

Media Notes

A day in the life of Mr and Mrs Bright

June Blakeway, home carer
Sheila Peace, interviewer
Alan and Pauline Bright
Geoff Wing, driver and general assistant
Brenda Masters, centre worker
Ceinwen Conroy, centre worker

Mr Alan Bright had Alzheimer's disease and his condition gradually became more difficult for his wife, Pauline, to manage. They were interviewed in May 1996, when Mr Bright was 76 and his wife 74. Mrs Bright was determined that Mr Bright should remain at home. Following diagnosis and assessment through a local hospital psychiatric unit, Mrs Bright was allocated community psychiatric nurse support and put in contact with Wolverton Social Services in Milton Keynes. Mr Bright was assessed by a care manager, who remained their link with social services. He received periodic respite care in one of the local residential homes, had home care services, who provide one or two carers to come into his home morning and evening to help wash and dress/undress him, and attended the Redwood Day Unit five days a week. One of Mr Bright's home carers was June Blakeway, who you hear on the cassette. Mrs Bright also attended a carers' group with a nucleus of about 20 people who met at the Campbell Centre, the psychiatric unit within the District General Hospital, Milton Keynes. Mrs Bright had some assistance in sorting out the financial arrangements for this care package and underwent a financial assessment. They had to pay for the day centre and the home care service.

Note: Mr Bright died in June 2001.

The Redwood Day Unit

(The information below is taken from *The Redwood Daycare Service*, published by Buckinghamshire Social Services)

The Redwood Day Unit is run by Buckinghamshire County Council and opened in April 1987. Redwood is part of the community care provision based within Cripps Lodge – a social services resource centre, located south of Milton Keynes. The unit takes up approximately two-thirds of the ground floor and consists of two lounges, one accommodating 10 clients and the other 11. Each lounge is comfortably furnished and has an area for making drinks, a dining room, and a place for hanging coats. Each opens out on to attractive gardens. The unit has six toilets, a bathroom, a medical room, offices for the manager and the centre workers, and a spacious kitchen providing hot meals for the clients.

Although Redwood was established to meet the needs of vulnerable older people, i.e. over 65 and suffering from dementia, a small proportion of older people are accepted who experience a more chronic functional form of mental illness, but are able to adapt to this environment. Younger people in their 50s and 60s diagnosed as suffering pre-senile

dementia are also accepted. All these people require a high level of individual attention and care, for which attendance at a larger day care facility would be inappropriate. All referrals are received through the care managers, representatives for the team for older persons, based at Wolverton. After carrying out a comprehensive initial assessment, the care manager may recommend day care provision to be part of the care package for the individual. The manager of Redwood or a delegated centre worker (key worker) will interview the potential new person to establish that a more specialised day care facility is suitable. During the interview further information is also collected, and the person is invited to visit Redwood with a relative to meet other attendees and staff over a cup of tea and to have a look round.

Final arrangements are then made, in liaison with the drivers, about the days that can be offered and an appropriate time for pick-up and return home. Special dietary arrangements that need to be taken into account in planning lunch-time meals are discussed with the cook. After approximately 4 to 6 weeks, an assessment is made which includes the person's physical and mental abilities. Following this, a care plan is developed which may incorporate therapeutic intervention activities designed to help retain and maintain levels of functioning, and aimed at promoting for as long as possible the individual's independence.