

# Floating into first place

A FEW WEEKS ago Chris and Cheryl Ives celebrated their ruby wedding anniversary in unexpected sunshine with a party in their pretty flower-filled garden.

Gardens are close to the hearts of the Ives family: Chris, who for eight years was Service Manager at Abbey Physic Garden, Faversham (a vocational rehabilitation service for clients with mental health problems), is a keen horticulturist and some of his enthusiasm may

have influenced daughter Natasha, who used the theme of a garden for her prize winning carnival float – another cause for family celebration this summer.

Natasha came up with the idea of a float named 'Garden of Hope' to promote the work of The Friends for Mental Health (East Kent) to help beat the stigma of mental illness. And it won first prize in its category in the Canterbury Carnival in June and another first in the Whitstable Carnival in August. Natasha was thrilled. Cheryl was exhausted. 'The whole thing took a year and a half from conception to completion,' says Cheryl. 'So many people helped us, it was amazing. It was a lot of work, but worth it.'

A band of carers, service users, health professionals and friends accompanied the float dressed up as famous people who suffered mental illness. Jan Armishaw was Marilyn Monroe at the Whitstable event and Chris dressed up as Hans Christian Andersen. There were others portraying Judy Garland (with Toto from Wizard of Oz), Winston Churchill, Vivien Leigh, Florence Nightingale, Vincent Van Gogh, Adam Ant, Charles Dickens and Carrie Fisher. Virtually all of the costumes, which also won a prize, were made by Marian Brown.

The float, framed by a rainbow and festooned with paper flowers and butterflies designed by Natasha and hand-made by members of Mustard Seed, a rehabilitation day centre, was truly a work of art. But then Natasha comes from a seriously artistic family. Her sister Ivy has



With a little help from their friends... 'Marilyn', 'Princess Leia' and 'Toto' on the winning float, 'Garden of Hope', at the Canterbury Carnival

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