

DO WE need to be vaccinated to visit our loved ones at Springdene? This is a question some of you have asked this week. To recap, the government has announced that all staff in our homes must be double vaccinated by November, otherwise they will not be permitted to work.

The new rule also applies to everyone who enters the premises, whether they are maintenance staff, hairdressers, beauticians or entertainers. However, there is one exception – visitors and friends who come to visit their loved ones in the homes. This is designed to protect the human rights of families.

Nevertheless, we appeal to you to ensure you are double vaccinated before coming to visit Springdene. Predictions are that the highly transmissible Delta variant will become even more rampant in the autumn, especially as schools and universities reopen. The hard work by our staff in testing and cleaning has made sure that our homes have been free from the virus for some months now. We are determined to keep it that way.

But there is a silver lining. The requirement for vaccination means that the door will be open in the not-too-distant future to bring in more outside entertainers to enhance our activities programmes. As you know, since the first lockdown, most of our enviable range of activities have been generated internally. But now we see an opportunity to open it out to more entertainers, lecturers and musicians, who we will be able to verify as safe. Watch this space!

While on the subject of activities, we are very sorry to announce we are saying goodbye to our much-loved group activities manager Eirlys Roff, who is moving on to a new position. Many of you will be familiar with Eirlys, with her huge energy, her lovely smile and always a cheerful word for every resident. She has been responsible for many innovations, including the activities planners, which are sent to you every week. And the entertaining Great Springdene Bake Off and the Springdene Olympics, which so many enjoyed, were developed by Eirlys, too.

Eirlys will remain on hand as a consultant for a short while, but we wish her all the best for the future as she leaves the homes. In the meantime, activities in the homes are in

the capable hands of the rest of the team – Tegan, Magda, Malwina, Steve and Odile while we interview for a new group activities manager.



While on the subject of activities, the best of them were shown off this week as we filmed and photographed for our exciting new website, which we hope to launch in the next few weeks. Tegan and Eirlys sang some of the old songs, Steve invited everybody to his Day at the Races, as well as his very popular Casino, and our very talented Spring Grove resident Marcelle Jay (above) played the piano. It was wonderful to hear her fingers on the ivories.

In her previous life, Marcelle was a distinguished ophthalmologist and is one of many folk at Springdene with a marvellous life story. She was so eminent that a room at University College London was named after her. Another is 99-year-old Lilli Segel, who has just joined us at Spring Lane. Lilli is one of the few people still alive in the UK with memories of pre-war Berlin in the Nazi era where she grew up as a young girl. She came to England as a refugee from Hitler in 1939.

"I call it my Fairy Story," says Lilli, her bright eyes animated as she tells her tale. As a Jewish child, she had been forced out of her grammar school even though she was a star pupil. "I recall my teacher crying because I had to go. The atmosphere in the city was terrible. I remember all the broken glass from Kristallnacht – it was horrifying." [In November 1938, in an incident known as "Kristallnacht", the Nazis torched synagogues, vandalised Jewish homes, schools and businesses and killed close to 100 Jews.]

But by chance, while in a cafe in the Tiergarten, Lilli had found a handbag belonging to an English girl, with whom she subsequently struck up a correspondence. The girl, Dodi, who lived in Liverpool, encouraged Lilli to escape from Germany and so she fled on a terrifying journey, leaving her parents behind. "Before I got to the border, I saw a Nazi take a child's teddy bear and slash it open with a knife," she says.



But Lilli (above) was well looked after and flourished in Britain, marrying and making up for her lost education by doing a degree with the Open University, eventually becoming an academic teaching drama at the University of London, where she worked up to her retirement aged 90. Lilli also occupied a distinguished position at the National Theatre

After retiring she returned to Berlin on a nostalgic visit to her old school and the headmaster was able to dig out her records. "It was amazing after all that time – 'very good pupil', it said." Now, aged 99, with the help of her daughter, Lilli has written up her life story. "I thought that sometime in the future, the world should know about all these events," she says.

It's been birthday time for another distinguished resident – Ian Willison CBE, former head of rare books at the British Library. Ian, one of the authors of the "Cambridge History of the Book", was so thrilled with his birthday celebration that he stood up and made a speech and wrote a card to all who attended, donating two of his books to the Spring Grove library. Thank you, Ian and many happy returns!

And, of course, we mustn't forget our cherished residents of the week, who we pamper with flowers and chocolates and to whom we grant special wishes.

At Spring Grove our celebrity this week is Lady Elizabeth O'Brien. Elizabeth has lived in many areas of the UK. She was born in Halifax, and has also lived in Birmingham, Wakefield and London. She read medicine at university and is a big lover of the arts, particularly classical music, painting and singing. She was a consultant child psychiatrist and really loved her work. She mostly likes to spend her time relaxing in her room but does like to join in with parties and classical music events. She has requested a gin and tonic and a fish supper, so we will absolutely organise this for her.

Maureen Bennett at Spring Lane adores music and every time she hears it her face lights up. She regularly sings along to her favourites and beams when listening. She is also a huge fan of "Dad's Army" and "Father Ted", which she finds hilarious. She was born in Dublin and grew up there. Her favourite job was teaching. She enjoys a sherry, lager or a gin & tonic so we'll get her at least one of those this week! She has requested scrambled eggs on toast as a treat for breakfast.

Joan Gallaway is one of the quiet people at Springview, but she loves music and used to go dancing all the time. She grew up in Wood Green and has a brother and a sister, who also lives at Springview and the two of them spend all their time together often holding hands.

Joan used to enjoy football and snooker and has very much relished watching the various sporting events in the Paralympics. She has requested a roast dinner and a glass of wine, which we will happily provide her with.

Lastly, we are delighted to receive the following warm tribute from Garry Davison, whose mother is in Springview: "The care and facilities provided at Springview are second to none. I live in South America, and due to Covid restrictions, have not been able to visit Springview to see my mother for over 18 months. I used to visit her every three months.

"It is so comforting for me to know that she is being so well looked after, and at least I get the chance to see her on the weekly Skype video calls that we have. She is doing very well and seems happy with life. The staff at Springview are all amazing, and I would like to send a big thank you to them all for looking after Mum so well."

Thank you, Garry. It is very much appreciated.
