



by Roger Linn



A happy family

at Valerie Manor

When I visited Valerie Manor almost a year ago, Zoe Bates had just taken over as its new owner – but already it felt much more like a family home than a residential care home. Now, if anything, this beautifully converted 17th century manor house is even warmer in its appeal.



The description of Valerie Manor as a ‘family’ establishment is particularly appropriate because not only do the fourteen elderly residents regard themselves as the manor’s family, but Zoe’s own family play important roles in the daily life of this small community. Her partner Rob is the IT king and also maintains the website www.valeriemanor.co.uk and its weekly ‘blog’. The website is well worth a visit because – unlike many of today’s websites – it is updated frequently, it’s informative, easy to follow and it is plainly created by people that love the place.

Zoe’s mum Robin – better known to many of you as Robin of Let’s Dance in Hassocks – is in charge of all the activities and entertainment. And there is a rich and varied programme for those who want to join in. How about seated Line Dancing? Fancy a sing-along or watching a film? Perhaps you’d prefer a day trip in the specially designed minibus? Recent outings have included trips to the Jack and Jill windmills, to the seaside and – always a firm favourite – taking residents down memory lane by going back to where they used to live to see how things have changed. Residents are given every opportunity to remain mentally alert and physically active and, to this end, one of Valerie Manor’s many wellwishers has donated a Nintendo Wii console – currently being promoted as a great exercise tool for the elderly by the NHS!

Of course, the happy atmosphere has only come about through a great deal of hard work on Zoe’s part, aided by her loyal staff, all of whom are either

fully NVQ qualified in Health and Social Care or are in the process of qualifying. Additionally, all have completed the Medication and Infection Control course. Zoe’s own qualifications in Nursing, together with her experience in NHS management, have been very important in setting the high standards of care that are the norm at Valerie Manor. In fact, she was very proud to accept the runners-up award in the RBS national competition for ‘Excellence In Care’ in September. That’s some achievement after only nine months! Although perhaps one shouldn’t be surprised because when the Commission for Social Care made an unannounced inspection in July, they gave Valerie Manor the highest rating possible! Zoe is immensely grateful for all the help she’s received, not just from her own staff but from the local community in Upper Beeding, residents’ families and the volunteers who simply like being involved in the life of the safe, sociable and friendly home that is Valerie Manor. ■

Find out more by ringing Zoe on 01903 812105 or emailing zoe@valeriemanor.co.uk

Above: Zoe Bates, the engaging and passionate owner of Valerie Manor and her team (below). From left to right, standing: Emma, Julie, Lucy, Joyce, Carole, Alayna, Ellie and Steve, sitting: Delyn and Cath.

