

# Apuldram News

## Winter 2015

The Apuldram Centre - Horticultural & Craft Training for People with Learning Disabilities  
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Editor: Paul Rees

### Christmas Greetings to all our supporters!

In this edition of the Newsletter there are articles about two new members of staff, **Karen Over**, Finance Manager and **Rachel Aslet-Cook**, General Manager. David Hatch is featured in a Q&A and there's an insight into the mysteries of Forest School (well, it was a mystery to me before I undertook the interview).

Rachel's arrival at Apuldram will undoubtedly bring some changes to the way in which things work but not to the over-arching ethos of providing opportunities for trainees and tenants to increase their independence and to enjoy doing so.

Congratulations to Cherie Prince, one of our Supported Living team (also a fundraiser and the leader of the Gateway Club), who was deservedly nominated for a Chichester Observer Community Special Recognition Award; the category was eventually won by the A&E Nursing Team at St Richard's Hospital, Chichester.

Whatever you're doing for Christmas, I hope you have fun!

*Paul*



**Karen Over** joined Apuldram as our new Finance Manager in early November and has already established herself as an important part of the Apuldram structure.

She gained an interest in money-management while working in a grocery store after leaving school and continues to study for further qualifications. For the past eight years she worked for an electronics company originally based in Petersfield that relocated to Bournemouth; Karen commuted for 10 months but is glad that she has found something a little nearer to home. At College Karen took a course in Social Care that included a placement at Rachel Maddocks school in Waterlooville, a school for children aged 2-19 with severe and profound multiple learning difficulties and complex medical needs.

Karen enjoys swimming, is a fan of Manchester City FC and Strictly Come Dancing and has a partner, Phil, who is a fireman.

**Welcome to Apuldram, Karen**

### Life and Lily

Hello.

This is such a busy time of year for everyone. I've been doing a lot of artwork at Pallant House, which I love, and I've bought all my presents.

For a birthday treat this month my sister took me for a Chinese meal in Selsey; I really enjoy Chinese food.

I'll be spending Christmas with my Mum, in Selsey; also there will be my sister Amanda, her husband Stuart and their three children, Isla (3), Ben (5) and baby Emmie. It should be noisy and great fun. **Happy Christmas to you all!**



# Good To Meet You

David Hatch, 33, Chichester

in conversation with Paul Reed

## Q What makes you happy?

A I love coming to Apuldram and seeing all my friends here, everyone who works here. I also enjoy going to WRAP club.

## Q What are your hobbies?

A I swim with the Otters at Westgate on Saturdays. I keep my flat tidy. I live with support in a flat through Dignity. I have full support but I'm independent: I come here in a taxi and go to Westgate by myself, to Out There, where I see you on Wednesdays. [I see David hard at work in the gym as I pass through on my way to something less demanding!]

## Q How do you spend your evenings?

A Sometimes I go out, perhaps to see a film; I've seen the latest James Bond at Cineworld. I play my music, happy music. I watch Hollyoaks. I help to make dinner. I play Tetris Splits on my iPad.



## Q Favourite tv programme/film?

A Ooh, I think I know, yes, Grease, with John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John. I like musicals.

## Q Favourite singer/band?

A I like Ed Sheeran, Jessie J, Kylie and lots of others.

## Q What do you like doing best at Apuldram?

A I love being with Richard and with Sally; we're making wreaths at the moment but Sally's off.

## Q Describe your family/pets

A My family live in Tangmere; there's my Dad and two sisters, Alex and Georgia at home; Daniel is my brother and he also lives in Tangmere with Sonia and their children Kitty and Sam. We don't have any pets. I am the youngest. I see them all a lot and will be seeing them all a lot at Christmas.



## Q Favourite meal?

A Burger with cheese and bacon and fries and tomato ketchup.

## Q Three words to describe yourself

A Happy, nice and polite, a little bit anxious sometimes.

Thank you, David.



Here's a picture that David would like - he'd certainly wish he'd been there: Jo Moyle sent in this photo of **Lily** in the Harwoods/Aston-Martin showroom in Chichester, standing next to the DB10 stunt car that was in the Bond film Spectre. The car was in the dealership for just one day along with the DB5 that featured in some of the earlier Bond films.

**It's been a whirlwind for Apuldram's new general manager Rachel Aslet-Clark since she took the helm of the centre in October. But she has found the time to reflect on her role and the challenges ahead, and also tells Sue Gilson what she believes she has to offer.**



Rachel with one of Apuldram's reindeer, in front of Alistair's Christmas wall and, below, at her desk

Rachel lives in Selsey, is married to David and has three children – Megan (12), Conor (16) and Georgia (19) – as well as an eight-month old miniature schnauzer Lola.

**Sue:** Briefly, what is your career background?

**Rachel:** At secondary school I was a member of the Girls' Nautical Training Corps and at the age of 17 I left home to pursue an ambition to join the WRNS, the Women's Royal Naval Service. I remained in the WRNS for the next 13 years, travelling globally and serving on frontline warships. After leaving the service I had some time being a mummy before returning to work and being part of a project that involved three UK warships being sold to Chile. I then looked for a part time role to fit in with my family. I joined *Relate Portsmouth and SE Hampshire* and managed the service for seven years. *Relate* is a charity that promotes and supports positive relationships.

**Sue:** What skills/talents do you bring to Apuldram?

**Rachel:** All of my career roles have involved various elements of leadership and management. I believe I'm good with people and see both the immediate and long term picture. In military scenarios you often have to win hearts and minds to bring about effective change, but this is equally important in the charity sector too.

**Sue:** What are your priorities for the centre?

**Rachel:** My first priority is getting to know all our staff and users - there are well over 100 names and faces to remember. I'm also taking time to observe what the organisation is doing now and thinking about how we can improve or strengthen what we do well.

**Sue:** And the long term vision?

**Rachel:** The priorities and plans that we will create over the next few years, I hope will enable us to remain relevant to our future young adults who are



currently in school. I'd like to ensure that The Apuldram Centre is a *brand* that is known and understood and increase our local visibility and influence. I would like to see Apuldram as an integral part of the wider community and to do this we need to be creative in utilising our resources and enhance local partnership opportunities.

**Sue:** What do you think it does well?

**Rachel:** There is a sense of "being" or "belonging" at Apuldram; we are providing a service, but we still retain

the flexibility to remain person centred and uphold a family atmosphere.

**Sue:** What can be improved upon?

**Rachel:** In my opinion our biggest future challenge is to ensure we remain focused on not just the daily operations but longer term strategic planning. We need to ask ourselves what services will our users want/ need in 10 years and beyond. We need to explore and embrace new technologies that not only enable us to be effective at delivering our services but prepare our users for 21<sup>st</sup> century living.

**Sue:** Have you worked with adults with learning disabilities before?

**Rachel:** No I haven't, although I do believe that in each of us there are varying levels of disability and ability. My focus is on people's potential to achieve and for each of us this will be different.

**'My focus is on people's potential to achieve and for each of us this will be different'**

**Sue:** Given your background with *Relate*, do you envisage setting up something here so the trainees can meet each other socially?

**Rachel:** Relationships are important to our users as is the need for us to provide appropriate relationship support and education, whether that be in forming, sustaining or ending relationships. I don't think I'm quite ready to set up *Date Apuldram.com*, but I think creating opportunities to meet, socialise and have fun in a safe environment as an additional offer is something to be explored.

**Sue:** How are you enjoying it so far?

**Rachel:** There is so much happening to occupy my time it's a wonder I'm actually getting any work done at all! I said when I left *Relate* it was because I'd made a decision from the heart to be closer to home and have an equally rewarding career opportunity. I certainly feel that Apuldram is a heart-warming place and a place where everyone has made me feel extremely welcome.



# FOREST SCHOOL is a new venture for

Apuldram; **Jenny Keil**, who runs it, told Paul Reed she volunteered at her son's school, The March, when they started doing Forest School, and says: "I decided that it would be a really good thing for our guys to be involved in; I talked with Alan [Doick] and he came and saw it, and then Jane [Kilby] agreed; they sent me for training - I had to have Level 3 Forest School qualifications".

So what is Forest School then, Jen? "It's an outdoor experience with the opportunity to learn a lot of different things - life skills, as well as educational things; it's also about social aspects, like communication and managed risk-taking; for example we show them how to light fires responsibly and safely, and how to respect nature."

After the training, in May this year Jen came back to Apuldram and asked trainees which of them would like to join in, and those interested she took for a day at Woods Mill, near Small Dole, where she had done her own training; the woman who had trained Jenny ran a 'taster' session for 12 people. The group has been back a few times and it has proved to be very popular with the Forest scholars. Funding comes in part from Chichester Harbour Conservancy, who pay for a lot of the tools and part of the training; the Goodwood Estate allows them to use their site, Seeley Copse, for nothing - the Estate runs its own Forest School for the general public there so the facilities are excellent. All in all it doesn't actually cost Apuldram a great deal at the moment.

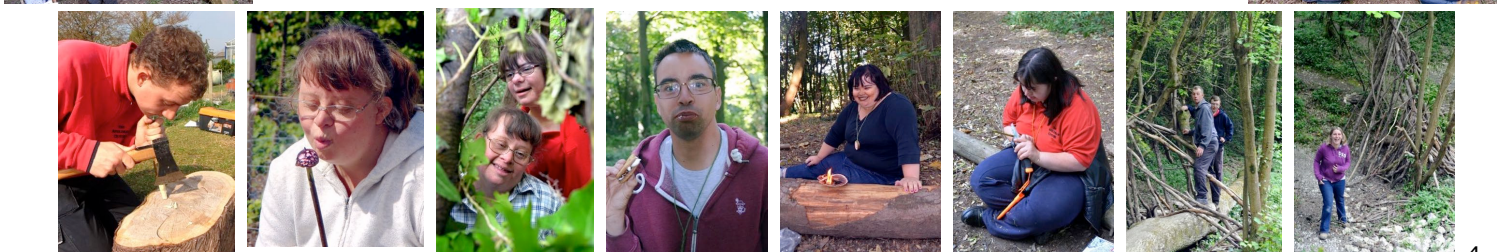
Jenny said it would be great to get some more equipment, including a shelter of some sort as protection from the weather. At Seeley Copse the main site often uses a parachute canopy and that would work well. Jen has also seen ex-Army tents in use, and she feels they could be useful, too, with the sides rolled up. They also need a four-wheeled trolley with wire sides for the woods. At the moment they borrow one from the Forest School at Goodwood.

Jenny is also hoping to do some 'rural craft' with the team; they are working with willow at the moment and they need some dried corn to make corn-dollies; they always need wood for the fire - good quality, unfinished natural wood, preferably when someone is chopping a tree down.

Jane Ellams is one of the volunteers who assists with Forest School at Apuldram; it seems to be a mutually enjoyable venture. Chloe and Grace have designed a nature trail for the other 'scholars' to follow.

What's next? Jenny is looking to start 'Beach School'; she will need further training which would cost £180, but it sounds as if it would be worthwhile to extend the learning environment and Jenny is sure the Harbour Conservancy Trust would support this.

So, what is Forest School? It's something really special, really exciting and very popular. Excellent!



# puldramatics!

The Apuldram Centre Drama group presented a pantomime for the Trainees, Staff and Tuesday volunteers of the centre, reports Mike Norris; the group, run by Sally Morley from the WEA, gave a brilliant portrayal of 'Robin Hood'. They had spent several weeks preparing for the show and thoroughly enjoyed acting out their pantomime to a packed audience in the Common Room. A unique twist on the story of Robin Hood was played out by the actors and actresses: The sheriff kidnapped all the maidens and Robin Hood and his Merry Men had to rescue them. The Sheriff was then chained to a chair and his goods and money were taken by the outlaws who subsequently proposed to the maidens and all ended with joyous singing and dancing. Oh no it didn't... Oh yes, etc.

## The Cast

The Sheriff	Alistair Riddell
Maid Marian's Mother	Jenny Seymour
The Guard	Jason Ireland
Robin Hood	Tom Matthews
Little John	David Heath
The Merry Men	Andy Francis Andrew Hek
Maid Marian & her maids	Chloe White Laura Herniman Olivia Coaker Anna Bradley Lisa Sloane Warsha Jones Liz
Macarena Dancers	Sam Barton Laura Herniman
Technical Operator	Sam Barton
Director	Sally Morley
Artwork	Chloe White



And finally: as mentioned at the beginning of the newsletter, there was a presentation for the Chichester Observer Community Awards; Guest of Honour and presenting the awards was Fred Dinenage, who is pictured here with Jason and Carol; Julie Sandalls told us that Carol has 'a thing' for Fred....