

Abbeyfield  
The Dales

# Abbeyfield Matters

## Winter Edition

# Contents

Well September definitely made its Autumnal self known. Although the sun still tried to keep it's hat on and our residents were still able to get out and about and enjoy their surroundings. Here's what's inside this edition:

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Residents enjoyed lots of Christmas activities, and had another visit from the alpacas.

## 8. *Meet the Trustees*

Board of Trustees Deputy Martin Carter is featured in this edition.

## 10. *Meet the Team*

In this edition we get to know Fern House Receptionist Hester Stefanuti.

## 12. *Grove House*

Residents go out and about, and enjoy Festive music and celebrations. Also find out who employee of the month is.

## 18. *Centenarians*

See who is celebrating some special birthdays.

## 20. *Portraits of our Time*

Two resident at Fern House participated in a Creative Health project.

## 24. *The Beeches*

Residents got creative with pine cones and pumpkins.

## 26. *Puzzle & Quiz*

Including an alphabet themed quiz, and a picture quiz.

If you have anything you would like to share with us for future editions of Abbeyfield Matters, we'd love to hear from you. Please talk to a member of the team or forward your content to

**[reception@abbeyfieldthedes.co.uk](mailto:reception@abbeyfieldthedes.co.uk)**

*We hope you enjoy reading*

A message from the Chief Executive ...

# Philip Birkinshaw

Happy new year to one and all, and may 2026 bring you peace and happiness.

Welcome everyone to this Winter edition of Abbeyfield Matters, and I do hope you are keeping warm and safe during this current cold snap. It seems such a long time ago that we were preparing for the festive season, and in a blink it is over and we are in a new year.

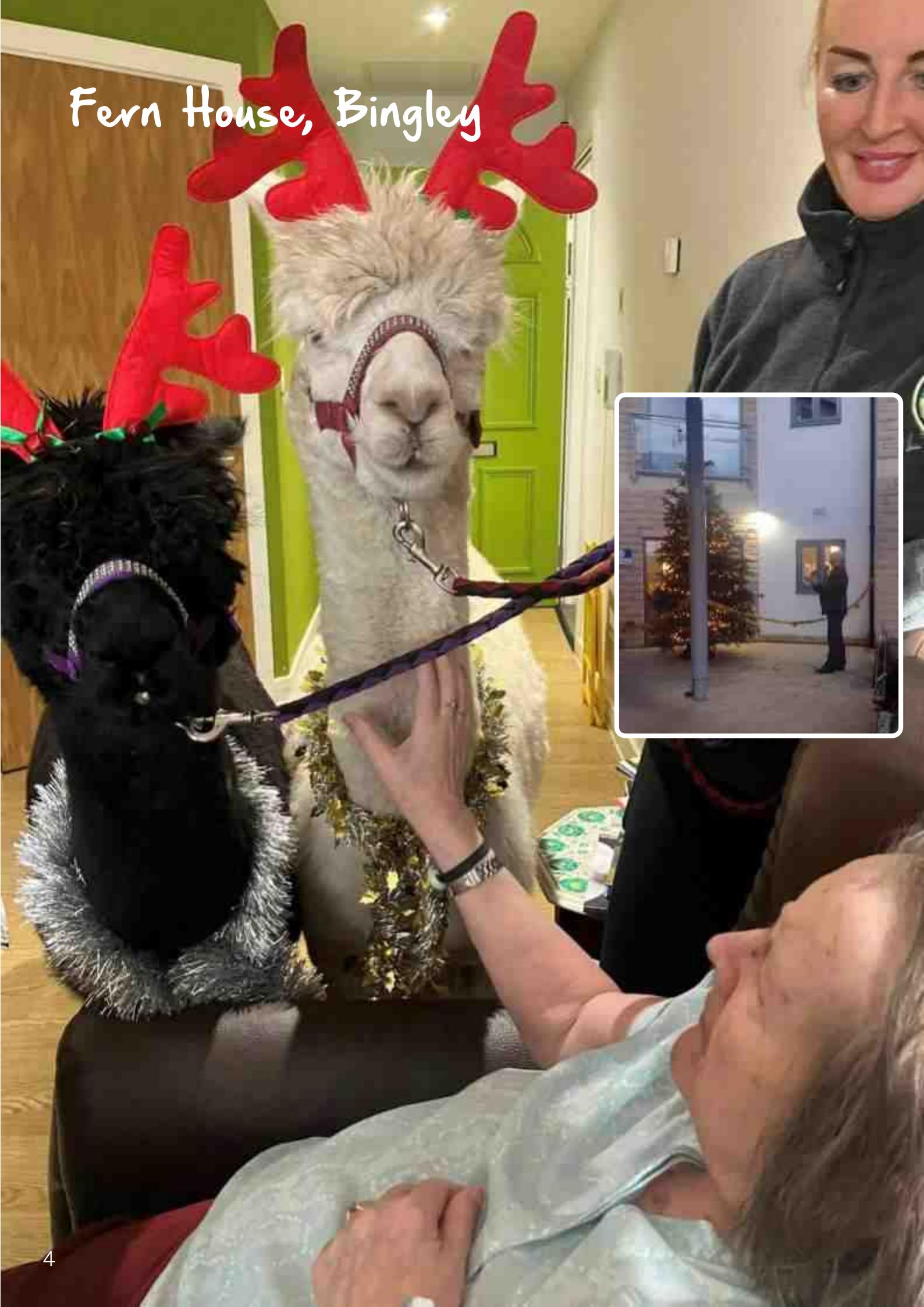
There have been so many activities and events since the last newsletter, and it is lovely to see many of you enjoying yourselves during the dark and gloomy Winter months. I would like to thank all our dedicated staff who go that extra mile to make your time living with us special, fulfilling and happy.

When you get part way through January, it feels like we have turned a corner to brighter and warmer days (although I don't think the cold weather has released its grip just yet) as we can see the sun rise a little earlier and the sunset a little later each day.

Please do keep safe if you are out and about, keep warm (tell us if you are not), and enjoy the activities program in 2026. In the meantime, wrap up warm as the temperatures drop, and keep safe.



Fern House, Bingley



# Christmas fun!

**Fern House had plenty activities and events in store for the residents to enjoy.**

Residents had a lovely visit from the Christmas Alpacas. Smiles and laughter filled the home as everyone gathered to see regular visitors Luke and King Kong (Pictured right). As always these little Beauties didn't disappoint!

They held a light switch on event with Chief Executive Philip counting down. This was all accompanied by a Choir, mince pies and mulled wine.



Musical interludes were enjoyed from Sunhill Ukulele Band, The Salvation Army Band, and other individuals who entertained residents and brought lots of Joy.



Fern House, Bingley

# Getting Crafty



Christmas Cake designing and Christmas Cracker crafting got Residents in the spirit of Christmas. Some lovely designs and execution of crafts by all.





Myrtle Park (with some blue sky) helped Residents with a Bench to Bench walk. Taslim from the Bradford Council came out to help.

The Busfield Arms hosted the Gentlemen Club with new friends being made.





Meet the Trustees ...  
**Martin Carter**

**I first heard the name Abbeyfield in 2009. My mother, feeling her age at 83, was looking for a new home in Bradford to be closer to me and my family. One day she saw a sign outside a large, attractive house on Leylands Lane, advertising a flat to let. It was an Abbeyfield House. My mother lived there very happily for several years until her eventual sad demise.**

How did this lead to me becoming a trustee? A friend from church, Nora Whitham, was Chair of Trustees for the Abbeyfield Bradford Society, which managed the Leylands Lane house. In 2015, when I was nearing retirement, Nora asked if I would consider becoming a trustee. Already knowing Abbeyfield's valuable work, I thought that perhaps some of my skills might make at least a modest contribution and so I applied. Accepted by Bradford, which later merged into ATD, I have now been an Abbeyfield trustee for 10 years. (Nora herself retired in 2024 after 21 years of exceptional service.)

Before retirement I enjoyed a varied career. After a degree in chemistry I moved into industrial management, first in the historic Lever Brothers soap factory at Port Sunlight where, for a while, I managed the department making Vim scouring powder. I soon began looking for something contributing even more directly to human health and joined a pharmaceutical company making sterile medical products, including intravenous fluid containers and blood collection systems.

After about 10 years in industry I became concerned about the declining state of UK manufacturing and decided to change direction. I took a degree in economics and became a university lecturer, conveying economic ideas to business students and researching business organisation. Sadly I never solved the problem of industrial decline.

In some ways my role as a trustee is far more practical than my career as an academic. We engage in great detail with ATD's senior leaders, looking at every aspect of how the organisation achieves its most admirable aims, ranging from current challenges to long term planning for sustainability and even greater improvement. Especially enjoyable is meeting residents and staff to see how well ATD helps them in achieving happiness and fulfilment. My mother, if she were still here, would be absolutely delighted.



Meet the team ...  
**Hester Stefanuti**

# Receptionist at Fern House

**I have been part of the Fern House team for eight years now, and one of the things I enjoy most about working on Reception is that no two days are ever the same. The Reception area is always a lively and welcoming place, with a steady flow of visitors coming through the doors to see their relatives and friends.**

My role involves a wide range of responsibilities. I support both residents and visitors by helping with any questions or concerns they may have, and I always aim to provide a warm, reassuring presence. A large part of my day is spent handling phone calls from various professionals—including doctors, social workers, district nurses, and other healthcare partners—and ensuring each call is directed promptly to the correct department or member of staff.

We also receive enquiries from potential residents and family members who are interested in learning more about life at Fern House. I'm often the first point of contact for these conversations, and I enjoy being able to answer their initial questions and offer guidance before passing on the details to our Operations Manager, Amanda Daly.

One aspect of my role that I value most is the opportunity to build strong, trusting relationships with our residents and with the families and friends who visit them. This is something I take great pride in. Knowing that people feel comfortable approaching me when they need support, information, or simply a friendly chat means a great deal. I always try to go the extra mile to make sure everyone feels welcome and supported.

I am very proud to be a member of the Abbeyfield Mental Health Team, and I feel genuinely privileged to be part of an organisation that places such importance on compassion, dignity, and community.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending quality time with my family and taking my dog Oscar for long walks. I like to keep active and regularly take part in sponsored charity walks and runs. I've completed the London Marathon three times and have raised money for a range of charities along the way. I have a feeling there's still one more marathon in me... so watch this space!

Grove House, Ilkley

# Outings and Adventures

Residents have enjoyed several trips over the last couple of months. Starting with a trip to Boundary Mill in Colne to do some Christmas present shopping. Then a trip to Ilkley Cinema to see The Choral.



Next a visit to St Margarets Church for the Annual Christmas Tree Festival...





... and most recently a trip to Owlcoates M&S for some January sale shopping.

Being able to get out and about with help from our wonderful volunteers and the Ilkley Community Transport bus is lovely.

Residents at Grove House were treated to a fantastic Christmas Carol Concert by the talented Phoenix Singers. It was a truly memorable performance that brought smiles to everyone's faces and set the perfect tone for the holiday season.



Grove House, Ilkley

# Musical Events

**There were so many fantastic musical events in December.**

Residents at Grove House were treated to a truly special evening of music, courtesy of the talented **Unity Ukes Ukulele Band**. Their lively performance featured a joyful mix of festive favorites alongside timeless classics. The energy and enthusiasm of the band were infectious, and everyone left with smiles and hearts full of Christmas spirit.



We were treated to another truly fantastic Christmas Concert on Saturday, 21st December! The talented **Hot Aire Brass Band** delivered an incredible performance, showcasing a wonderful selection of festive music that had everyone tapping their feet and smiling. A huge thank you to the band for creating such a memorable and heartwarming experience.



On December 6th, the talented **Abbeyfield Residents Choir** delighted their families and friends with a beautiful Christmas carol performance. Visitors, residents, and staff thoroughly enjoyed the performance and joined in the singing and applauded the choir's wonderful efforts.

Our Chief Executive, Philip Birkinshaw, Director of Operations, Clare Hobbins, and Registered Manager, Fiona Downs were in attendance at this special event. Thank you for your continued support and engagement—it means so much to our residents. Finally, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Anne and Sally for their dedication and all they do to make our choir such a success.

Our residents were also treated to a unique musical performance by **Chevin Handbell Ringers (Otley)** who paid us a special festive visit.



# Grove House, Extra Care Christmas Celebrations

Debbie and her team pulled off a fantastic full Christmas Lunch for all occupants at Grove House and The Hub. Everyone sat together in the Activities Room and enjoyed a beautiful 3 course meal with all the trimmings.



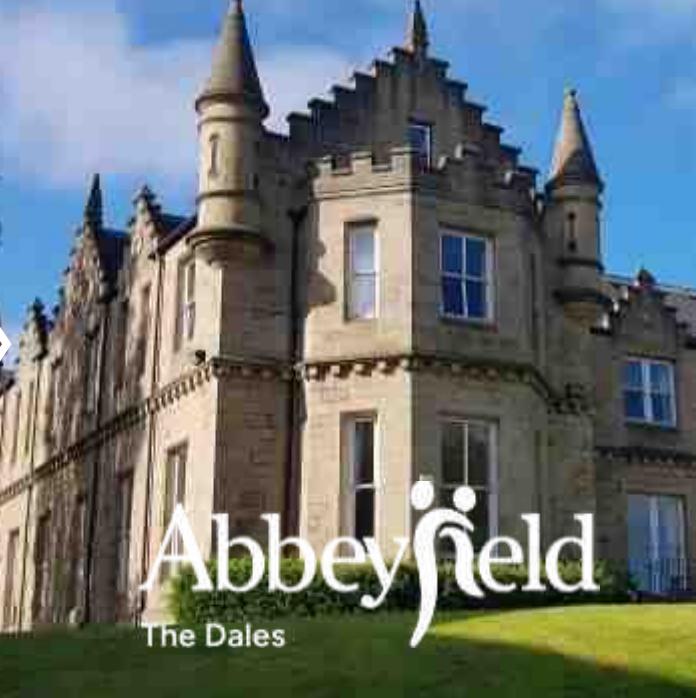
Our wonderful ladies and gents at Grove House rang in 2026 with an unforgettable celebration! The party was filled with delicious festive food and drinks, lively games that brought plenty of laughter, and joyful singing that created a truly heartwarming atmosphere. It was the perfect way to start the new year together!





Grove House, Ilkley  
Employee of the Month

Megan Downs



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# Sponsored Walk

## Walking Miles to Make Smiles

**On Saturday 14th March 2026 at 9:30am we have our sponsored walk from Fern House in Bingley to Grove House in Ilkley.**

Please consider sponsoring us and help us reach our goal of raising £1,000 to grow our resident activities programme. Your support will allow us to offer even more meaningful opportunities that keep people active, socially connected, and engaged in the things they love. Our team will be made up of a wonderful mix of staff, volunteers, and Fern House family members—all coming together to make a difference for our residents.



**If you would like to sponsor us or join in the walk please contact Jeanette or Modesta on 01274 065 090 or email [activitiesFH@abbeyfieldthedesales.co.uk](mailto:activitiesFH@abbeyfieldthedesales.co.uk)**

Or donate on our gofundme link below, or scan the QR code ...  
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/sponsored-w>





# Centenarians

... continued from previous Newsletter

**Marion Brushett** (pictured right) has been a resident at Fern House since 2017 and in February this year will be celebrating her 104th birthday.

Marion was born in Bingley in February 1922, the youngest of three. The family moved to Bradford where Marion attended Bradford Girls Grammar School.

In March 1942 Marion was called up for service and joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service. She met Vic in Brussels and they married in October 1946. They lived in London until 1949 when they came back to Bradford.

In 1952 Andy was born followed by Helen in 1955. When Helen started school Marion trained as a teacher and taught English in various places until she retired.

Marion loved travelling going to New Zealand and South Africa among other places, walking and playing Bridge.

She now has four grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Also a resident at Fern House is **Betty Greenwood** (pictured bottom left) who celebrated her 100th birthday last June.

Below right we also have **Marjorie** who is very soon to be 100. Many congratulations to you on your special day Marjorie. Enjoy your birthday celebrations.





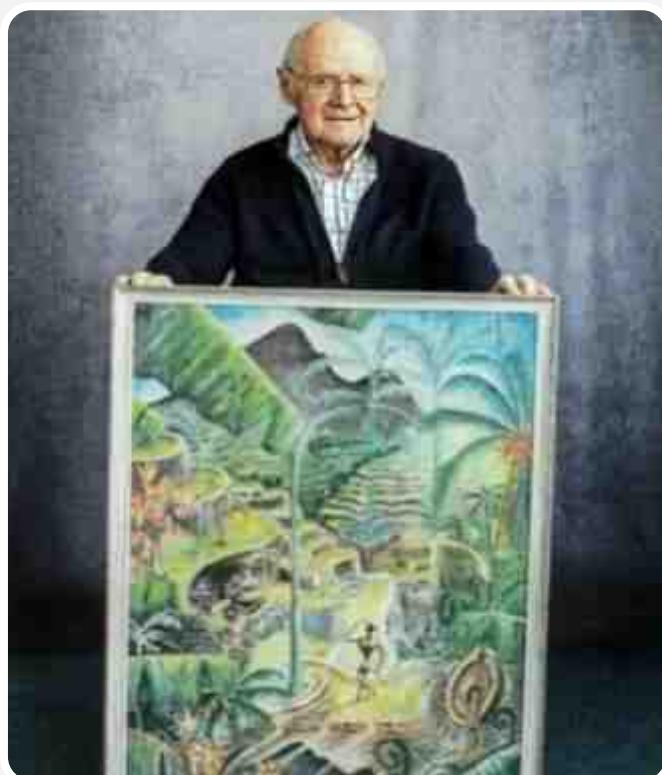
# Portraits of our time

Celebrating Care Through Photography & Storytelling

**24th January - 29th March 2026**

Bradford Industrial Museum, 235 Moorside Rd, Bradford, BD2 3HP

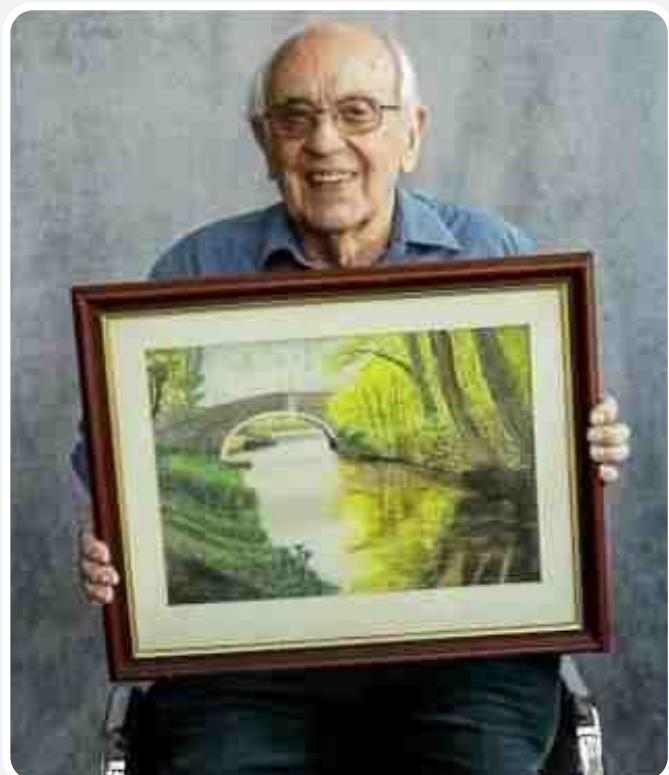
**As part of Bradford Care Association's Bradford 2025 supported Creative Health project, care providers were invited to participate in a photography exhibition recently and John and John, two of our talented Fern House residents took part, and were able to showcase something they cherished. They are both keen artists and decided to be photographed with one of their beautiful paintings.**



**John**

John chose to hold his own painting, inspired by an original image by Auke Sonnega. The scene in Malaysia captured his imagination. His late father kept the painting, later passing it back to John, who treasured it ever since.

John worked as a management consultant and enjoyed life with his wife and children.



**John**

John chose a watercolour he painted, inspired by a tranquil stretch of the Leeds Liverpool canal, holding fond memories of time spent there.

John worked as a chartered civic engineer and served in the Royal Air Force, once returning to the UK aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia during the coronation year.



# The Beeches, Menston

# Pumpkin Painting

Last Halloween it was so lovely to have our friends from the Railway Children come to visit us. Both parties benefit so much from spending time together. Children have a warm and infectious energy and we can give our full attention and make great listeners.

We decided not to carve our pumpkins but instead we painted them and we were all very proud of the final results.



# Remembrance Day

We received a truly lovely surprise when the children from **Menston Primary School** sent us a collection of beautifully made **Remembrance Day cards**. Each card was thoughtfully decorated and, inside was a beautifully written question about the war and our residents personal memories of that time. Their curiosity, respect, and effort really touched everyone here.

Our residents took great pleasure in writing back to the children, sharing their experiences, reflections, and stories for them to read and learn from. What a wonderful idea this was—meaningful, educational, and heartfelt. It created a truly special connection between generations, and it was just as enjoyable and valuable for us as it was for the children.



It was a pleasure to host over 30 children from **Menston Beavers**. Everyone had a wonderful evening. We sang together and they had made all the residents Christmas cards which will be cherished and took pride of place in their apartments.



Last November a very relaxing afternoon was had by all listening to **Adventuro Cello and Piano Duo** who kindly performed for us before setting off on a four-month cruise to play their beautiful music.

The concert felt extra special for our resident Eileen who was very proud as the young man playing piano is her great nephew.



# Lots of Festive Activities ...

More wonderful singing followed as the delightful **Ladies Please Choir** took to the stage, filling the room with their beautiful harmonies and heartfelt performances. They truly sang their hearts out for us, sharing a joyful mix of Christmas carols that had everyone smiling. Before long we were all joining in, creating a lovely atmosphere of music, laughter, and festive cheer. What an enjoyable and uplifting afternoon it turned out to be.



We were also treated to a wonderful evening performance by **The Vivace Choir**, beautifully led by **Eleanor Cree**. Their visits are always a highlight for us, and this occasion was no exception. Over the years, we have had the joy of watching them grow in confidence, skill, and harmony, developing into an incredibly talented group of young performers. Their dedication and passion shine through every time they sing. Truly, they are stars of the future!





Our residents truly got into the spirit of the season, immersing themselves in a whole range of **Crafty Christmas Activities**. From getting green-fingered and creating some truly outstanding festive table decorations, to designing beautifully personalised Christmas cards and handmade decorations. It was wonderful to see how much fun everyone had throughout the process, and the pride on their faces when they saw their finished masterpieces was absolutely heart-warming.

A big and heartfelt thank you goes to **Lynne Melville**, our fantastic craft volunteer, whose imagination and enthusiasm never fail to inspire us. She continually surprises us with fresh ideas and brings out the creative spark in everyone she works with.



# The Beeches Christmas Party

We had a fantastic time at our Christmas party. After enjoying a delicious Christmas dinner, we held our raffle and were entertained by singer Andy Wiseman, who soon had everyone up dancing and singing along. We rounded off the afternoon perfectly with mulled wine and mince pies. A big thank-you to everyone who donated raffle prizes and bought tickets. All funds raised go directly into the Beeches Amenities Account to support future activities and events.





Come and join us for our ...

## **Monthly Coffee Morning**

... at The Beeches, Newfield Drive, Menston, LS29 6JQ

**1st Wednesday of every month,  
from 10am-12pm**

Join us for a morning of coffee, cake and good old natter. We have raffles and bric-a-brac on offer too.

**We look forward to seeing you!**

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For more information call **01943 822 430** or email  
**a.lambert@abbeyfieldthedesales.co.uk**

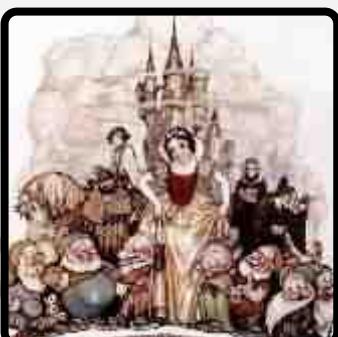
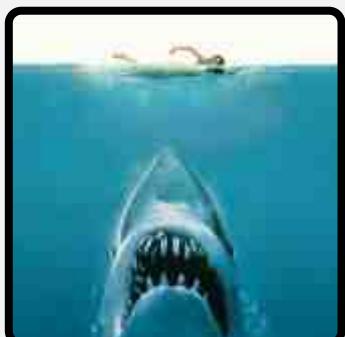
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# Picture quiz...

Can you name these famous movies from their posters?  
*Answers on back page.*





Looking for something rewarding to do, wanting to give back and help others? Then ...

## Volunteer with us

... at our sites in Bingley, Burnley, Ilkley & Menston.

If you are caring, respectful, open & honest, and have ideas of how we can enhance the lives of others we would love to hear them. We have many rewarding roles such as befriending, gardening, activities, dining room assistant, receptionist ... and so much more!

**We look forward to hearing from you!**

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For more information call **01943 866 000** or email  
**[s.dean@abbeyfieldthedesales.co.uk](mailto:s.dean@abbeyfieldthedesales.co.uk)**

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# It's quiz time!

This general knowledge quiz where the answers are all in alphabetical order.

Answers on the back page.

- A. What is the only country besides Azerbaijan that starts with an 'A' but doesn't end with an 'A'?
- B. What is it called when fat juices from the roasting tin are spooned over meat while it is cooking?
- C. What was the computer called which was developed from Turing's 'bombe's' at Bletchley Park.
- D. Hills and ridges composed of drifting sand are known as what?
- E. In the early 20th century, rattlesnake venom was used to treat which illness.
- F. In Scrabble, how many bonus points do you get if you play all seven tiles at once.
- G. Mary Ann Evans used which male pseudonym, when she published her first short story "Amos Barton"?
- H. Part of the North American Continent, what is the biggest bay in the world?
- I. What is the common name for the condition dyspepsia.
- J. What is the name of the compact opaque gemstone ranging in colour from dark green to almost white?
- K. What is the more common name of the fruit known as 'Chinese Gooseberry'?
- L. In what type of building would you see the Dewey classification system used?
- M. Who began her career making death masks from the severed heads of those executed by the guillotine after the French Revolution?

- N. What was the first self-governing country in the world in which all women had the right to vote in parliamentary elections?
- O. Which musical written by the duo Rodgers & Hammerstein shares its name with a U.S State?
- P. What is the name of the mountain chain separating most of Spain from France?
- Q. Which English cartoonist, caricaturist, illustrator and children's writer has illustrated 18 books written by Roald Dahl?
- R. What unit of currency is shared by Sri Lanka, Nepal and India?
- S. In the animal kingdom what is the only male that undergoes pregnancy and birth?
- T. The only chemical element with a three letter name, is extracted from the ore cassiterite?
- U. As of 2021, who is the world record holder in the 100 metres, 200 metres and 4 x 100 metre relay.
- V. What name is shared by the Roman Goddess of the Hearth and the brightest asteroid visible from earth?
- W. What antelopes, native to Eastern and Southern Africa, are also call Gnu?
- X. Ethernet was a registered trademark of what company, better known for photocopiers?
- Y. What is a form of singing which involves repeated and rapid changes of pitch between the low-pitch chest register and the high-pitch head register o falsetto?
- Z. Who was David Bowie's titular alter ego, a fictional androgynous rock star who is sent to Earth as a saviour?

## Alphabet Answers

**A**) Afghanistan **B**) Basting **C**) Colossus **D**) Dunes **E**) Epilepsy **F**) Fifty **G**) George Eliot **H**) Hudson Bay **I**) Indigestion **J**) Jade **K**) Kiwi Fruit **L**) Library **M**) Madame Tussauds **N**) New Zealand **O**) Oklahoma **P**) Pyrenees **Q**) Quentin Blake **R**) Rupee **S**) Seahorses **T**) Tin **U**) Usain Bolt **V**) Vesta **W**) Wildebeest **X**) Xerox **Y**) Yodelling **Z**) Ziggy Stardust

## Movie Poster Quiz

**1**) Seven Year Itch, **2**) The Godfather, **3**) Star Wars, **4**) Breakfast at Tiffany's, **5**) Jaws, **6**) Diamonds are Forever, **7**) Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, **8**) The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, **9**) A Clockwork Orange, **10**) Grease, **11**) Casablanca, **12**) Doctor Zhivago, **13**) ET, **14**) West Side Story, **15**) Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, **16**) Silence of the Lambs

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