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Plant a smile on Mother's Day

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find your nearest garden centre or to place your order online, or call **0871 384 3237** for more details. **To win, simply answer the following question:** What's the official name for Mother's Day? Send your answer to Christine Craig, details on page 3.



Celebrating 20 years at Weardale's only nursing home

CROSS Hill Nursing Home in Stanhope organised a party for residents and their families to celebrate its 20th anniversary.

The home, owned by David and Florence Rayson was purpose-built and opened in February 1992 with the first residents to enjoy the facilities being those from the then recently closed Winterton Hospital in Sedgfield. Three of the original residents are still there and still enjoying life, which is not surprising given the amount of activities on offer and the level of nursing care.

Both David and Florence are highly experienced State Registered Nurses and they



had a vision, which was to provide high quality care to older adults who could no longer manage in their own homes. More importantly, they wanted to prevent the regular movement of older people in these circumstances between organisations, especially as they neared the end of their lives.

Cross Hill has a friendly atmosphere and visitors are warmly welcomed by staff, which includes 24-hour qualified nurses as well as carers. It is pristine clean, thanks to the efficient domestic staff and Diana Dobson is the Events Co-ordinator. In this role, she organises a plethora of activities, games and even away days for the residents. In December, she even persuaded a local theatre company to perform a pantomime in the home!

Julie Percival is the Manager of the home and leads the friendly staff who all seem to thoroughly enjoy working there. Julie, a local girl who is a highly qualified nurse, was appointed and the Rayson's eldest daughter, Maria Vincent also decided to join the team. Maria, too, is very highly qualified in nursing, being a RGN, MSc Oncology/BSc (Hons) Nursing and had previously worked as the Macmillan Lead Cancer Nurse for the Newcastle Hospitals Foundation Trust.

Maria has maintained a keen interest in the family business over the years and now holds the position of Director of Nursing and Patient Services, primarily developed to provide support to the Home Managers

within the business. She ensures that Rayson Homes continues to deliver high quality care that reflects the holistic needs of the residents, their families, friends and the local communities fulfilling her parents' visions and dreams.

The 20th anniversary party, co-ordinated by Diana, was a huge success with John Beaty on the organ, playing tunes from the 40s and 50s. "Mr Beaty is wonderful," said staff member, Helena, apparently known as the 'Singing Nurse'. "He gets them going – many of the residents, visitors and staff were singing and dancing along to his music."

There were balloons and banners decorating both inside and outside as well as a sumptuous buffet and a cake, made by Joyce Turnbull and decorated by Brenda Strong. The picture on top of the cake was the same one used 20 years ago on the opening celebration cake! In the evening, the celebrations continued with a singer.

The home is always looking for volunteers who could work alongside Diana in helping to bring new activities for the residents. Volunteers would also accompany them on trips away. If anyone is interested in giving up a few hours a month to help, please contact Diana at Cross Hill on 01388 526205.

Cross Hill Nursing Home, proves its excellence all year round but, last month, the staff excelled themselves celebrating the anniversary. Here's to the next 20 years!



David and Florence Rayson with two of the original residents.



Top left: John Beaty entertains while nurse Helena looks on.

Bottom left: More residents with visitor, Jan Tinkler.



Some of the residents and their families at the Open Day.

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