

News and Views from

AROUND THE HOUSES

I would like to start this issue with a warm welcome to Cherry the new housekeeper at Annett House and her husband Sam.



Cherry has previous experience of working for Abbeyfield and we hope that she and her husband will soon settle in.

If you know the history of the Abbeyfield Society you will know that it was started by Richard Carr Gomm in 1955 in Bermondsey. Since then he has gone on to found other charities to help people in need including the Carr-Gomm Society and the Morpeth Society each focusing

on a different area of need. Recently he was awarded the Beacon Society's *Judges Special Award for Lifetime Achievement* in recognition of all his achievements. Now 83 he is still involved with these societies as well as other charitable ventures.

We were recently pleased to welcome our local MP, Mike Penning, pictured below with the Society Chairman, Mr John Stevens and the Chairman of St. Mary's House, Dr. Alan Younger.



**March/April
2006**

Abbeyfield
Where older people find care in housing

Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead

Mike Penning had already visited Annett House on an earlier occasion but took the time to come and meet the residents at St. Mary's House and Sibley's Orchard and to talk to them about local issues.

Annett House had it's own visitors recently when it was host to two separate groups.



First were a group from Abbeyfield national office in St. Albans, pictured above. It is their policy to arrange for all new staff to make a visit to one or two Abbeyfield Houses to see how they operate and to see how unique each Abbeyfield House is. Secondly, Annett House were pleased to welcome a group from Germany who are part of Abbeyfield International. Thanks must go to Christine Hopcraft, chairman of the Annett House committee for giving up her time to co-ordinate and host these visits.

If you would like to make an informal visit to Annett House there will be an opportunity to do so on Wednesday May 10th from 10.30am when they hold one of their regular coffee morning bring and buy sales. These are always popular and busy events and provide an ideal opportunity to meet some of the committee and residents and to hear what life in an Abbeyfield House is really like.

St. Mary's House have been kept very busy recently with birthday parties.

First to celebrate was one of our more recent residents, Miriam, who has reached the wonderful milestone of 95.

She was quickly followed by two more of our residents, Rita and Anne, who shared a birthday party as their birthdays were only a few days apart, see picture below.



Just a few days later again one of the relief housekeepers was also celebrating, and as you will see from our Birthday list on page 4 they still have more to celebrate this month!

St. Mary's newest resident, Evelyn, recently gave an excellent talk at the Wednesday coffee morning about her experiences in Romania.



As part of a church group who provide financial and practical support she had travelled out to a small village near the border to carry out repair work to an orphanage and to assist however necessary. As well as telling us all about the experience she had a full album of photos to pass around and was able to bring the people in the photographs to life with her descriptions of them.

St. Mary's most recent talk was by their house treasurer, Steve, who has not long returned from almost

two months touring Australia with his wife. His talk was accompanied by a large map so that the residents could follow the route easily and illustrated by a slide show on DVD.

Sibley's Orchard also have regular coffee mornings on a Tuesday., although they do not usually have a guest speaker.



The coffee mornings are hosted by a volunteer, Paula who comes in every Tuesday during term time, and the house manager joins them when she can as do other committee members from time to time.



As regular readers will know our houses could not exist without the

hard work of our volunteers. However this effort is not entirely one way. As you will see from the picture below age is no barrier to helping others.



Kath (who came to Abbeyfield when she moved back to England from South Africa) and who is one of the most long-standing residents from Annett House has been knitting comfort blankets for children in hospital for some years and has now completed hundreds.

The blankets are knitted in bright colours to a specified size and then sent to a central distribution depot so that they can be dispatched to hospitals as needed. They are designed to be given out to children when they come in to hospital and they are then able to

take them home when they leave. Obviously this means that a constant supply is required from Kath and others like her.

Welcome to

Cherry at Annett House
Evelyn at St. Mary's House
Madeleine at Annett House
Jean at Sibley's Orchard

Goodbye to

No goodbye's this month!!

Happy Birthday to

Eleanor at St. Mary's House
Walter at St. Mary's House
Grahame at Annett House
Gladys at Annett House
George at Annett House
Audrey at Sibley's Orchard
Elsie at Sibley's Orchard
Nancy at Sibley's Orchard
Cherry at Annett House

As always if you are interested in one of our houses for yourself or a friend and would like to arrange a visit we would be only too happy to show you around by appointment. Please contact me using the details below.

If you would like to contact us you may e-mail us at susanpullen.abbeyfield@virgin.net , you may phone us on 01442 217578 or you can send items to Mrs Susan Pullen, St. Mary's House, 9 George Street, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 5HJ.