quality of life for older people in care.

Nine training days were held in Fife, Ayrshire and Argyll in February and March; 3 in Dundee and Stirling in June and July; and 9 are planned in Glasgow, North and South Ayrshire, the Isle of Arran, and the Shetland Isles for September and October.

From the eight quality of care topics offered, those chosen by the participants were care planning, management of risk, abuse, the rights of residents, and leisure activities. The training undertaken so far has been

very much appreciated, with such comments as:- "promoted food for thought", "looking forward to sharing my knowledge with fellow staff", "very enjoyable day with plenty of information provided", "I'm more aware now", "there was a lot I didn't know or realise".

One of the aspects of care that care staff feel they need to know more about is dementia. This is the case throughout the U.K. - not just in Scotland! 50% to 80% of the residents

in residential and nursing homes now have some degree of dementia, which presents an enormous challenge to the care staff. Unfortunately, with local authority care home fees being so low, training comes fairly low on the list of priorities of care homes. Most care staff are very dedicated and caring and deserve more support through training, to enable them to do the very difficult and demanding work they do. Though Scotland is undoubtedly another country, with different plans on paying for care than those which

are soon to take effect in England and Wales, the issues that affect how older people are looked after are just the same. Dignity, privacy, respect and independence are themes that continue to run through our work with care staff wherever we provide training.

The 2001 Graham Lecture

This year's Graham Lecture will be held at The Ismaili Centre, SW7 and Anne Parker, Chair of the National Care Standards Commission will deliver the Lecture 'Regulating Care: priorities and challenges'. Attendance is strictly by invitation only.

Date: Tuesday 20 Nov 2001.

Time: 3pm-5.30pm. Venue:

The Ismaili Centre, 1-7 Cromwell Gardens, London, SW7 2SL.

The Manifesto for Continence...

The Manifesto for Continence has just been launched by a group of 18 patient and carers organisations led by Incontact, among them Counsel and Care for the Elderly, Alzheimer's Society, Age Concern, Help the Aged and the MS Society.

Its purpose is to improve life for the estimated 6 million people in this country who suffer from incontinence, usually silently and without seeking help because of the perceived shame involved. These people need to know that there is a lot that can be done to help.

The Manifesto for Continence formed the largest ever patient consultation of its kind in the UK. 150,000 people who live with continence problems

were asked to state the most important changes that would help them in every day life.

The top issue was the need for more public toilets. Others were better treatments, more information on the condition and availability of treatments, increased public awareness and understanding, better training and more sympathetic attitude of NHS staff, and more support services.

The organisers stress the fact that, in particular, the decline in decent public toilet provision needs to be reversed. All of us at one time or another must have been caught short. The Manifesto is the beginning of core campaigning to realise the demands of those involved in the consultation. If you would like a copy of the manifesto or more information, please write to Incontact, United House, North Road, London N7 9DP.



Staff profile

I joined Counsel and Care just over a year ago, but it really seems that I have been here longer - in the best possible sense!

Name	Liz Brooks
Nationality	British
Joined Counsel and Care	May 2000
Position	Project Officer/ Researcher

After completing my studies to M.A. in the 80s, I hesitated between psychology and art and ended up choosing the latter, pursuing a career in contemporary art publishing. It was a classic case of 'false start': the artworld of the 80s and 90s has been notoriously remote from the idealism of the

early 20th century pioneers. After an uncomfortable stint working my way up to Senior Editor, I was offered the opportunity to study psychology in Geneva.

Returning to London with an unusual qualification, part Swiss, part British, I worked as a temp, care assistant and a day centre volunteer for a couple of gruelling but eye-opening years until I finally secured the longed-for research post in adult mental health. I worked on a total of 5 projects in this area before deciding to

specialise in older people's mental health. After a brief stint as research manager at St George's Hospital Medical School dementia research unit (sadly axed in departmental restructuring), I jumped ship to Counsel and Care where I took up the project officer post on the Housing Decisions in Old Age project. This project is in collaboration with Lancaster University. I also began a 2-year, day release M.Sc. in ageing and mental health at U.C.L. in September 2000. About this time, I also took up a complementary

researcher post on the Quality of Care and Support in Very Sheltered Housing project, funded by the Department of Health.

I am still very much at the lower rungs of apprenticeship in both dementia and specialist housing for older people but Counsel and Care is the ideal place to be learning about these areas because colleagues are supportive, experienced and well-informed. I hope I will eventually be able to give back as much as I am getting out of working here!

We welcome your comments...

We are reviewing the design of our newsletter. Our aim is to improve the format and text to ease readability for our supporters. Are there any articles you particularly like? Do you think we leave any areas uncovered? We welcome all of your comments, good or bad! Please write or send an email to Laura Brown at the address below.

Please note this interim issue has not incurred any additional costs.

Counsel and Care, Twyman House, 16 Bonny Street, London NW1 9PG
advice@counselandcare.org.uk

You may have a very clear impression of what BUPAs all about, but there is more to the company than you probably realise. So here are:

SIX THINGS ABOUT BUPA THAT MAY SURPRISE YOU!

1. **BUPA IS A PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION**, so any profits are re-invested in health and care.
2. **AS THE UK'S LARGEST CARE HOME PROVIDER**, we operate 16,000 beds in 233 homes.
3. **LOCAL AUTHORITIES FUND 75%** of our residents care.
4. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A BUPA INSURANCE CUSTOMER** to use any of our care services.
5. **BUPA IS LEADING DEVELOPMENTS** in care for older people, including a pilot of a new care assessment tool and testing new models of intermediate care.
6. **90% OF OUR CARE HOME RESIDENTS** rated the quality of service in their home as good or excellent in our annual customer survey.



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If you would like to know more,
call Dean Cowley on:

0113 381 6218

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