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Nick Ferriman (left) and Nick Stanton take time out from their busy schedule

Working Life

“The guys love what they do, have grown so much in confidence and long may this continue”

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Nick works very hard, enjoys learning many new skills and always has a good laugh with staff and residents alike.

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Words by ALEX JACKSON
Photos by IAIN GARRETT

ON first meeting both Nick Ferriman and Nick Stanton, you can tell there is an instant spark between the two of them. Both have a charismatic smile, a jovial demeanour, a great sense of humour, and an almost inseparable bond not too dissimilar to the great comedy duos of old.

With a passion for life, people and sport, among other things, it's not too surprising that the pair have recently found themselves in employment. Working in close proximity of their home (Ridgeway's Supported Living Service) in Carterton, both have taken on roles in care homes. Since starting in April, they have picked up a whole host of skills from washing the dishes and scrubbing the floors to laying the tablecloths and serving the food.

When visiting both at their separate places of work, it's clear they take an immense amount of pride in

everything they do and thrive in each of their own surroundings. Whether it is helping fellow staff colleagues out or chatting with the residents, there never seems to be a dreary moment.

On arrival at the Robert and Doris Watts Residential Home, it's noticeable from the off that the ubiquitous Nick Stanton is not a man to shy away from a hard day's work. Rubber gloves intact, overalls donned and pots in the washing machine, suggest nothing less than a spotless kitchen. His presence seems like a refreshing addition for

both the staff and the residents. And there is a real rapport, second to none, between Nick and his boss, Anna Jakes. From joking about rival football clubs and horse racing to pretending he hasn't had his dinner or a cup of coffee, there is a welcoming feel to the home. One example comes to mind when Anna jokes "He's nothing but trouble," Nick without a second to spare, quips "Don't push it!"

Nick works three days a week at the centre and then another two at Oakwood House, in Faringdon, Oxfordshire. >>

"He is a pleasure to have around and loves to help in anyway he can. He comes across all kinds of people, some with alcohol related dementia and others with physical disabilities and learning disabilities," said Anna. With a subtle grin on his face, Nick adds: "It's good fun working here and I have enjoyed learning many new skills."

Next up is Nick Ferriman, who since starting at The Robert and Doris Watts Residential and Nursing Home, around the corner from his home, has made quite an impression.

From the word go, Nick was motivated to impress and meet new people. Having lived all his life at home with his parents before moving to Ridgeway's services, he had become reliant on other people doing the housework. However things have drastically changed and Nick is now living a more independent life through his work, helping serve drinks and doing all the domesticated cleaning chores he would have previously found unusual.

Working two days a week, Nick has built up good friendships with many of the residents who feel comfortable in opening up their thoughts and minds to him. David Wesson, a senior nurse at the home, said: "He's a great lad who is always respectful of his fellow staff members and residents."

Nick said: "I've learned a lot since I started here and have really benefited from the help and advice I've been given." The chance to work with both care homes came about after support worker, Caz Beater, looked at opportunities for both Nicks to find employment locally. This was then followed up by Ridgeway team leader, Karen Williams and Care Service Manager, Mike Hill, who met with their staff and managers to discuss potential opportunities for service users.

"It has been a fantastic project and both Nicks are learning so much in terms of social living skills. They have both got to know most of the community, are always busy and look forward to their days at work," said Karen.

"It's worked well for building links with other services in the area, information sharing and we are now looking at joint training on a number of issues, including dementia. ■

"It's all fairly new to Nick but he is not afraid to get stuck in and spend time getting to know the life stories of certain residents. He's settled in really well and it has so far been a great learning curve."

Hear the two Nicks story at the Annual General Meeting on 22nd September 2010.



Nick Ferriman relaxes with Dave Wesson, Karen Williams and one of the residents



Nick Stanton gets stuck into those dirty dishes



It's easy this working lark

WITH all the proficiency and poise of a seasoned veteran, Matty Mason, steps to the table knowing he is just one shot away from victory.

Looking to emulate the many stars that have tread the circuit before him, there is only one thing on his mind. As he shapes up to pot the black, there is a noticeably firm grip on his cue, a steely look in his eye and a calm composure unbecoming with the pressure shot he is about to take.

However, just like Neil Robertson in the World Championship Final against Graeme Dott earlier this year, Matty, who is supported by Ridgeway's Stepdown service, seems to take it all in his stride tucking the ball away into the bottom cushion.

And it was only a matter of months ago that having played the game for more than 30 years in clubs and pubs, he watched his first major World Championship Final at the Crucible in Sheffield.

Similar to Matty's taut ending to the game today at a local snooker centre in Oxford, the final was a nerve wracking experience which went on late into the evening, with all to play for. Despite Matty's understated views on Sheffield itself, he did find the Crucible a fitting venue for such a historic and great spectacle.

"It was a great final and I cheered on the Australian underdog Neil Robertson all the way to the end," said Matty.

"The Crucible was a lot smaller than I thought it would be, but there was a really nervous atmosphere as we didn't know who would win.

"We were sat fairly close to the table and had a brilliant view of the game."

Neil Robertson eventually edged out the Scottish opponent and 2004 champion in fine fashion winning 18-13 to become the first Australian to win a major snooker tournament in many years.

For Matty, it wasn't the first snooker game he had witnessed, but it was one of the most absorbing. Fortunately for him, his last game happened to coincide with a certain Ronnie O'Sullivan, who he subsequently met.

"He is such an inspirational sportsman and I have followed him throughout the tournaments for many years."

Dismantling and dusting off the chalk from his Alex Higgins signed snooker cue, Matty looks satisfied with his win as another discontented opponent walks off into the distance. It's only a matter of time before the next challenger will pit their wits against the mighty Matty Mason. ■

"It was wonderful to meet with Ronnie, one of my all time favourite players and to see him win."



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