

Springdene Newsletter

October 15 2020

Issue

24

Springdene
CARE HOMES 

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IMAGINE waking up in the morning and being presented with a beautiful bunch of flowers and a box of chocolates. You get to choose your favourite lunch and supper, the type of biscuits and cakes the kitchen make, the music everyone listens to and the films they watch. You get a one-to-one pamper session and are generally spoiled magnificently.

This is the treat our folk get when they become “resident of the week” – a new initiative to celebrate the wonderful attributes of all the individuals in our homes. The programme was launched at Springview last week with the appointment of Ken Newman as our first Springdene VIP – a choice universally applauded, since Ken, who is in his 100th year, is not only a great character, but a war hero, too.

Ken is one of the last surviving few who did active war service in the RAF, flying as the rear gunner in one of legendary Lancaster bombers in raids over Germany. Volunteering, aged 19, in 1940. Ken tells the story of his wartime exploits modestly and with great clarity. He ran nine incredibly dangerous sorties over Berlin, carrying a 4,000lb bomb plus other smaller bombs and with flak exploding all around him.

“The point is, you had to do it. It was your job, he says. “So, you just went. I was confident with the rest of the boys that we’d get through safely. I just trusted in the crew that we would be safe and sound. You had to think like that. You had to just get on with it and get it over with.” Fortunately, but unlike many of his brave compatriots in the bombers, Ken lived to tell the tale.

Taking over from Ken as our VIP this week is 97-year-old Hetty Cullen. Hetty has been going through a difficult time recently but valiantly attended a series of hospital appointments on her own, and staff thought she could do with a bit of cheering up. Hetty, as the picture shows, was delighted to be appointed "resident of the week".

As part of her pampering session she was looking forward to getting a splendid hairdo from Eirlys, our activities coordinator. And, true to her Cornish heritage, Hetty chose Cornish pasty and scones with jam and clotted cream as her treat. It's fair to say she was really chuffed.



Much of the focus of the nation this week has been on the rising levels of coronavirus, in what is being dubbed a "second wave". We're delighted to be able to report that our homes continue to be completely virus-free. However, we are sorry to learn that London is to enter the "high" tier of coronavirus restrictions from midnight on Friday,

which means the government will impose a total ban on visiting care homes other than in exceptional circumstances.

Nevertheless, you can keep in touch with your loved ones by *Skype* or *Zoom*. We have plenty of tablet devices available and will help residents use them. We'll keep you posted on the new lockdown rules as they develop.

We continue to be ultra-careful, always striving to strike a balance between a flourishing social life in the homes and taking precautions against infection. With this in mind we have introduced Perspex screens across the tables in the dining rooms. It's a simple measure but allows folk to sit opposite each other and have a natter over their meal without any risks.

Life in the homes is being lived to the full, as always. At Spring Lane, Caroline and the team have been organising projects on the theme of autumn. Residents have been making bookmarks, taking inspiration from seasonal foliage, with chrysanthemums, Michaelmas daisies, nuts and anything else rust-coloured. Celebrated local artist and film-maker Reg Boorer (in photograph), who is now a resident, has been painting the windows with some wonderful autumn scenes, attracting the attention of local small children, peering in through the glass.



Picking up the theme of nature, residents have been watching David Attenborough films, followed by some animated discussion of climate change. (Our folk are never happier than when putting the world to rights!) Everyone is enjoying a project on trees, looking at leaves and shapes, myths and poems, with readings from Robert Macfarlane's award-winning book "The Wild Places".

Over at Springview there has been much mirth with the return of balloon volleyball, while the pampering sessions of "Wellbeing Wednesday" are keeping everyone super-relaxed. Steve and Odile at Spring Grove have been entertaining

residents with poetry readings, quizzes and a very popular baking session, whipping up some delicious chocolate chip cookies, which vanished no sooner than you could say "time for a cuppa"!

Meanwhile, the "Midweek Proms" – our "Artists 'n' Residents" live-streamed concert series – continue to be a great hit. This week we were treated to a recital from Jo Withers on horn and Leo Nicholson on piano, playing a lively choice of pieces, including the first movement of Beethoven's Horn Sonata, a Chopin Nocturne, Op 9: No 2, and the *Danse du Meunier* from "The Three-Cornered Hat" by de Falla.

The concerts have been so popular that the programme has been scheduled up to December 2 and Jennie Muskett, the inspired organiser, has set up a website with the details. You can access it at www.artistsandresidents.org. In the introduction, Jennie says: "Music is an incredibly important part of all our lives. Like food, breathing or love, we all need it. It has that strange magical quality to help us feel better. We can't take our loved ones to concerts at the moment – but we can bring music to them – right into their living rooms – live".

To this end, Jennie says she is widening the audience to allow you, the next of kin, to join in, too. All you need to do is to download Zoom on to your computer or tablet (it's free) and log in to the website at 2.30pm on Wednesdays. You can even send a message to the musicians to say how much you have enjoyed it!

As the nights draw in, our thoughts are turning to preparations for the festive season, which at Springdene will be celebrated with special gusto this year to cheer everyone up, with delicious food and great entertainment in prospect. One of the delights of being in a care home is there is no restraint on the amount of people who can get together – unlike in family settings, where the government has placed tight restrictions on numbers.

Do you know of anybody who would like to join us? Why be lonely when you could be part of our extended family at Springdene, where warmth and good company are the order of the day? Details on admissions to our homes are available on 020 8815 2000.

Finally, we have some good news this week about our Springview CHAT team, the wonderful group of NHS nurses, who come in and support us on a whole range of issues, from family liaison to end-of-life care. They have just won the prestigious Royal College of Nursing National Team of the Year Award, beating groups from all over the country.

Congratulations to Lyn Jeganathan and her colleagues. (Lyn is pictured, right, with team member Julia Foot, who was also made a Queen's Nurse by the Queen's Nursing Institute.) Very well done!



Stay safe and stay well.

Jeremy Balcombe
CEO Springdene Group
