

Moments that make it all worthwhile

“It’s evening on Boxing Day, and I’m finally home from work,” wrote Maintenance Department staff member, Merrick Winsor. “The last three days have been a blessing as I realise that spending this special time with 15 recovering addicts who are experiencing this holiday-time in sobriety is a miracle in the making.”

“I have been reminded over the past few days that God called me to Yeldall, just as He has with all the staff. Sometimes we go through stressful and difficult moments, and sometimes we can forget that God chose us to serve Him serving those unable to cope in life without a substance (drugs or alcohol). These guys are broken and troubled, and God placed them in our care so that He can perform miracles through us.”



“Sometimes I can feel my work is mundane and insignificant, or even futile or in vain, mending the same thing over and over again. But even when I have to work in the bowels of the building to keep it working and functioning, it is rewarding to know that God has placed me there. When I can be there to hear a guy say it was his first Christmas sober, or the first time he purchased gifts for loved ones instead of spending the money on drugs, or the first time having quality time with his kids sober and enjoying Christmas together, it makes it all worthwhile and confirms God’s calling. What’s more, our work doesn’t just affect the residents, but their families and friends and society in general.”

“In the two years I’ve been at Yeldall, I have helped admit several guys who were very broken, some not even able to walk, some very close to death (alcohol detox can be deadly), only to see them eventually recover and have their lives restored. Thank you God for calling me and help me not lose sight of that.”



Merrick and family enjoy Christmas dinner with staff and residents

After going to church to remember the true meaning behind the day, the residents returned to the house where one of them dressed as Father Christmas and distributed the gift bags to each resident one by one as they sat on his knee for a photograph.

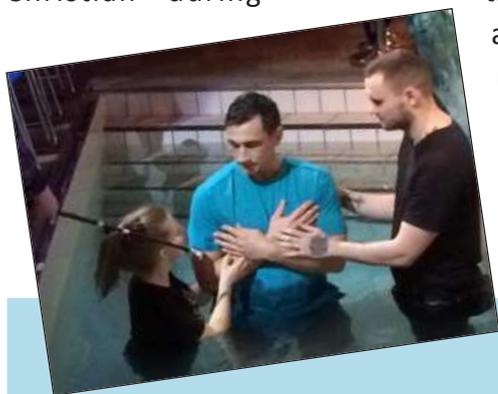
There were presents from Yeldall and from our supporters, followed by Christmas dinner and party games. It was wonderful to see them celebrating Christmas in such a positive, safe environment. Thanks to all of our supporters for helping to make this possible!

“My life was chaotic and I had no hope; now I”

With a difficult childhood and home life, Dean became addicted to heroin and crack at the age of 18 and this continued until he was 24. “My life was just chaotic; I had no life, no hope; I was stuck in addiction.”

He was also selling drugs to other users, which eventually led to a prison sentence. He successfully came off drugs while in prison and felt ready to move forward with his life at the end of his sentence. However, his grandmother (who had brought him up for much of his early life after significant family problems) died unexpectedly shortly before his release date and, when he was released, he quickly turned to drugs again to cope with his grief.

During his next prison sentence, he attended the ‘Alpha’ and ‘Challenge to Change’ courses which had a significant impact on his life and understanding of God’s love for him as an individual. Dean became a Christian during



the Alpha course and also began a regular role in the chapel which helped him to stay close to God.

Dean’s probation officer saw the potential benefit of him undergoing rehabilitation, and recommended Yeldall Manor. However, his local authority had no budget to fund residential rehab and, with a complicated family situation, he had no-one he could turn to for financial help.



He therefore applied to the Good Samaritan Bursary Fund and was delighted when he found out that his application had been successful.

Since starting the programme in June 2017, Dean explains, “I have found the support and comfort received from my counsellor extremely helpful. Yeldall has helped me find freedom from past hurts and make a fresh start. Being part of a community that wants the best for me has been very important, and I am learning to look after myself and am also more comfortable with who I am and my own identity.”

A Probation Officer’s viewpoint:

Dean’s Probation Officer, Emma Hayes, comments: “I would assess that the opportunity given to Dean to attend Yeldall Manor has afforded him the chance of a new life. This has only been made possible for him through the Bursary Fund. Without this, Dean would have been released from prison with no fixed abode and with limited support networks or positive role models. It was my assessment that Dean was at imminent risk of returning to drug misuse and also criminal activity had he been released into the community. Instead, he has had the opportunity to address the underlying causes of his substance misuse issues, he has developed skills as part of the practical element of the programme, and has been challenged to engage and open up with other residents and staff.”

“It is my view that Yeldall Manor provides hope to people who are in need of a second chance. I have heard it said from residents that, whilst working hard and being challenged, they also experience love from the staff. I believe that this environment is conducive to changed lives. It has been a pleasure to witness this first hand and to be able to work alongside the team at Yeldall.”

'm coming back to life!"

Now on the Lodge programme, living semi-independently with other residents in a flat in the Yeldall grounds, Dean has started voluntary work with Chissock Woodcraft in the Coach House, also on-site. Under the leadership of Steve Hedger, an ex-resident from 1999, Dean is working alongside Dan, who completed the programme in April 2017 and who is passing on the skills that he has learned whilst being there. Steve observes: "At first, Dean struggled with the drudgery of stripping furniture but, as he started to polish up a coffee table, he could see it come back to life; it really is a metaphor for recovery!"

For a few months, Dean considered whether to be baptised until, in December 2017, he joined two other residents in this step of obedience to God. He says, "I wanted to be baptised to show that I had been cleansed by God from my past and to express my thanks to God and others for helping me to turn around. As soon as I came out of the water, I immediately felt a sense of peace." He has felt close to God over recent months and believes that he now has a strong foundation in many ways to make the best of his future life.

Dean concludes: "I am so grateful to all those who have contributed to the Bursary Fund, which gives hope to men like me who previously had no hope in their lives. Thank you."



Dean (left) guided by ex-resident, Dan



Cyclists on the Ride for Recovery 2017 enjoyed cycling 40, 60 or 10 miles through the Berkshire countryside, raising money for the Bursary Fund whilst cycling alongside some of the men who were currently benefitting from it.

This year's event takes place on Saturday 9th June. We hope to involve even more people and raise more funds to support men like Dean, who wouldn't otherwise be able to come to rehab.

Some residents are even planning on cycling on the Saturday and then taking part in the Wargrave 10k run on the Sunday to raise funds for an activity break later in the year (again, more participants are welcome).

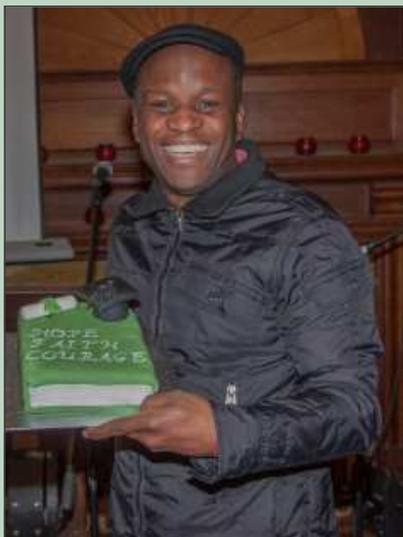
If you would like to join us and be part of an event that is both healthy and uplifting, please visit our website www.rideforrecovery.co.uk or call us to book your place.



After some months of lower occupancy, we are pleased to be virtually full in the Main House once more. It's great to be so busy and to be able to help more men who need it. Some of them have statutory or private funding, but about a third are now supported by the Good Samaritan Bursary Fund.

We have just launched a significant appeal to "Replenish the Bursary Fund". More details coming soon, or visit www.justgiving.com/yeldallmanor.

Ten years at Yeldall Manor



“Smiley Dave” was one of four residents who graduated from our programmes last month. As always, we had a great evening hearing residents’ testimonies, sharing news from Yeldall Manor and worshipping God together before chatting over coffee.

Please join us for our next **Celebration** at 7.30pm on Friday 11th May. Subsequent dates are 21st September and 7th December.

Also, don’t miss our **Open Day** on Saturday 7th July. Hog roast from 1pm, stalls and games for all the family followed by a grand Celebration service in the marquee from 3pm and then a strawberry tea.

Whenever you shop on-line, retailers will donate a percentage to Yeldall at no cost to you: clothes, furniture, holidays, technology, books, music, white goods, groceries...

www.giveasyoulive.com/join/yeldall

“On 3rd January 2008, aged 24, in my first ever car, I drove up the drive to start my new job as a Trainee Counsellor.”

Atarah (now Counsellor and Training Manager) continues: “I was so excited and nervous driving up that long drive. It felt magical and it felt so right! Wow, it’s been a journey!”

“My job has changed, staff members have changed, the interiors have changed, leadership has changed, aspects of the programme have changed, BUT the heart of Yeldall remains the same. A place that loves God and brings freedom from addiction.”

“I love my job, I love the residents and I love the staff. It’s not an easy job, but it’s the most rewarding one I’ve known. It’s a privilege to walk the journey with these men - to see them grow and change, and live a life they could only dream of. I have no idea where I’ll be in ten years’ time, but I know that right now I am where He wants me. Thank you Yeldall staff and residents for having and accepting me.”



Atarah



Roman

Roman, who organises and supervises the work of our residents on the Estate, writes: “What I have enjoyed most during my last ten years is watching residents getting better and stronger as they progress through their time here.”

“It’s like the flower beds out here on the patio; if you look now there is not much to see. Some dead leaves, a few twigs on the bare soil, nothing beautiful. But just under the surface there are some bulbs with potential. Even they aren’t especially beautiful. That’s just like many of our residents, when they arrive: exhausted, desperate, physically and emotionally weak and with little hope – just enough to give it another try by coming to Yeldall...”

“But then they receive care and encouragement, start to eat well and look after themselves. They become hopeful, healthy, stronger and start smiling again – they start blossoming like our flower bulbs, when spring comes with its warmer weather, showers and the gardener’s care.”

“I love seeing our residents starting to blossom and getting well! This makes my job rewarding and Yeldall a great place to work!”

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