

## Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> - The Big Welcome

And just a week later we all gathered again for another special occasion, this time to officially welcome and commission Steve Edmunds, our new General Manager, to Eckling Grange. His wife, Felicity came to meet some of us and be welcomed too. Steve has now taken over from Stewart who had guided him through his first few weeks here. The room was again full to capacity, as Steve stood up to introduce himself and tell us of the spiritual journey that has brought him to this stage in his life. The Trustees gathered round him to give thanks to God and to pray for wisdom and strength as he goes forward into this very



demanding new role. Pastor Nigel led our service, and the singing of praises to God, as he played the piano; Steve had chosen the hymns (How great Thou art again) and Nigel spoke from Exodus 4 where Moses is called into a job he feels is too big for him and in which he will have to rely on God's provision. The afternoon finished with joyful song followed by tea and cakes for everyone.



## **Passing on the Baton**

**September 2024**



## **A Week to Remember**

## Preparing for Change

It was just a year ago that Stewart let us all know that he would be leaving Eckling Grange. Talk about a bombshell!

Stewart leaving...! Impossible...! However will we all manage without him?



And so the Trustees, led by Graham, got down to thinking, talking and praying. They were accustomed to the ups and downs of life at

the Grange with Stewart's experience and wisdom to help them, but this was a different situation for all of them. The time had come to rely on God for His guidance and special help, there really was no other way.

A special monthly meeting for prayer was organised for all or any of the Residents, Staff members and Trustees to gather together to ask God to lead us to the right person to be the next General Manager. We all prayed. The months slid past, the ads went out, applications came in and before we knew it, the Trustees were conducting interviews.

And, yes, they had made an appointment, we would meet him in due course.



**General Managers from left to right**  
Stewart Barber (17yrs) John Taylor (5yrs), now a bungalow resident with his wife, Anne. Peter Baldwin (15yrs) and Steve Edmunds



## Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> - The Final Farewell

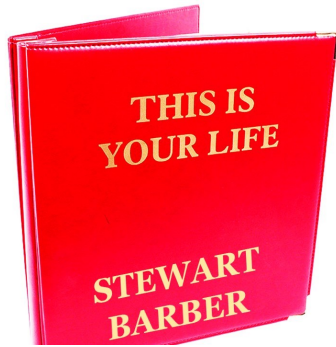
This wonderful day was divided into two parts; house in the morning for residents and staff, and a gathering for bungalow residents in the afternoon so that everyone had an opportunity to say a personal good bye to Stewart.

In the afternoon nearly all the 50 bungalow residents met with Stewart and Graham in the Gate-house, to cheer and to laugh.

Pastor Ian was the Master of Ceremonies and led us through an entertaining 'This is your Life' series of photos depicting Stewart from babyhood to present day. A microphone was then passed around and several people expressed their appreciation and gratitude for Stewart's ever present willingness to go the extra mile.

(Not forgetting Christmas Eve 2022 when most of the bungalow electricity supply suddenly failed at 10.30pm, and as we panicked, a car's lights appeared - Stewart had left his own family gathering to come to calm and advise us!) What a Manager! To God be the glory!

And so our special farewell day concluded as gifts were given, and photos taken. Stewart found time and energy to speak to everybody who queued up to say 'goodbye' and 'thank you.' It was a fitting climax to a remarkable career as General Manager of Eckling Grange for 17 years.

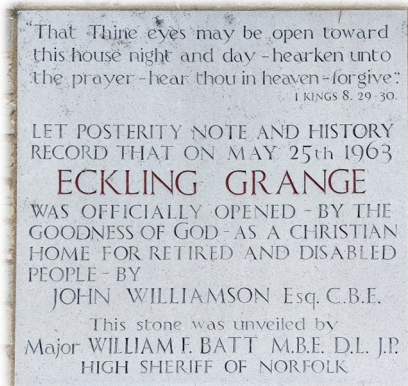


Stewart with Elizabeth (his 'work-wife'!)



## Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> - The First Farewell

We gathered as usual for the afternoon service in the main lounge, but with little that was "usual" about it. With residents from both house and bungalows plus trustees, staff, visitors, relatives and many friends, the room whose previous maximum was thought to be 60 or 70 was full to more than maximum capacity with about 140 people there to give thanks and pay tribute to Stewart's work over his years here as General Manager. He came from an engineering background and only with God's wis-



dom could the trustees of the time have chosen to appoint him to run a Care Home! But God knew the gifts, the abilities and the potential He had put within him.

Our Pastor, Ian Masson led a service in which several friends were invited to give gifts and words of appreci-

ation to Stewart, who replied briefly emphasising the virtues of the family ethos of friendship that exists amongst all who live & work at EG. His response to a query about the best achievement of his time was to point to Pastors Ian & Nigel, who have so enhanced the life here.

Ian then preached on "finishing well" as we run the race that is the Christian life. A joyful service concluded with the singing to God of "Great is Thy Faithfulness".

Tea and cakes were then served to everybody.



Pastor Ian

Alaina with husband Stewart



Staff, residents, family & friends worshipping together

