



Residents enjoy some poetry at the Spring Lane Care Home Photo Mike Coles

## Poetry that connects us all

By Daphne Chamberlain

**This year's National Poetry Day was celebrated with love at Spring Lane Care Home, Muswell Hill.**

Residents, staff and visitors filled the big lounge to enjoy old favourites, new treats, and tea and cakes.

"Why do we love poetry?" asked organiser Caroline Elliot. Answers included: "It's a way of understanding more fully", "We can share and pass it on", "People have different tastes", "It brings people together".

When singer/songwriter Julie read her own pieces about love and change, someone told her: "They made me feel warm". Other original poems "brought back lovely memories".

Family members, friends, staff and residents all contributed. Some recited poems they had probably learned in childhood. Others read pieces in memory of loved ones.

We heard among others Lewis Carroll, Malory's Mort d'Arthur, Robert Browning, Sylvia Plath, Dylan Thomas, A.E. Housman, W B Yeats, Robert Burns, Jenny Joseph, Carol Ann Duffy, Wendy Cope, and new carer Craig, who read pieces he had written at the age of 14.

There is a poetry session every Monday at Spring Lane, always including something from storyteller Becky. On Poetry Day she told the story

of Persephone, which inspired talk about the beginning and end of life.

Ethel Mattison, whose life and passing at the age of 106 we featured in October's *Archer*, spent her last three years at

Spring Lane. She loved the poetry sessions, and as part of a warm tribute from Caroline we heard one of her favourites, Shakespeare's *All the world's a stage*. A reminder that we all indeed play many parts.

## How to deal with monsters and mysterious beasts

Review by Diana Cormack

**Local author Carey Miller's twelfth book for children was published in October. Having been a headteacher with 30 years of primary school experience, Carey knows what youngsters like and how to put it over to them. In this case *A Dictionary of Monsters and Mysterious Beasts* contains a wealth of facts and fiction on a subject which would actually be of interest to readers of any age.**

Mankind has feared the sort of creatures which she describes since the beginning of time and it is interesting that similar ones are said to be found in different parts of the world. Think of Big Foot, Sasquatch or the Yeti. Intriguing too that some are part man, whilst others share the features of two, three or even more animals.

### Dominate dragons

Plenty of uncommon ones such as the Squonk and the Kraken are introduced. Specific ways are revealed about how to escape from or even eliminate some, with readers occasionally given amusing tips on how to avoid certain creatures.

As well as learning more



Childrens author Carey Miller. Photo Mike Coles

about home-grown dragons and dinosaurs, beasts from many parts of our planet are included; some live in water, others underground or in the air. There are characters from Greek and Indian myths and legends and even horror film-favourite Doctor Frankenstein's monster makes an appearance.

Along with stories of eye-witness accounts and unsolved mysteries in the 80 descriptions in the dictionary are illustrations by Mary French. Published by Olympia Publishers, the dictionary is available on Amazon.

Carey is willing to give talks about her book, being particularly skilled at this in the primary school age range. To make enquiries, email her at [careymiller21@hotmail.com](mailto:careymiller21@hotmail.com).

## SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Jan Lovell, of the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, updates us on the latest crime news. Jan and the team can be contacted by email at: [EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk](mailto:EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk), or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

### HMRC scam

Thank you for the many emails from local residents about aggressive phone calls they've had from people who claim to be the HMRC (the tax office), telling them they owe money. One gentleman was told he was £2,000 in arrears and that there was a warrant out for his arrest. The callers even tried to arrange for someone to come within an hour to collect payment.

Remember that HMRC would never ring you, they would write; as would any government department or financial institution. Never give a caller or emailer any personal information. Never talk to a caller you suspect is a scammer. Just hang up.

There's a good sense of community here and we talk about these issues and no one has yet fallen victim. But please share this with everyone you know, especially elderly people who may not hear about it on the grapevine or social media.

### How do the scammers get your number?

If you've ever bought anything from a catalogue, in a store, online, booked a holiday, bought or hired a car, and I think that's probably all of us, then there's a footprint of data somewhere with your name on it. Some companies buy this information for legal marketing purposes. But scammers buy it to con you out of money. These are facts and it's one of the unfortunate aspects of the vast goings on of the internet. And it's not going to go away.

### If you give the police the number that called you, can they trace it?

The numbers that scammers use constantly change or they use untraceable numbers from disposable mobile phones. But you can report this scam to HMRC by calling 0345 300 3900 or emailing [phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk). You can also report any kind of scam to Action Fraud at [www.action-fraud.police.uk](http://www.action-fraud.police.uk) or by calling 0300 123 2040. If the victim is vulnerable, then call 999 or 101.

### Other scams

Cash point scams have dropped dramatically, but please don't drop your guard. Scammers are still getting folk to put their cards into parking meters to pay fines for being "wrongly parked". Remember the council do not collect fines in this way.



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