

Castle Comfort Clarion



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APPEAL BY NORMANDY VETERAN !!

Does anyone recognise this man?

The Clarion regularly quizzes Castle Comfort's staff about goings on at this thriving and growing business - and always of particular interest is news of remarkable and outstanding characters who come along - and in needing the services of CCC, become not just customers - but friends. None more so than 84 years' young Mr ERNEST FROST of Bradwell.

Pure pride oozes from ex-Normandy veteran Ernie as he enthusiastically relates his wartime experiences. On weighing up his ability to manage a CCC Vaya-Bien scooter the firm's advisors were told to "belt up ... if I can handle a tank" declared Ernest "I can drive anything".

Despite being seriously and permanently injured through shrapnel damage, the veteran's sense of humour wasn't affected. The youngest of 12 children he claims he would have been born much earlier but had a shy father! On a more serious note, Ernie was among those to witness the horrors of Belsen and he attended the post-war tribunal in November 1945 which

resulted in the hanging of 13 perpetrators. He modestly dismisses his collection of five medals as being par for the course, yet deservedly displays them at every opportunity.

Ernie was a pupil of Hassall Street School in Newcastle and wants to know if any of his former school colleagues are still around or indeed if anyone in North Staffordshire recognises him from his wartime stint and would like to make contact. HE WAS IN THE 6TH BATTALION 59 DIVISION 176 BRIGADE.

Calls are awaited at The Clarion from anyone who experienced those bygone years and would like to be put in touch. We'll be delighted to arrange a reunion.

Ernest is pictured here with his medals, Normandy badges and his latest vehicular acquisition. The Clarion and CCC teams send him best wishes... and VAYA-BIEN! (May you go well).



IT'S CLARION TIME AGAIN! -

and we hope you like the new compact look with double the pages. When the very first Clarion newspaper came out two years ago never in our wildest dreams did we think of building up to a circulation of 100,000. The reader response and local businesses wishing to renew their advertising with us has made it possible. Wolstanton-based Castle Comfort Centre have, for the third year running, doubled their turnover and we'd like to think that our popular family

bulletin has helped in promoting their good name. In fact the secret is already out ... this innovative family-run business is expected to shortly have branches UK wide. The CCC style, community newspaper to match, its products and level of service will become, through its franchise operation, a national brand - quite an achievement in just a few years with the original idea emerging from an abandoned old bank building!

This edition of The Clarion contains many of the previous features, competitions and articles relating to an important subject for all of us - our health. Our own NHS in the area often comes under scrutiny but we'd like to put things into perspective; so let's begin, in this issue, with the first of our series of reports, starting on page 5, on just how other countries manage their health - or don't! Read on ...

WIN £25

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and a CAPYBARA

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HANLEY FIREFIGHTERS RUN 26 MILES

"They're just BRILL! Says Gill

By Clarion Reporting Team

The Potteries Marathon, always one of the best attended and most respected long distance events in the U.K., never fails to encourage acts of kindness and good-spirited action from us "Stokies" always ready to help others. The last event was no exception - with a team of Hanley fire fighters called into action, because Gilly Abbots from Sneyd Green really needed them, and it wasn't due to a blaze! - they completed the arduous 26 mile course in 4 hours 48 minutes pushing Gill with them in her wheelchair. The effort raised much needed ££££'s because this brave young lady, a sufferer of cerebral palsy, has for some time needed a special sized electric adjustable bed to help with her condition and make life more comfortable.

The always cheerful 28 year old had visited the showroom of Wolstanton specialist bed company Castle Comfort Centre over a year ago but due to limited funds it all had to be put on hold. However, the group, based at Hanley fire station, raised through their run *almost the full cost needed..* so there was light on the horizon. Then apparently, someone had tipped off the staff at CCC about the cash shortfall, so the buying department of the Company informed their manufacturers of the circumstances - who in turn agreed to reduce the wholesale cost to match the amount available.



Without further ado, Gill's bed was on its way, and here she is pictured along with three of the fire-fighting team, Tory, Max and Derek to whom The Clarion sends congratulations for their remarkable achievement! Let's not forget to mention those who generously contributed through sponsorship, and special thanks go to all on the route who gave fantastic encouragement by cheering, applauding and digging deep into their pockets.

Tory, Max and Derek make an off duty call out to visit Gill

"Nice one" too to Motion Technology of Nottinghamshire, Castle Comfort Centre's bed makers, whose gesture is much appreciated, and finally the most important verdict on all this, including that on her new sleeping aid, comes from Gill herself... "JUST BRILL"!

SAFARI TIME

SPOT THE 3 CCC ANIMALS

Find hidden away in The Clarion,

A CAT, A CAMEL AND A CAPYBARA

Then write to us at FREEPOST MID 30746
Newcastle ST5 OBR telling us where they are and...
in which part of the world might you find a capybara?
- that's the easy bit... also ... wait for it... *how many toes in total does it have?*

Terry Conroy of Stoke City and Eire fame who is also patron of the CCC Doug Brown Motor Neurone Fund will draw the winner (closing date 01.07.2004) £25 goes to the lucky and toe knowledgeable winner.

GOOD HUNTING! *The Editor*

PS see page 15 for results of last Clarion competitions

MOTION TECHNOLOGY

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THE SENTINEL Tuesday August 12, 2003



Michael's on the move again

Housebound teenager Michael Bailey whose wheelchair was destroyed in a firebomb attack on his Trentham home is mobile again - thanks to a kind hearted business. Michael, aged 17, whose rare congenital disorder has left him with the body of a seven-year-old, was given his new specially made wheelchair by Castle Comfort Centre in Wolstanton.

It was handed over at his Parkwood Avenue home by Graham Scott from the firm.

CCC Ambassador/Public Relations Executive (part-time)
Graham Scott is seen proudly presenting the wheelchair...
 Picture: Dillon Prendergast, Clarion

...And right: Graham is captured revelling in his full-time profession

Picture: taken by a grateful parent



WHO EVER HEARD OF A BUSINESS NOT WANTING TO MAKE A PROFIT?

By Emily Tongue, Freelance Clarion Reporter

Wolstanton based Castle Comfort Centre explained to the Clarion why one of their best selling products has recently been put on offer to the local community at cost purchase price without any gain to the company.

Julian Lewis of CCC told me 'A growing part of our business is coming from people buying presents for their relations and loved ones especially at Christmas, anniversary and birthday time. 'Whilst we thrive on marketing motion

furniture here it is clear from many requests that a small and very affordable inexpensive item should be available also. 'So the ever popular Classic Cane folding adjustable walking stick, is on offer at just £10'.

'The average age of visitors to our showroom since we started this,' Julian continued, 'has dropped noticeably, as quite a number of teenagers now find the problem of what to get Grandfather /Grandma for Christmas has been solved'.

This seems to be proving another welcome service by this innovative local company but we are asked to point out that the offer is limited and may be withdrawn without notice. So why not get that gift really sorted out well in advance? It will be appreciated!

CLARION READER SPECIAL OFFER

 **Classic Canes**

Please supply a **Classic Canes Adjustable Walking Stick** for just **£10 (Cost Price)**

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NOTE: Offer limited to ONE stick per person

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WOLSTANTON HOMECARE FIRM JOINS FORCES WITH THE ELITE

By Clarion Business Correspondent

Julian Lewis at Castle Comfort let us in on the fact that it is **not always** to be assumed manufacturers of fine products need new retailers. In fact on numerous occasions Sherborne, undoubtedly the highest quality maker of furniture in the UK told CCC that to respect something of a 'closed shop' arrangement with other dealers they could not supply them. However, this year things have changed - word probably got out that not only has CCC quickly become one of the largest suppliers of riser-recliners in the UK, but despite having credit accounts with suppliers (up to 3 months in some cases) they prefer to settle all invoices on arrival. Julian explained 'we negotiate the best discounts because of that, and any savings made can be reflected in our prices charged.' 'In addition' he explained 'most of our customers pay us on delivery, so what's the point in keeping a manufacturer's money for months? - 'The respect we've earned in the industry for this policy is tremendous. 'Eventually Sherborne started to supply



Another delivery of quality furniture,

and we've raised their eyebrows already with the size and regularity of initial orders to them, not just the speed at which they get paid.'

'The quality of this range is just something out of this world,' concluded Julian 'and as ever we welcome the fact that people shop around because

we'll have no difficulty impressing customers with our keen prices and excellent service.'

Products from Sherborne are proudly on display at CCC's headquarters at Wolstanton and at their popular indoor Hanley Market venue and remember if you can't get to them - they'll come to you!

A MESSAGE FROM THE TOP AT SHERBORNE

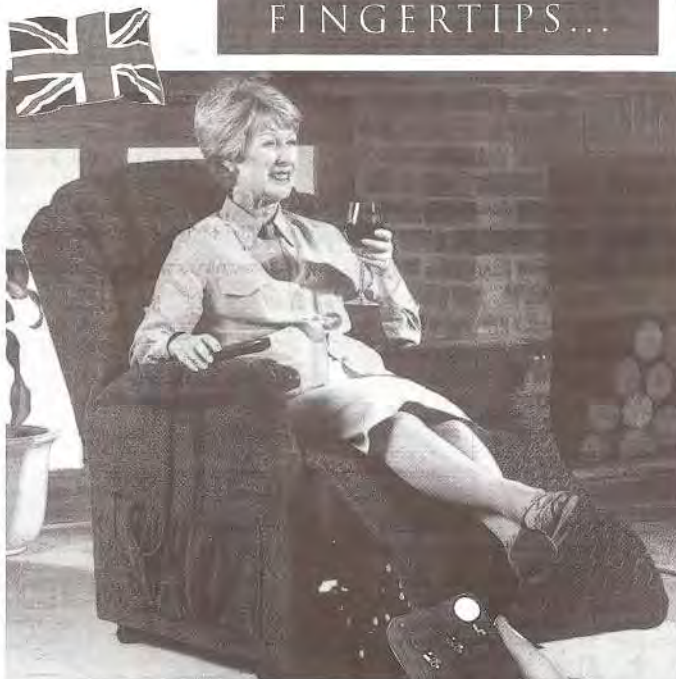
"We are delighted to become a supplier to Castle Comfort Centre, a Mobility Centre which clearly gets involved with its local community. We feel sure that our electric lift & rise' chairs and matching furniture will enhance their product offering and wish them continued success in the future."

**Chris Fort, Managing Director
Sherborne Upholstery Ltd.**

THE COMPANY

Starting as a small family business over 70 years ago, Sherborne has grown into one of the most successful upholstery businesses in the United Kingdom. Manufacturing all our own frames every piece is fully produced (not just assembled) in our factories. Not only that, but with our excellent reputation for high quality, quick and efficient service and value for money, many of our designs are already established top sellers.

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"All types of nuts supplied"

Don't cry for me Argentina – Just sob for your National Health Service!

By Our Man in Buenos Aires

Castle Comfort Centre director Keith Simpson explored his way into northern Argentina to get a first hand glimpse of healthcare standards in an extraordinary country that is economically and administratively completely destroyed. Ironically, it is a nation that has rich and vast natural wealth from agriculture to oil, precious metals, wine production and other manufacturing industries all successfully exporting. But it is so politically corrupt and badly managed that the despicably treated non-wealthy Argentines (the large majority) are hungry, in fact often starving, lack basic medical care and are frightened to demand their basic human rights for fear of igniting the return of a military dictatorship.

Instead of being, as it should be, a shining example to the rest of third world Latin America, this beautiful nation containing a dignified and proud people is now merely a symbol of suppression. Its considerable number of highly trained doctors (those who do not flee the country) are rarely able to practise their skills due to a famine of basic drugs and facilities.

Keith spent time at San Pedro, in the Jujuy province and visited the town hospital. Some pretty horrific cases were witnessed but typical was that of farm labourer Candido Quisp.

"This guy was screaming with pain continually" Keith explained. "He had been lying there for eight days with gallstones as big as golf balls needing urgent removal. "Due to the fact his employer hadn't passed on his social security



The hospital main entrance affords easy access for the disabled - NOT!

payments for years he had no right to national health cover so the hospital couldn't treat him. "Candido and his family were so poor that none of his children had been able to afford the bus fare from their village 60 kilometres away to come and visit him, let alone pay for the treatment. "A nurse explained that all the staff in the hospital had clubbed together to get the operation done there privately but were struggling to raise the anaesthetist's fees.

"I went to see the hospital administrators and made them pledge that if I paid the shortfall of 80 dollars (about £45) they would get the job done quickly. "They promised action rather unconvincingly, but I still gave them the cash. "The following day I returned and the guy was in a worse state - having had his hopes raised then told there would be a delay. "Again I was given reassurance the operation would go ahead the following morning. "I made sure I got back at daybreak to be told that they were all prepared but rain during the night had caused another postponement. "Rain? - apparently the anaesthetist's suit had been left outside to air and it got drenched.

"However, it was all eventually sorted out after another day's wait and Candido came through it all well. When he came round I realised that despite his post-op weakness he was unsuccessfully trying to grab my hand to say thanks. "He didn't need to do that - his moistening eyes expressed his gratitude and the tears shortly to appear on his cheeks were not for his beloved Argentina, but out of relief.

"All that went through my mind at that point was that I needed everyone in North Staffordshire to know about this," concluded Keith, "because we just don't know how lucky we really are."



FALKLANDS FORGOTTEN - A victorious Argentine, a happy English traveller and an unwanted gallstone!

Bath war rages on...

Walk in Systems versus Bath Lifts - the debate continues...

By Harry Leake

We reported on the problems with walk-in bath systems in the previous Clarion and WOW! Staffs that caused a stir with the makers/importers of that product!

A further interview with Keith Simpson, founder of CCC confirmed that the Wolstanton based homecare company has now decided to cease becoming involved with walk-ins at all due to several reasons. Leaks on the door seals, at some stage, are virtually guaranteed. The installation costs thousands of pounds (which may prove a poor investment if only used for the twilight years of a person's life), and there are practical use disadvantages such as having to endure a concentration camp style of having to wait in the bath naked and cold while it fills and empties. More importantly though, the firm feels that the bath-access problems which many people in Staffordshire have can be solved by an inexpensive, portable battery operated product called the REVOLUTION and comes backed up with ace German technology.

Keith told us, 'we have sold thousands of them. The profit to CCC isn't huge compared with what could be earned installing a walk-in bath system, but it is such a simple trouble free exercise and VERY economical to our customers that we are sticking to our policy. The REVOLUTION fits neatly into the existing bath in seconds and problems are rare, but anyway we can offer a two year on-site warranty just in case.'



CCC's founder went on 'One Hampshire based importer of walk-ins reacted angrily at the Clarion article. They kept writing to the industry magazine naturally blowing off steam and although I joined in the banter at first I then kept out of it - we are too busy here unloading pallets of bath lifts! Their point was that my claim that all walk-in systems may leak was nonsense and that THEIR particular product didn't and couldn't leak - "impossible" they say ... "it's tested in Canada" ... "and it's fireproof too!"

'My experience in life,' Keith concluded, 'is that if it can go wrong it just might and if the salesman says it won't - it's guaranteed to!' And at the Clarion we are sure that due to the public reaction in Staffordshire on this subject (see readers' letters on page 12) we think Castle Comfort Centre are entitled to declare 'CHECKMATE... but please enjoy your bath!'

Young and Old, we've got the lot! - CCC clients - age no barrier!!!

The Five Most Senior... (all ladies!)

Ellen Burton of Caudon Low - 96
Elsbeth Nicholls of Tean - 96
Hilda Hall of Walton- 98
Ethel Sweetmore of Hanchurch - 99
and Annie Mayer of Biddulph - 101!

and the Oldest Man...

Norman Breeze of Penkhull - a mere 94

The Six Most Junior...

Rebecca Snape of Ball Green - 11
Rebecca Grundy of Longton - 17
David King of Northwood - 16
Holly Banks of Uttoxeter - 27
Gilly Abbots of Sneyd Green - 28
and Matthew Dooley of Knutton - 24

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The Revolution comes with a plug top battery recharger. A solid red light indicates charging is in operation, and flashes when the charging is complete.

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Two Piece System

The Revolution can be disassembled into two parts for ease of transfer and storage, making it lightweight and portable.

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A Fare Retirement!

By Horace Holmes, Clarion reporter

The end of 2003 sees the retirement of popular hackney-cab driver KEN KNOWLES of Newcastle. We are asked by Castle Comfort Centre to thank Ken on their behalf for many years of impeccable and reliable service in being a key part of the mobility company's courtesy transport service. In fact, he was warmly recommended for the 'Courteous Cabbie' award offered by the Campaign for Courtesy recently and has now been awarded status of Honorary Member.

CCC are aware that many potential clients are unable to make their way to Wolstanton so transport to and from the showroom is arranged - with no obligation to buy anything. If the firm's own vehicles and drivers are occupied - Ken has always stepped in.

One slight drawback.... we are told by CCC that when he arrives there with the visitors, the specialist advisory staff often have little to do as Ken, a purchaser several years ago of CCC's products for his family has already sung the praises of the company so much that the potential clients' minds are already made up when they arrive!

The Clarion and Castle Comfort wish Ken a long, happy, restful and enjoyable retirement and send him best wishes, and good luck goes to Anthony, his son-in-law, who is taking over the business.

CHAMPION CHAUFFER



Ken Knowles, pictured here, along with his deserved award.

ANY COLOUR YOU LIKE AS LONG AS IT'S BLUE OR RED (BLACK) IS EXTRA!

By Simon Smith, Pride Mobility Products M.D. and Stand-In Clarion Transport Editor.

The Americans have come a long way since Henry pushed his first Ford (black only folks!) off the production line and such a history in vehicle design and production may be one of the reasons why this summer at Pride Mobility we've been overwhelmed by the success of the GO-GO scooter range.

More amazing is how we persuaded Castle Comfort Centre to supply them, as this thriving company, dedicated until now to riser-recliner chairs and electric beds, never planned to get into what they called 'the motor trade'. In fact the arrival of our compact travel vehicle has been so welcomed by Staffordshire people that CCC have renamed and registered their own trademark for the roadster - THE VAYA BIEN. There are already scores of them in the region and many more to follow.

The GO-GO Travel Scooter (or "Vaya Bien") is available as a three or four-wheel vehicle and has a maximum weight capacity of 113 kg (18 stone). It has an easy lock-up system, adjustable tiller and easy-to-remove battery pack. Scratch resistant plastic in Red or Blue, flat-free tyres and easy-to-use controls make this lightweight scooter (the heaviest piece weighs only 13 kg - 29.5 lbs!) into a durable and versatile machine. For convenient transport and storage, the Go-Go 3 and 4 easily disassembles into 4 lightweight pieces to take with you in the boot of your car. Using the off-board charger the battery pack can be charged on its own, saving you time and effort. Competitively priced, the Go-Go Travel scooter will make a useful addition to your transport needs. Go for one!

Sorry we don't do it in Black.

Part-time Job Vacancies at Castle Comfort Centre **MATURE PEOPLE ONLY**

CCC will soon be needing several helpers to staff our instore promotions (for one off periods) such as at Morrison's stores in Newcastle and Hanley.

This will involve staffing the display, inviting interested people to have a price list and distributing copies of the Clarion.

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JOKE OF THE SEASON

The CLARION thanks retiring Kozee-Sleep Sales Director, Bill Williams, for supplying various tales - yet the only one near suitable for publication in our family newspaper goes as such....

"A man is driving up a steep, narrow mountain road. A woman is driving down it. As they pass, the woman leans out of her window and shouts 'PIG!' The guy immediately leans out of his window and yells 'GET LOST!' They each continue on their way but as the man rounds the next bend he crashes into a pig sat in the middle of the road. If only men would listen!"

THANKS BILL - AND HAPPY RETIREMENT TO YOU TOO.

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introduce the...

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["May You Go Well"]



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Have a test drive at our Wolstanton head office or see our permanent display at Hanley Indoor Market

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THE VAYA-BIEN 3



THE VAYA-BIEN 4



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In Memoriam

When a loved one eventually dies our thoughts turn, naturally enough, to how we can have them remembered and how we can thank those who cared for them towards the end.

At this time of sorrow many think of giving to a charity in lieu of flowers at the funeral, collecting all donations and sending off a cheque in return for a letter of thanks.

However well intentioned this, understandably, may be - your donation is a once and over thing - but have a thought towards others within your community who could in the future be in need of that same care.

Small comforts can mean a lot to these persons, and for a more lasting memorial to your loved one a gift to the nursing home for the comfort or improvement in the quality of life of residents could mean a lot more.

Castle Comfort Centre is willing and able to supply items such as a wheelchair, customised armchair or the like with a plaque in memoriam of and thanks to the centre of your choice.

It is nice to see a local company that both understands these difficulties and is so willing to come to the aid of those so impaired. It is hard to see why more do not use this as a natural alternative to flowers or a way of using any small bequests in such a tangible and lasting way.

For a larger inheritance, then professional financial advice should always be sought from a qualified and Independent Financial Adviser before any commitments are undertaken.

Dear Castle Comfort Centre

We are writing to acknowledge and thank you for your recent help following the passing away of Mrs Wladyslawa Hryciuk. The wheelchair we obtained from you is now being donated, in her memory, to Ward 31 (the day renal unit) at the North Staffs Hospital complex. She was so well treated and cared for on the unit that this is the least we can do. We are sure an item of equipment always in such short supply will be useful.

Also, we are particularly touched that your company is arranging to manufacture a memorial plaque in the name of Mrs Hryciuk which hopefully the staff at Ward 31 will be only too pleased to suitably place.

With kind regards

The Family of Mrs W. Hryciuk

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The Charity Challenge

Three Hospice Staff all set to walk the Inca trail!

Next June, three hard working hospice staff will be walking the Inca trail in Peru. Joy Mulliner, Angie Thomeycroft and Jeanette McCartney will be trekking the arduous route for days on end enduring high altitude (over 13,000 feet) conditions. It's all in aid of the HOSPICE AT HOME SERVICE which provides care for patients who choose to spend their final days in the place they know and love... their home. The girls have forked out the cost of the expedition themselves and hope to raise over £9,000. National Lottery funding for this service ends soon therefore much needed funds hopefully will be raised through efforts such as this, rallies, celebrity dinners, auctions and CASTLE COMFORT CENTRE are pleased to be the principal sponsor. Already the Wolstanton company has started the ball rolling with a cash injection, along with the donation of a riser-recliner chair and rolling walker to be auctioned or raffled.

The brave and adventurous trio deserves the best of luck and we hope the CCC tee-shirts wear well!

Do you want to help?

Please make cheques payable to:
"HOSPICE AT HOME APPEAL - PERU"
and these can be sent to CCC, FREEPOST
50 HIGH STREET, WOLSTANTON,
NEWCASTLE ST5 0BR.
OR TO - DMH BARLASTON ROAD
BLURTON STOKE-ON-TRENT ST3 3NZ.

Alternatively pop in to CCC's Wolstanton or Hanley Indoor Market branches where raffle tickets and collection boxes are in place.

(Castle Comfort Centre link its to point out that their assistance in this matter comes from additional funds and in no way affects the benefits provided to their long established Doug Brown Motor Neurone Fund)



Joy, Angie and Jeanette pictured here, told The Clarion "Every blister we suffer and every shallow breath we puff will be worthwhile".

"Cathedral of the Potteries" comes fourth in RESTORATION final.

- LOCAL CARE CENTRE USED AS POLLING BOOTH!

By Hanley Reporting Squad

Ailing Bethesda Chapel came a respectable fourth in the BBC Restoration final and although missing out on a £3.5 million lifeline that would have guaranteed it avoiding the bulldozers -all is not lost. The interest that has been generated in this historic jewel means that efforts to preserve it will continue.

Enthusiasts of Bethesda hardly expected that their cause would be 'up in lights' but that is precisely what happened when local mobility products specialist Castle Comfort Centre became involved.

Someone asked if a supporting poster could be put up and the CCC staff, agreeing it was a good cause, also used their digital outside display to declare "VOTE BETHESDA" for the days running up to the final at the Tower of London. The scrolling sign which has been a local landmark for some years in Wolstanton village informing everyone of the time and temperature suddenly turned their showroom and offices into an unofficial polling booth! Members of the public were calling in to vote. The Evening Sentinel reported goings on, then Radio Stoke's

mobile broadcast vehicle arrived and asked for a live interview with the company staff and various 'Bethesda spin doctors' who were canvassing passers-by in the village for votes.

Keith Simpson, Director of CCC told the Clarion - 'It was all good fun and we think we did our bit in supporting the cause... the people who called wanting to use our phone to vote were given permission to do so, as long as they promised to match it with another call from their phones at home.'



Radio Stoke's Paul always hungry for news.

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We love to hear what you have to say...

Readers Letters

Sir

Thank you for your article in the last Clarion explaining BT's choice to refuse service. I have had this in place for some months now and got rid of most unwanted callers - it really works! Perhaps you or your readers can come up with a sensible suggestion on how to beat the ridiculous farce of directory enquiries 118 118 etc - it is a total shambles and obviously designed to confuse all, cause vulnerability and rip everyone off.

To me there seems something morally wrong that people can be charged for essential information at all just to use a service that charges you again? Perhaps a group could form to buy between them a 192 computer disk with all directory enquiries numbers on then spread the word via your newspapers to invite anyone to phone the group member who has it on their computer (paying for a normal call) to be given the information.

I suspect however, that the greedy profit hunters would cry foul and have it outlawed. Just a thought.

Yours truly
**William Eagles
Whitmore**

Mrs JR from Smallthorne writes..

Dear Clarion

My husband, already disabled was taken to the N. Staffs Royal Infirmary in May with breathing difficulties. Waiting on a trolley to be transferred into a ward the porters came to transfer him on to a wheelchair and dropped him breaking his one leg that was usable. The only reaction we got from all concerned that they were unaware that there was a 'no lifting policy' on my husband's records.

An apology and genuine concern would have made us less bitter, but there is clearly no chance of that. We are all so angry about this that legal action is being taken via my daughter's union.

Doris F of Newcastle wrote to The Clarion with her mixture of feelings towards the local NHS facilities

Dear Sirs

You asked for opinions good or bad about the local hospital. When I was rushed in with heart problems this year I experienced during the 3 weeks spent on the ward a remarkable contrast in care, efficiency general concern for patients and enthusiasm in all departments. One part of me is full of praise for my problem being sorted out yet the other couldn't help noticing a big attitude shortfall and now with time to reflect it could be put down to one factor alone - it depended who was in charge of the ward at a particular time.

When certain shifts produced a rather large military style dominant character with the title of Staff Nurse I couldn't help thinking about years gone by - the type portrayed by Hattie Jacques of "Carry On" fame, because this look-a-like and act-a-like old fashioned matron certainly did the business. Respect, tinged with almost fear oozed from her understudies, people moved faster, held their heads higher and generally seemed to get things done. When she was in charge it was as if my recovery rate increased.

I would like to thank all concerned who looked after me and it's perhaps a little naive to expect a step backwards in time but surely the highly paid National Health managers might agree that I have a point?

Dear Sirs,

After reading your front page article about the man who had his cancer scare sorted out in Spain I called into a clinic recently whilst there on holiday. I saw an ENT specialist and told her about my private sinus operation done back home a couple of years ago and that I had been told repeatedly since that the embarrassing, runny and unpleasant nasal discharge I had was to be expected and put up with.

She tactfully made me put away my Spanish phrasebook as her English was clearly better than mine and then promptly diagnosed mild sinusitis. A course of antibiotics, special sprays and advice as to what atmospheres to avoid for a while was followed by a special courier delivery the next day of nebuliser breathing equipment to use for a week.

The doctor even went to the trouble of phoning me at my hotel before the follow up appointment to see if I was behaving well and sticking to the instructions!

The problem has now gone, seemingly for good, and the bill - a sniff (just a pun) at 240 euros (£168) seemed amazingly cheap! I am extremely grateful to Doctora Palacio of the Clinica de Nuestra Senora de America and thanks to The Clarion for causing me to have the idea to pop in there in the first place!

**Mr Arnold Jackson
Penkull**

46 Kingsway West
Westlands
Newcastle
Staffs ST5 3PU

Dear Ed

I read with interest the feature on the front page of The Clarion issue 3 concerning the Newcastle shopkeeper thought to have cancer and finally being treated in Spain for a non-malignant lipoma.

I had a real tumour and my treatment on the

NHS could not have been more different.

Seeing my GP complaining of irregular bowel movements, he examined me and was concerned enough to contact a consultant at the City General Hospital, Stoke.

6 days later I saw the consultant and had a biopsy taken.

10 days after that I saw the consultant who was certain that it was cancerous but required a further biopsy. I was scheduled for surgery 2 weeks later, subject to the results of the second biopsy. This was postponed for 2 weeks to allow for radiation treatment advised by the Medical Team to shrink the tumour and make the surgeon's job easier and more effective.

The colostomy surgery was successfully carried out shortly afterwards.

The treatment I received at all times during this surgery, post operative treatment and subsequently was first class and all on the NHS. When the consultant first diagnosed possible cancer and I enquired what the time criteria for the operation was, he replied that if I had planned a holiday for the end of the month he would advise I took the holiday and he would schedule surgery afterwards. However if I had wanted to postpone it would be too late.

As a precaution against the return of cancer the medical team insisted I have 30 weeks chemotherapy.

I have volunteered to participate in the trial for a new anti-cancer drug for 5 years. This is the least I can do in return for the new lease of life I have received from the NHS.

I hope this will give hope and encouragement to anyone similarly diagnosed with the 'C'.

I am a retired IT Engineer with no connections with the medical profession so there was no preferential treatment involved.

Yours sincerely

Norman Wood (Mr)

Dear CCC

Thank you for recommending, last year, one of your battery operated bath lifts. We had anticipated moving so when it came to the crunch a deciding factor was that we could easily bring our useful device with us. Had the necessary £5,000 commitment been made fitting a walk-in bath conversion at our bungalow in Newcastle we might have still been there along with George's awful asthma problem - but it's much better and healthier here on the coast!

From George and Maria Francis
(formerly of Bradwell)
Nivens Court, Brighton

Dear Sirs

After experiencing two years' use of my CCC bath lift I can now see why you made the criticisms that you did of walk-in bathing units. I am over the moon but my brother, luckily for him quite wealthy and wanting "the best", had such a beast installed by a national mobility company and is now having regrets as the door seal regularly leaks. They are sorting it out but he could do without the inconvenience.

I'll be in touch when I can afford my electric bed!

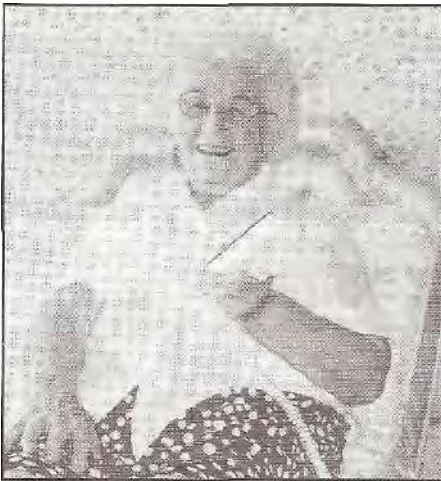
**Mr B. Lamont
Trent Vale**

How happy are you at bedtime?

By Clarion Reporting Team

Considering we spend a third of our lives doing it, time spent in bed is not always as enjoyable as it could be. Ask a doctor what is probably the most common statement heard from a patient before they even sit down for the appointment and it might be "It's when I first wake in the morning..."

The problems caused by a bad night's rest, uncomfortable sleeping position, an old bed with unsuitable mattress are endless and because of this a multi-million pound industry has emerged in the UK - the ELECTRIC ADJUSTABLE HEALTH BED. Until recent



You could be mistaken for thinking that Ellen Burton of Cauldon Low has just had six numbers up on the Lottery - No, she believes a far better stroke of luck was choosing a CCC Relaxomatic adjustable bed. She quipped "With this bed, and beginning my 97th year, I can now think about retiring!"

Best wishes go to Ellen from the Clarion and all at CCC (and NO her stated age is not a misprint).

years, this product has only been available from the national heavy- sales companies and to fund expensive advertising and agents' commissions the cost can easily run into thousands... which is why North Staffordshire homecare company CASTLE COMFORT CENTRE have caused quite a stir in the industry, specialising in high quality adjustable beds at a fraction of what one might expect.

We asked Dillon Prendergast at the company if customers regretted paying just a few hundred

pounds for a product that they had previously thought would be beyond reach. Dillon, in just his second year with CCC said "I am not a salesman - please ask some of our customers what they think" - and the Clarion did exactly that. Our reporting team spent a few enjoyable hours visiting a random selection of Castle Comfort's clients and we think that the comments made and expressions on faces on this page speak volumes. Clearly, NONE of these people are unhappy at bedtime!

Margaret Stacey's adjustable bed clearly gets the approval of the grandchildren! Since we visited this delightful family at Newstead, Margaret apparently has moved to the Longton area and CCC would like to update her records - otherwise she may not get the new year calendar!

Does anyone know where she is?



An adjustable bed may help sufferers of the following health conditions

Raised head position helps:

- Asthna • Breathing Problems • Emphysema • Hiatus Hernia • Sinusitis
- Upper and Lower Back Problems

Raised leg position helps:

- Poor Circulation • Muscular Problems • Easing Rheumatic Pain in Hips, Knees and Ankles
- Sciatica • Fluid Retention • Varicose Veins

Contour position helps:

- Back Problems • Muscle Aches and Pains in all parts the body • Shoulder Tension
- Rheumatic Aches and Pains • Pressure Areas • Spinal Disorders • Hip Problems
- Stress and Tension

★ CCC current star supplier

We spent years searching for a local printing company with HIGH STANDARDS, EFFICIENCY, KEEN PRICES, FRIENDLY SERVICE AND COMMON SENSE. Then suddenly, it's like waiting for a bus, two come along at once! So on this occasion we split the points and declare joint STAR SUPPLIERS TO BE:

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and
ALSAGER PRINTING, Alsager



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LISTEN TO THIS... "IT TAKES ON AVERAGE 7 YEARS FOR SOMEONE TO ACCEPT THEY HAVE A HEARING PROBLEM!"

BY PETER SANGARNI Health Correspondent

One of the CCC team was sent by his boss to the Hearing Care Centre for a test as it wasn't clear whether he had a hearing problem or just occasionally didn't want to listen! Apparently he has no defect at all but Dillon returned with an explanation as to why mail shots to the Wolstanton firm's data base announcing their new link with the Hearing Care Centre hadn't produced a huge response.

Jane Bateman (Trainee Hearing Aid Audiologist) explained to Dillon that when

someone suspects a hearing problem, because they can put up with it indefinitely they just delay action time and time again. After all, it can be tolerated without fully realising what loss of quality of life (and irritation to friends, family and work colleagues) it can cause. Eventually most people get round to doing something about it - but records show that it takes on average 7 years!

So CCC have taken the view that patience is the answer in this area, but are optimistic that the services offered by The Hearing Care Centre will in the medium term be of great value to

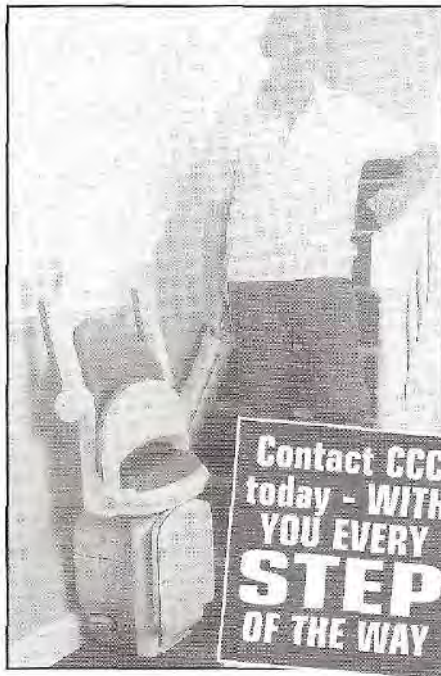
their customers. Advances in technology mean that a hearing defect can be addressed by amazingly unobtrusive digital hearing aids at a much lower cost than expected.

Free, no obligation hearing tests are available at Castle Comfort Centre's premises at Wolstanton, so why not call the free phone number on this page.

After all, if you are the average person, you could always book an appointment for 7 years next Monday!!

.... "And seven minutes to realise that they can't run up and down the stairs so easily"

By comparison, experience shows that the need for a STAIRLIFT is more of an urgent one. Most requests for a quote at CCC come before 11 in the morning after another night's irritating battle to combat stairways - and most enquirers are delighted that not only is the cost much lower than expected - but an installation can be completed free of fuss within a few days. Castle Comfort offer the best of both worlds in this respect, local service and national back-up through their long established partner companies. A FULL SIZE WORKING STAIRLIFT IS AT WOLSTANTON FOR YOU TO TEST RIDE!! - Just call in. The lack of bungalows in North Staffordshire (and the few available are enormously expensive) means that a STAIRLIFT is the practical, economical and sensible answer.



If you are thinking of a hearing aid for the first time, or are an experienced hearing aid user, then you can take advantage of the latest developments in computerised hearing aid science.



**Alison Ridgway
Hearing Aid
Audiologist**

Our expertise enables us to recommend and prescribe the leading systems in hearing aid technology. As our service is not associated with any single manufacturer, we are able to offer genuinely impartial advice on the best hearing aid for you.

NEVER A CROSS WORD IN 85 YEARS OF MARRIAGE!!!

By Clarion Overseas Correspondent
Some couples these days perhaps couldn't go 85 minutes without a fight so when the dubious news broke about a Taiwan couple celebrating eight and a half decades of marriage without a row had to check it out.

Yes it's true and confirmed... Farmer Liu Yung-Yang 103, and Yang-Wan, 102 got married in April 1917, after a 'courtship' of twelve years. Young Yang at the age of five was sent by her family to live with future husband to learn how to respect and take care of a man. Taiwanese custom ensures proper apprenticeship in this area thus avoiding future conflict.

About 40 of their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren partied at the couple's home in the north of the country to enjoy the occasion. The Milestone is now recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records.

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**OR SEND IN THE COUPON ON
THE BACK PAGE OF THE CLARION**



We've got one... 101 years of age!

By Clarence, Clarion Independent Reporter.

At last! - the leading Midlands' mobility specialist has achieved a goal that has been awaited since it began trading in 1999 - the privilege of having a CENTURION client - someone of over 100 YEARS OF AGE!

Castle Comfort Centre's research department have always been curious to learn just how many Staffordshire residents are around aged 100 + but despite there probably not being that many, guessed it was only a matter of time before one came along.

MRS ANNIE MAYER, of Biddulph has recently celebrated her 101st BIRTHDAY so we thought it appropriate to pay this remarkable lady a visit at her home in Biddulph.

Annie's RELAXOMATIC adjustable bed was acquired some months ago and whilst many folk getting on in yeMS 'have the bed brought downstairs' in this instance it is far from the case. Twenty-odd steps are negotiated nightly to

the upstairs bedroom (with daughter Ruth following not too far behind) - no sign or even the thought of a stair lift.

She must have been asked a million times if the secret to such longevity is not 'smoking or drinking so we decided to investigate what else is responsible, other than the pure Biddulph air ... answer, simple - 'I've been looked after' In fact for thirty years Annie's three children RUTH, ISABEL & DAVID have been totally dedicated to ensuring that the only place for Mum to spend her yeMS is in her own home - and that is exactly what will continue.

Annie enjoys life to the full, in fact our visit was cut short as the delightful aroma of home cooking meant lunch was about to be punctually served.

Apart from a recent cataract operation on one eye (she is now hoping for the other to be sorted out) visits to the doctor or hospital are infrequent.

Impressive beyond doubt is Annie's memory



Pictured, still going strong with a smile and thumbs up - MRS ANNIE MAYER -101

and knowledge of the area - on mentioning Castle Comfort Centre and her electric bed she responded 'yes, that's the place just along from Porthill roundabout' and continued to give us exact directions how to get back!

We send our warmest regards to a truly wonderful lady, and the Clarion and CCC staff look forward to celebrating her one hundred and second anniversary.

Are you 100 or more? If anyone has information as to just how many centenarians are in the Clarion readership area or you know of someone in particular who has received the Queen's telegram, please tell us.

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PREVIOUS CLARION COMPETITION RESULTS

Wow! Hundreds of you found the three animals tucked away and most of you knew that a CHINCHILLA comes from South America (No, Simon Grindey of Bakewell - its NOT Derbyshire, thats a wallaby!) but the lucky winner drawn out of all the correct entries was MRS MARIE FORD of HEMPSTALLS LANE NEWCASTLE - WELL DONE! - £25 IS YOURS. OUR WORDSEARCH GAME PROVED JUST AS POPULAR WITH MR GRAHAM LANDON OF CLAYTON PRODUCING A REMARKABLE 132 WORDS!!! He is now the proud owner of a CCC 4 wheel walker value £169. The Reverend Martin Oram of Hanford came second and receives £15 worth of Marks & Spencer's vouchers.

Many thanks to all entrants and better luck this issue

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You need to make up at least 19 words to enter.

THE OVERALL WINNER WITH THE MOST WORDS WILL RECEIVE THE MAJOR PRIZE

CLOSING DATE 15.7.04

J	E	R
I	A	B
K	L	A

At least nineteen words exist. All must contain the centre letter and no letter can be used more than once. Minimum four letters in each word - no plurals, verb forms ending in 'S' and your entry must have at least one nine letter word.

Good luck...

Post your entry to: CASTLE COMFORT CENTRE FREEPOST 50 HIGH STREET, WOLSTANTON, NEWCASTLE, STAFFS. ST5 0BR (no stamp necessary)

Solution and prize winners - see next CLARION

The Castle Comfort Team Goes From Strength to Strength



This Autumn has seen the arrival at CCC of a new team member who, after joining National Westminster Bank from school 26 years ago and progressing to Newcastle Branch Business Manager has dramatically embarked upon a new and exciting career.

Ann Bruce, pictured here, will be a tremendous asset to the growing mobility products company which was formed just 4 years ago. Ironically, the firm's headquarters (containing Ami's new

office) is at Nat West's former branch building at Wolstanton - quite a homecoming!

She is already enjoying having a varied and wide number of responsibilities including the marketing of the Company to the professional sectors, although importantly Ann will be at the helm of Castle Comfort's dynamic and ambitious franchise plan to become a UK-wide brand name during the next few years. The Clarion offers her best wishes and also pass on regards from many at Nat West, who will have their fingers crossed for their friend and popular former colleague.

New team member - Ann Bruce

NEWS TO SMILE AT

YOU'RE A POLICEMAN? - SEW WHAT!

By Becky Shipley (14) Stand-in Clarion Reporter

Castle Comfort Centre customer CONSTANCE LEADBEATER 87 of Basford was spotted driving her Vaya-Bicn scooter flat out at 4 mph through The Brampton. Nothing unusual perhaps, but she was, at the same time, juggling a ball of wool and demonstrating her skill with

her safety, a Newcastle Police patrol motorcyclist pulled alongside and shouted 'Madam - pull over'. Octogenarian Connie didn't brake and just wanted to continue on her way ... so true to the form of a lady never short of a quick response, raised the knitting

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE FOR A LAUGH

Bertram M, we shall call him, from Harsehead, kept CCC's showroom staff entertained recently by reciting the latest experience with his wife of six decades. Emily, aged 87, a touch younger than Bert was awaiting his return late one night from a tonsil-moistening session with his domino mates at the Nag's Head.

'Bert darling,' she welcomed him 'we are in our twilight years and it's lime to let you in on a lifetime secret always kept from you until this moment.'

The tired but curious husband urged her to tell all so she first instructed him to produce a small wooden chest hidden away at the base of the wardrobe. Emily asked Bert to unscrew the lid and the amazed husband discovered three eggs sitting on top of neatly stacked cash bundles totalling £100,000.

'Three eggs,' he announced - 'what on earth is the significance of that?'

'Well,' Emily declared, 'each time during our marriage you got in from the pub after midnight staggering as you are now, I marked the occasion by placing one egg in the chest...'

'But dear' interrupted Bertram, 'three times in 60 years of marriage isn't so bad is it? - and what about all this money?'

'Inevitably'...she concluded... 'each time I'd got a dozen eggs, I sold them!'

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We hope that you have enjoyed this Clarion edition. Why not pass it on?... Especially to someone you may think may be interested in Castle Comfort's services.

**To advertise telephone:
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