



Bryn and Emma Parry, the founders of Help for Heroes

## Blue Apple awarded Tedworth House contract

*Blue Apple has recently been awarded the prestigious contract to provide the catering at the Tedworth House Personnel Recovery Centre, which is supported by Help for Heroes in partnership with The Royal British Legion and the MoD – and getting the job was no mean feat.*

Blue Apple was one of nine caterers to receive an invitation to tender for which they provided a bid. From this they were one of five companies asked to make a presentation at

the Help for Heroes head office.

"The presentation went very well and they liked the homemade cakes we took with us," said Brian Allanson, Director of Blue Apple who, with fellow Director, Ruston Toms, Robert Millar, Operations Manager and Paul Bailey, Project Support Manager, made such a good impression that Blue Apple was invited to take part in a live cook off.

The Blue Apple team was shortlisted against

one other company, BaxterStorey.

"We were given a brief to prepare starters, main courses of chicken and beef, and to have a centre piece, making a selection of about 20 dishes. The venue was Wellington Academy in Ludgershall, Wiltshire, which was chosen because the kitchen at Tedworth House was still being built. We had to cater for a range of Help for Heroes guests including staff, and

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## What's cooking?

- Tedworth House special
  - ❖ how the contract was won;
  - ❖ why Blue Apple was the winner;
  - ❖ the grand opening; and
  - ❖ training the team.



## The big cheese

*Last year we were optimistically looking forward to 2011 as a year of financial growth for the country. However, economic experts are forecasting an upturn, or even a downturn, for next year. The only thing that's certain seems to be uncertainty! But it's not all bad news. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of everyone at Blue Apple, we have seen an 11% increase in turnover compared to the previous financial*

*year – a fantastic achievement.*

Many of our clients are experiencing tough times during this downturn and Brian and I, and our staff teams, recognise our role in maintaining a high quality lunch service at an affordable price.

We welcome more great people into Blue Apple as a result of new contracts at Monarch at Luton Airport, JP Kenny in Staines,

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# Blue Apple awarded Tedworth House contract

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wounded service personnel and their families. Plus Emma and Bryn Parry, the founders of the charity," explained Brian.

The Blue Apple team started its week-long preparation, which included a visit to Wellington Academy to

find out more about the facilities and planning the menu.

Brian and Ruston decided that their own personal involvement in the cook-off was essential because everyone involved in the charity does their bit. So with Brian in his whites and Ruston as Maitre d' the team was assembled.

Brian's wife Jo was even drafted in to help with the table presentation.

"Being well rehearsed was critical," said Ruston. "As a result, the whole day was really enjoyable, even though it was hard work."

Brian continued: "The menu included a spicy curry and stir-fry dishes, just the type of food the 'guys' would be eating.

"The stir-fry option gave diners the opportunity to choose their own ingredients. This was really popular and it gave the Blue Apple team the opportunity to chat with the guests while adding some theatrics to the lunch."

The Help for Heroes guests scored each dish; the final score was very close with only a narrow margin between Blue Apple and BaxterStorey. However, when it came to the final vote, Blue Apple received a unanimous 'thumbs up' and a week later Ruston was given the good news.

Brian continued: "We were absolutely delighted with the result. Especially given that we were competing against a



Brian Allanson puts the finishing touches to his croqueмбуше centerpiece

much larger organisation with greater resources. It was down to the hard work of the team."

The contract has now been mobilised and phase one of the refurbishment of Tedworth House completed.

"Part of the rehabilitation programme for the residents will include getting them involved in cooking. We are hoping to get some

celebrity chefs to work with us on this to make the experience special and to help mentor the men and women at the centre," explained Brian.

The £20m project is due for completion in mid 2012. Tedworth House will then be able to provide accommodation and facilities for approximately 50 soldiers plus a staff team of up to 50.



Left to right: Diane Hall from Hertz, Robert Millar, Operations Manager, and Kellie Wilson, Support Operations Manager

## The big cheese

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Lyreco in Telford, Elms BMW in Cambourne, Urenco in Stoke Poges and Atlas Copco in Hemel Hempstead. As well as expanding our customer base we have achieved the environmental standard ISO 14001, recycled 1,715 litres of cooking oil from January to July 2011 and reduced carbon dioxide emissions to the equivalent of taking 14.5 family cars off the road.

Congratulations again to Diane Hall and her team at Hertz for being awarded a very creditable third place in the annual

ACE Clean Kitchen awards – £750 of prize money was shared between the team.

Last but not least, it is our great privilege to be catering for the Tedworth House Personnel Recovery Centre in Tidworth. More about that can be found in this issue of Out of the Blue.

The Help for Heroes cause has captivated our hearts so much that Kellie Wilson, Support Operations Manager, decided to leap from a plane at 14,000ft and raised over £800 for the charity. Well done to Kellie.

*Ruston & Brian  
Directors*



The Blue Apple team outside Tedworth House



Russell Snowdon, Operations Manager, and Paul Bailey, Project Support Manager preparing for the cook-off



Russell and Paul in high spirits

# Simply the best!

The journey to being awarded the catering contract for Tedworth House was a long and complicated route, but out of the nine companies invited to tender, it was Blue Apple who was successful. Out of the Blue asked Ian McFarlane, Head of Facilities at Tedworth House, what made Blue Apple stand out from its competitors?

Ian explained that the decision was made early on to buy in the catering expertise, rather than try to fulfil the function in house.

"We worked with a company called David Matthews Associates, a procurement consultancy, that was able to advise and guide us through the process," said Ian. "An invitation to

tender was sent out to nine catering companies from which David Matthews recommended a shortlist of three."

Help for Heroes was looking for some very special requirements from the caterers. The company needed to provide a flexible service.

"We were anticipating a low volume start with a relatively small headcount of 24 residents in the recovery centre, increasing to 50 by summer 2012, with a staff of 30 to 40 on site, plus visitors. Lunchtimes will therefore need catering for up to 100, while breakfast and dinner will provide for 50 people," explained Ian. "We also need to have a whole range of dietary requirements that could include vegetarian, religious needs such as halal meat, food intolerances and special diets, such as for those people who need to consume certain food



Left to right: Agata Kociuba on loan from LeasePlan and Krisztina Kun on loan from Wates



Brian Allanson makes the choux pastries for the croquembouche

groups to prepare their body for an operation.

"In addition we have to be mindful of the amount of calories being consumed as some of the soldiers might not be as mobile as they once were and do not,

therefore, need to take in as many calories. Above all else the food has to be tasty, nutritious and wholesome, and appeal to lots of different people from all walks of life.

"We knew we were looking for an exceptional



Brian Allanson helps out at the stir-fry station

catering company to fulfil all our ideals."

The final three were given the opportunity to find out more about the work of Help for Heroes and were then invited to make their presentations on how they might meet the needs of the contract.

The three were whittled down to two and Ian suggested a cook-off to prove they could deliver what was being promised. As Tedworth House was still in the grip of a demanding construction programme, an alternative venue had to be found. Nearby Wellington Academy offered to host the event in their new training kitchens and a panel of over 20 diners was assembled including some wounded soldiers and their children.

"We were looking for a caterer that would engage with the soldiers; it was a very tough choice as the standards delivered by the two

contenders were very high. Blue Apple took a simple but high quality approach and delivered a menu that included a curry and made-to-order stir-fry dishes that were cooked in front of the diners. They interacted with their customers and encouraged them to get involved. A question and answer session at the end allowed the panel to ask the two teams about their cooking and how they would provide the service if selected."

Blue Apple has now recruited its Tedworth House team. "They are a fantastic, highly effective team. The head chef has been supporting one of the recovering soldiers to get involved in working in the kitchen as he has shown an interest in retraining to go into catering."

"They have proved to us that we chose the right company for the job and now we are all working as one big happy family," said Ian.

# The grand opening could have been a grand disaster!

*An unfinished kitchen, a combi oven that wasn't working, a store with no racking and 5,000 canapés to make – for some it would be a disaster but for Robert Millar, Kellie Wilson, Paul Bailey and the new Blue Apple Tedworth team it was a challenge to overcome and conquer.*

The team was catering for the grand phase one opening of the Tedworth House Personnel Recovery Centre in Wiltshire, which is supported by

Help for Heroes in partnership with The Royal British Legion and the MoD.

For 20 weeks a construction team had been working around the clock on the £20 million renovation project. To mark the opening of phase one a sponsored launch event for 400 media guests had been organised.

The three-strong team from Blue Apple arrived on Monday morning to join Sharon Owen, Chef at the site,

to find a kitchen that hadn't been commissioned, and workmen painting doors and installing panes of glass in the storeroom. To add to their worries the main oven wasn't working and the manufacturer's engineer was the only person authorised to look at it.

"Produce deliveries started arriving but they couldn't get near to the kitchen due to JCBs and scaffolding on the

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## Shirley helps to serve up great customer care

*The Blue Apple team at Tedworth House Personnel Recovery Centre knows the importance of delivering great customer care, which is even more meaningful to those Service men and women recovering from injuries sustained while on the front line.*

Shirley Mundy, a consultant working with Blue Apple, held a fun, three-hour workshop for the new Tedworth team. Shirley believes that if learning is fun, the information is more

likely to stick. The workshop focused on delivering excellent customer care and helped the 15 individuals to start working as an effective team.

"There is no better way to understand what customers look for than to 'walk in the customer's shoes'," said Shirley. "When we are able to do this we see things from their perspective and that can change the way we behave. We are all customers and we know what good customer care feels and looks like."

Shirley's tips for delivering excellent customer care are:

- Focus inside out and look at your business the way a customer does
- Listen actively to everything and anything that can help you see what the customer sees
- Measure everything from the customer's perspective
- 'Maximum joy' is your new goal, not order fulfilment
- Improve constantly

# Shirley joins Blue Apple team

*Shirley Mundy joined the Blue Apple team in May on a consultancy basis – and what a difference she has made already!*

Shirley was taken on for two days a week to provide management development and mentoring to the Operations team. She has a wealth of experience gained from working in the foodservice business for

many years, including contract catering, retail restaurants and hotels, in roles that have included operations director and business owner.

"When Ruston and I first met Shirley we knew she was the right person to help us to develop our team and take our business forward," said Brian Allanson, Director.

"As our company grows, we want our

team to grow with us. Being entrepreneurs, Ruston and I weren't best equipped to provide this development, but Shirley was just what the business needed.

"In the short time that Shirley has been with us I have seen a shift in my day-to-day work which has given me the time to focus on the big picture of Blue Apple and, more than anything, get out and about to see our clients."

Shirley has also been training the Ops team to build its management capabilities and has been examining the systems used within Blue Apple to identify areas for improvement.

One area that Shirley is working on is to help the team to work smarter and more efficiently.

"The company grew rapidly with the acquisition of Zest Catering 18 months ago but it has meant that some people are spending a lot of time travelling to cover their 'patch'," explained Shirley. "A realignment of how the team work and where they work should build better and more frequent communication with their contract teams and clients. After all, this is a relationship business and Ruston and Brian are adamant they want to retain the personal touch they have achieved in Blue Apple."



Shirley Mundy

## The grand opening could have been a grand disaster!

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driveway, so the lorries had to park 200 yards away. We had to make a human chain from the gates to the kitchen to get all the ingredients and food delivered," said Paul.

"We asked the builders to stop working and then it was all hands on deck to get the kitchen clean and dust free so that we could start prepping the following day."

Tuesday morning brought with it reinforcements. Jan Cannings, from Smiths News, gave Paul and the team a much-needed helping hand to complete the prep

for the canapés. The combi oven, however, still wasn't working and the party was being held the next day!

First thing the following morning the oven engineer turned up and much to the relief of the Blue Apple team he had it working within 20 minutes – a fuse had blown. "That was a huge weight off my mind!" said Paul.

Barry Griffiths from the relief team also arrived armed with mini Cornish pasties from Mark Callaghan at LeasePlan, and the team started to assemble the canapés – smoked salmon, beetroot and horseradish bamboo sticks, Mark's mini Cornish pasties, crayfish brochettes, Parma ham, fig and

mozzarella bamboo sticks, seafood blinis, a wide range of bruschetta, goats cheese tarts, chicken skewers, duck spring rolls, chilled soup shots, and petit fours and sweet tartlets.

"I was very proud of my team in the kitchen; I couldn't have asked for more," said Paul. The party started at 7pm and all the food was ready to be served. "We had so many fantastic comments and it certainly made me feel proud of what we had achieved."

There was no rest for the Blue Apple Team, however, as the

following day they had to cater for a lunchtime press launch and sponsored barbecue for staff members, volunteers and the wounded. "We were on such a high from the night before that nothing could phase us.

"The barbecue was held for all the people that have worked on the project – the builders, catering and cleaning staff, reception and office personnel to thank them for all the hard work that had been put in to making Team Tedworth!"

For more information about Help for Heroes, making a donation or fundraising for the charity visit [www.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk)

# Paul and Jane climb up the career ladder



*Congratulations go to two members of the Blue Apple team who have recently been promoted. Jane Greenwood has been made Operations Manager and Paul Bailey is now Project Support Manager.*

Jane's new role sees her looking after 11 contracts and reporting directly to one of the Directors. "I had to produce a business plan and do a presentation to the Directors. Then I was given the great news that I had been given the job of Operations Manager," said Jane. "My hard work and commitment to Blue Apple and its customers has been recognised with this promotion about which I am absolutely delighted."

Jane has the day-to-day responsibility of looking after about 30 staff over 11 sites, dealing with food, health and safety issues, training, budgets and accounts, and client meetings.



Jane Greenwood, Operations Manager



Paul Bailey, Project Support Manager

There's hardly an area in Blue Apple that Paul's new job doesn't touch on. Paul has worked for Blue Apple for approximately eight years and is a trained chef but his role of Project Support Manager encompasses all parts of the business.

Since being promoted Paul has worked on organising the cake competition, been involved in new business pitches – which saw him baking enough cake for 300 portions for the Help for Heroes presentation – looking after and supporting

new sites, training, and helping chefs with menu planning.

"I cover all the Blue Apple sites, supporting the Operations Team and the chefs," explained Paul. "Having been a chef manager myself, I understand the challenges and opportunities faced within the units, and try to develop practical, workable solutions."

Paul said he always aims to give the same high standards of support and service that he gave at Schering Plough, to all the Blue Apple sites.

*Paul McLeod (above) from Wates won first prize in the Blue Apple Cake Competition with his spicy Blueberry, Apple and Pecan cake. Paul, Chef Manager, said: "The Blue Apple name gave me the inspiration, but I also wanted to create a cake that would be easy to make and appeal to those looking for a slightly healthier option."*

*Jeanette Smith-Duncan from Remploy came second with her Lime and Poppy Seed Drizzle cake. Both varieties have been adopted as Blue Apple 'signature cakes'.*

## Employee Recognition Award winners

Congratulations go to all those receiving Employee Recognitions Awards – the staff incentive scheme that rewards commitment and quality through service excellence. Each winner receives a £50 gift card, a certificate and automatic inclusion in the annual Big Apple award.

Most nominations come as a result of somebody going the 'extra mile'. Past areas of excellence have included supporting a new manager, covering staff absence, extra support given during

busy periods, positive client and/or customer feedback in relation to outstanding customer service and ensuring profitability through new ideas.

### Employee Recognition Award winners

Mark Rigby – Relief Team  
Stephen Murphy – Monarch  
Paul McLeod – Wates  
Richard Fletcher – WMP Shrewsbury  
Shirley Cannan – WMP Barton Road  
David Maidment – TARRC  
Danielle Scarfe – TARRC  
Jenny Barrett – Torex  
Prudence Ann – JP Kenny  
Joshua Wilson – JP Kenny  
Matthew Varney – Barry Callebaut  
Yaw Amofah – Anite, Slough  
Milena Kamenova – Mercedes

**blueapple**

food is our passion

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