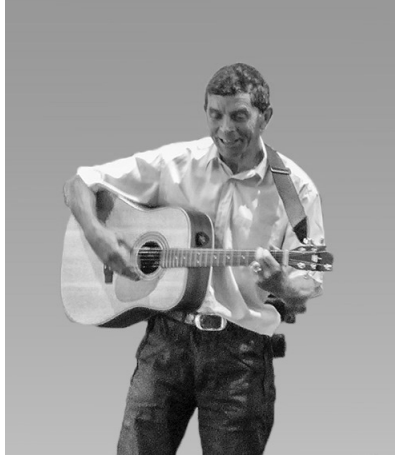


## The Power of Music

### 'Doors opening'.

Stepping through, the musician entered the closed world of Tall Trees Care Home, a smile on his face, a guitar in one hand and a bag of songbooks in the other. This was a world ignored or abandoned by the majority, a world conveniently pushed to one side but a world where music can ring out.



silently by moving mouths, with the occasionally more raucous rendition of favourite words: *When a certain little lady comes by*, springs to mind. Music in such a setting has immense power, power to move, to engage, to empathise and to flow. Memories are re-awakened, minds re-engaged.

### The Rose of...?

He walked into a warm room, too warm even, a room filled with spacious arm-chairs. To one side was a group of dining tables and chairs, behind them a small serving area, and in each chair reclined a lady passed by in our world. As the musician came in, heads slowly swivelled like puppet heads on a stick. In one corner sat a solitary man but one whose face lit up as he waved in recognition. Interest quickened; music had arrived to brighten their world.

Greetings were exchanged then the music began. Nothing fancy or sophisticated but everything familiar and warming. Sleepers dreamt on but one or two of their hands began to tap out the rhythm. Faces that had been lifeless took on a gentle pleasure. Song followed song - they knew them all. Song titles were announced in part - *The Rose of...* and almost in unison, came a muttered *Tralee*. The warmth of the room became the warmth of communication, the musician with his audience. Well-known lyrics were sung

### A Light Shone

Not one of the residents nodded off; the novelty of the occasion and the joy that it brought were too much for that. Emotions were stirred. There were no tears but at the conclusion of *O Danny Boy* one lady sat, eyes closed, sightlessly staring upwards, palms in front of her, raised in ... we will never know, but in her world, a light shone. And when tea was served, the staff joined in, singing and helping residents to take part with a few actions, even if, *What shall we do with the drunken sailor* was not the most relevant song in the world. The ladies, and the gentleman, sang, supped and smiled; a heart-warming combination. As the musician left, he knew that the warmth of the room had gone much further than its confines. Memories had been kindled and spirits raised.

The musician had experienced one of the most rewarding moments of his life. With the same smile, he re-entered the lift.

**'Doors closing'.**  
**Bob Forster**