



The Daffodil

Summer 2018

The Newsletter of the
Springdene Care Homes Group

Welcome

to this edition of *The Daffodil*.

Welcome to the latest edition of the Daffodil. It's been a busy and enjoyable few months and we wanted to share with you some of the highlights. Come and see what we've been up to and see some of the many events that residents have enjoyed.

Jeremy Balcombe, CEO



EASELS AT THE READY THE BIG DRAW IS BACK!

The Big Draw is back. For the past few years our homes have joined in a national project called The Big Draw, which takes place every October. The idea is that anyone can be an old, or even a modern, master by painting a tiny portion of a great painting. Then all the pieces are joined up as a kind of patchwork to produce the whole artwork.

It's a remarkable communal experience, in which residents, friends and relatives can all take part and gives everyone a chance to be creative.

In previous years our homes have produced works based on paintings by Rembrandt, L.S. Lowry and Gauguin among others which have been curated by our activities coordinator at Spring Grove, Odile Kidd.

Whatever subjects are chosen this year, the Big Draw promises to be as exciting and empowering as ever.

GLORY DAYS!

We join the Premier League to bring back great sporting memories

What's your favourite sporting memory? The one moment that still makes you thrill when you think back on it?

Maybe it was your team winning the FA Cup. Perhaps it was a special goal that you can still summon up when you close your eyes. Maybe it was a memorable cricket match. Sometimes it's not about what you are watching, but who you are watching it with.

Talking and reminiscing about sport can be a powerful medium for people, sharing memories and personal experience of sporting victories, the thrill of competition, the friendships made, the sense of community and the endless conversations that can connect people to each other.

So, it was with great delight that Spring Lane was approached by **Sporting Memory Network** to come to the home and run a 10-week programme with us. We are linked with Tottenham Hotspur football team, which is located close by in north London, although there will no doubt be memories shared by neighbouring Arsenal supporters, too.



Sporting Memory Network partnerships are formed between voluntary bodies wanting to share their sports knowledge and happy recipients keen to take part. The recall of personal memories offers a powerful positive release of feelings – good for wellbeing, and creates a rich focal point for conversation. For our residents it's an opportunity to reconnect to past generations, or to personal identities. It is for some a lifelong passion, and the game or sport becomes closely interwoven with

our families, home towns, childhood dreams, and so there is plenty to talk about.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Comic Relief and the Premier League among others, the charity started its life in Glasgow in 2009, led by Michael White, the Falkirk Football Club historian, who embarked on an experiment of reminiscing with people with Alzheimer's as a starting point.

White's experiment quickly spread, gaining the support of Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Football Association as it was rolled out nationwide. The Scottish Football Museum at Hampden Park became a focal point, with the sound of clicking turnstiles and scents of the museum's restored dressing room capable of stirring a multitude of memories.

White says: *"I think a lot of people, probably myself included, felt it was too simple an idea to work as well as it does. Reminiscence therapy is nothing new in treating Alzheimer's, but it was aimed more at women because it focused on things like clothes and music. I always felt football was the best way to reach men, but it's been using photos from their era and favourite teams that's really made a big impact."*

And it's certainly made an impact on us at Spring Lane. We really enjoyed playing games of identifying famous sporting personalities (see picture) – and the reminiscences just didn't stop flowing.

Across the homes



Symphony of praise for ‘outstanding’ performers at music festival

Bowls of daffodils on tables provided a cheery contrast to the spring snow showers visible through the windows as a rapt audience enjoyed the last day of the finals of the **Spring Grove Music Festival** on one of the coldest March days for several years.

Nor did the freezing weather outside diminish the enthusiasm of the players at this the fourteenth of our popular festivals, bringing together young musicians from schools and music groups to compete at the highest level in front of professional judges over a sequence of weekends from January to March.

The programmes ranged from traditional chamber compositions by Brahms, Puccini, Schubert, Debussy, Tchaikovsky and Enescu to modern songs by Billy Joel and U2. For the first time this year, there was a competition for soloists, which was won by Rosalind Pike in the junior category and Jaren Ziegler in the senior. There was even a category for young composers, where the winner



Hampstead MP Tulip Siddiq with her daughter Azalea

was Meera Patel and the Henrietta Barnett School Composition Ensemble 2 for the charming “Idylle”.

Other winners, who received prizes of £250, included groups from Camden School for Girls, the Park View Chamber Group, Henrietta Barnett School, South Hampstead High School and the Youth Music Centre.

The prizegiving by Hampstead MP Tulip Siddiq was enlivened by her toddler daughter Azalea, who scampered round the room bringing much pleasure and amusement to the residents, while Ms Siddiq described the contributions of the young musicians as “**outstanding**”. The previous week another set of finalists had received their awards from Camden’s mayor, Councillor Richard Cotton, who spoke eloquently about the value of music for older people.

“*The standards were as high as ever,*” said the chair of the judges, pianist Amanda Kaliski. “*We were particularly impressed by the younger entrants,*

who showed exceptional maturity.” Other judges were the leading pianist Tessa Uys, eminent cello teacher Wendy Max, the BBC Radio 3 broadcaster Lucie Skeaping and the music lecturer Jennifer Muskett

And the audience lapped it up. “*Amazing, beautiful – wish it was every month,*” one was heard to say, over delicious tea and cakes during the break. “*Quite exceptional,*” said another.

Meanwhile Dr Robin Powell, the director in charge of the festival, praised the inclusivity of the occasion: “*What could be better? Groups of young people playing their heart out and enhancing their skills, and a wonderfully appreciative audience at the other end of the age range. Two generations brought together by a mutual love of music.*”



Camden Mayor Richard Cotton with some of the winners

Across the homes



Strictly Springdene!



Roll over, Claudia and Tess, Darcy, Bruno, Craig and the rest of the celebrities from one of TV's most famous shows! The world of **Strictly Come Dancing** came to Springview the other day – at least in spirit, when residents staff and relatives got together to do their own version of the hit BBC programme.

It all started when some of the residents decided they could teach the staff and other residents some of the talents from their youth – the art of ballroom dancing. So **Mrs Gathergood, Mrs Dean, Mrs Belcher** and **Mr Newman** put their best feet forward and ensured that everyone was stepping out in style on the dancefloor. Soon couples were taking the floor to the tune of “Let me call you sweetheart”, the “Anniversary Waltz”, or “L'Amour”.

It was amazing how impressive everyone was. Thanks to a bit of music everyone was soon in a mood to win over the judges. The winners were **Ken**, son of **Mrs Blackwell** and **Angela**, daughter of **Mrs Court**. Second were two staff members, **Kathy** and **Jackie**. Did anyone tackle the rumba or the tango? Not yet. But who knows what talents are bubbling away. Now the intention is to expand the competition to Spring Grove and Spring Lane and to set up a contest between the homes.

In the meantime, as they say, “**Keep Dancing**”.

The man with the **GOLDEN HANDS**

The latest in a series in which we focus on staff who have won an award for ‘Going the Extra Mile’



They call him “**The Man with the Golden Hands**”. If you ever need to get an item of clothing altered or fixed, then **Alex Quiambao** is your man. He's also the person to seek out if your shirt or dress is in need of ironing, because it's Alex who keeps the laundry room running smoothly at Spring Grove, ensuring that hundreds of items are washed and pressed immaculately every week.

“*I love my job,*” says Alex, who hails from the Philippines, where he worked as a tailor, a skill which comes in useful for anyone wanting an expert mend. “*All my colleagues are so nice to be with and I love the atmosphere here. This really is a home from home.*” And the feeling is reciprocated by colleagues who value his cheery smile when he arrives at work at six in the morning

Alex is a dab hand at many things, including altering curtains, for example. He can also turn his hand to other jobs and is happy to work on room service or, indeed, any other role, including doing shopping for residents or popping out to buy a bunch of flowers. He's known for his keen dress sense and will sometimes advise residents on what to wear.

Alex has been with the Springdene group for nine years and lives quietly with his wife and two sons in west London, although drama intruded into their lives last year at the time of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster. Alex and his family witnessed the fire from their eleventh-floor home in a neighbouring tower block. “*It was very worrying at the time, but I feel safe now,*” he says.

What is the secret of happiness in his job? “*I never like to say no. That way, you get on with everybody,*” says Alex.

Spring Grove



A trove of treasures. Spring Grove puts on its own Antiques Roadshow

Move aside, Fiona Bruce! Spring Grove was a fitting substitute for the usual stately home backdrop as the home staged its own version of BBC's Antiques Roadshow. **Pamela Roditi** very kindly offered her personal selection of antiques for inspection, with fellow residents being given a questionnaire to fill in about what they could divine about the provenance of each item.

The purpose of the event was to look at, hold and touch the antiques then decide where the object was made, what material it was made from, the year of manufacture and then to decide how much the value of the object was.

The winner was **Hannah Whitwell**, who won the trophy for what everyone agreed was her expert knowledge of antiques. All who took part in the Spring Grove Antiques Roadshow thoroughly enjoyed it. Roll on the next one!



A special present for The Year of the Dog

It was all very auspicious when **Lailan Young** – wife of our residents' committee chairman **Robin Young** – came to explain some of the history behind the Chinese New Year tradition, using animals for each new year in the calendar. This year it's the Year of the Dog – in the eleventh position in the Chinese zodiac. People born in the Year of the Dog are independent, fierce, sincere and loyal.

Lailan, who is an expert in the subject, then told everyone which animal signified the year of their birth, followed by everyone receiving a special red envelope with lucky coins in.

The residents said how much they enjoyed it, especially when Lailan also sang a few songs for her audience. She had a lovely voice which rounded off the occasion perfectly.



All the fun of the fair as Friends launch their first event

The newly-formed **Friends of Spring Grove** have been busy getting together their first event, which was a Winter Fair at the home.

The idea behind the group is to create a point of contact for families and friends of new and existing residents which would enhance the experience of being part of the Spring Grove community for everyone. Meetings and events offering opportunities to get together are a key focus.

The Winter Fair was put on with great encouragement from all the staff, and included entertainment by an eight-year-old magician, a Punch and Judy show, a tombola and a number of stalls selling cakes, bric-a-brac and plants.

The fair was an opportunity to showcase some of the wonderful gifts produced by the Spring Grove Studio. Under the guidance of **Odile Kidd**, residents made a variety of

beautiful items, ranging from jewellery, cushions and soft toys to decorative boxes, wrapping paper, lavender bags and Christmas decorations and a selection of these was on sale at the fair.

The fair was well-supported by relatives and friends and everyone who helped contribute to the warm and relaxed atmosphere. The kitchen staff produced tea cake and hot chocolate at teatime, which was a great success.

The proceeds from the various stalls are being put towards equipment and supplies for the Spring Grove Studio so that Odile and the residents can continue to amaze us with their creations.

The next event will be an informal get-together for relatives and friends, and it looks as though our new group is going to be a great and convivial success.



Spring Grove



The Wallace Collection comes to Spring Grove



A Dance to the Music of Time by Nicolas Poussin in the Wallace Collection

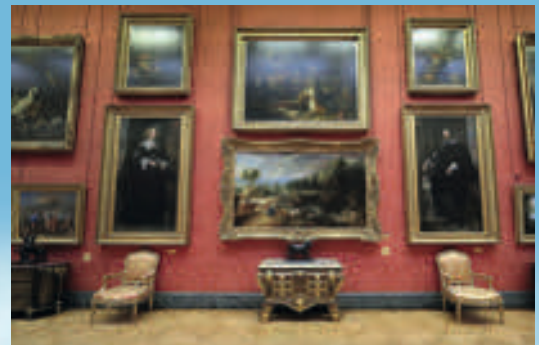
Spring Grove is very fortunate to have a special connection with the Wallace Collection art gallery, with Joy, their outreach worker, visiting on a monthly basis.

In the museum's 25 galleries are unsurpassed displays of French 18th-century painting, furniture and porcelain with superb Old Master paintings and a world class armoury. Probably the most most recognisable of all, among the general public, is The Laughing Cavalier by Franz Hals.

One of the many cultural pleasures for Spring Grove residents is spending the afternoon looking at a selection from the Wallace Collection's great array of pictures and talking about them as well as asking questions. Our residents have become very knowledgeable about great paintings!



The Laughing Cavalier by Franz Hals





Getting to the heart of

ART

in

Odile's workshop

Odile's workshop at Spring Grove is always abuzz with activity. From Chinese painting and marbleizing to silkscreen printing and still lifes, she gently inspires the residents to tap into their own creativity. With a focus on nature, colour and imagery and perhaps a guiding hand, even the most unskilled creator can gain confidence!

As might be expected from an activity based at our home in Hampstead, Odile also provides an intellectual slant, where specific designers, artists and art movements (requested by the group) are discussed in detail.

Anything useful is added to the mix – BBC recordings, video clips and printed images are incorporated. Subjects have included the development of perspective in Western art, Piet Mondrian and Theosophy and the First World War's effect on fashion. You don't need to be an expert before you start, but here is the perfect introduction to everything you ever wanted to know about art.



Spring Grove



In the spirit with leading cultural centre JW3

We're delighted to say that Spring Grove has established a great bond with the **JW3** centre across the Finchley Road from us. Also known as the **Jewish Community Centre London**, it is an arts, culture and entertainment venue, an educational facility and a social and community hub, opened four years ago with an endowment from the philanthropist Vivien Duffield.

Not only do our residents go to JW3 to watch films and attend events such as Christmas Munches but they come over to Spring Grove and put on different events such as Mitzvah Day, a national day of faith-backed social action, which helps unite communities.

Mitzvah Day over the years, has evolved onto a wonderful musical event on a Sunday with a number of volunteers coming to entertain the residents.

The Mayor of Camden and musicians from the "Mock the Week" TV Programme came to be part of the celebrations. All the residents who came to the party thoroughly enjoyed the singing and dancing with the volunteers from JW3.

Laura Marks, the founder of the Mitzvah Day charity, also attended, and she brought the actress Tracy Ann Oberman with her, who spent

most of the morning talking to the residents, as did the Mayor of Camden. We have also been extremely fortunate to have their wonderfully talented violinist, Vita, come to Spring Grove with the little ones from the nursery.



JW3 volunteers also participated in Project Impact, an initiative designed to bring young and old together. Our residents greatly appreciated the conversations with 14 and 15-year-olds who they found intelligent and personable.

Volunteers from JW3 also came to our Mock Seder service, which **Adrienne Powell**, together with **Freddy, Barnaby** and **Theodore Powell**, made really fun and enjoyable.

There were nine residents who joined to listen to the explanation of the Seder service, ably given by Freddy Powell, and ask appropriate questions.

Everyone then ate the food which was laid out at the table. All the volunteers, together with the residents, sang the songs to end the service.

The residents who attended were treated to a small gift from the volunteers.

We hope our future connection with JW3 will go from strength to strength.



Visit from fan museum is a breath of fresh air



Spring Grove residents are long-time fans of the Fan Museum in Greenwich, whose curators have made regular visits to talk about the collections in this, the first museum in the world dedicated to these decorative and invaluable artefacts.

In the latest visit, we learnt how few art forms combine functional, ceremonial and decorative uses as elegantly as the fan. Fewer still can match such diversity with a history stretching back at least 3,000 years.

Pictorial records showing some of the earliest fans date from around 3000 BC and there is evidence that the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans all used fans as cooling and ceremonial devices, while Chinese literary sources associate the fan with ancient mythical and historical characters.

The museum houses more than 5,000 individual fans, so it is not surprising that residents found the story of the fan absolutely fascinating – and – one is tempted to say – a “breath of fresh air”.



Spring Grove



Putting the **OOMP**H into making people happy!

If you happen to spot our Spring Grove residents looking especially cheery as they are doing their post-breakfast exercise in the mornings, then it's probably thanks to **OOMP**H!

It's a new programme that we have introduced whose initials stand for **"Our Organisation Makes People Happy"**. How does it do that? It's a new concept to bring activities to the elderly in residential care homes, based around mainly wellbeing and person-centred care.

The exercise programme which we do every morning is based on the abilities and tastes of the individual and knowing the person you work with. The programme is 30 minutes in length and is done to music.

The benefits are enormous to the residents. They become totally engaged in what they are doing and are visibly invigorated.

But it's not only to do with exercises it's all about the residents and their personal wellbeing, with everything tailored to their needs in a carefully designed programme that is applied in every area of the home throughout the day.



Question Time as home shows off its political mettle

It may be something to do with the intellectual atmosphere of Hampstead, but representatives of four of the main political parties were keen to come to Spring Grove to debate their policies in advance of the council elections on May 3.

The sitting councillor, Giovanni Spinella, for the Conservatives (below), Rebecca Shirazi for Labour, Anne Ward for the Liberal Democrats and Anthony Humphrey for the Green Party all set out their policies and met with some robust questioning from the residents.

The feedback was very positive, and the residents greatly appreciated being courted by the candidates. They are hoping that some of the ideas they suggested will be implemented by Camden council over the next few years!



Warm reception for Icelandic delegation



A delegation of professionals in elderly care from Iceland paid a visit to the Springdene Group to see some examples of best practice in running care homes in the UK, meeting staff and residents alike. Iceland has some of the highest standards of care for the elderly in the world. *"There was a great exchange of ideas,"* said Robin Powell, Springdene's medical director (centre, with bow tie), *"and we had a fascinating conversation. Both sides were favourably impressed."*



Spring Lane



Pat is still putting the world to rights after all these years

Resident of a care home she might be these days, but the legendary **Pat Arrowsmith** is showing few signs of slowing down. Pat joined us at Spring Lane a year or so ago after a long and prestigious career as an activist, socialist, anti-war protestor, and as the co-founder of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

She is usually to be seen with a thick hand-knitted wool jumper, jeans with turns ups, flip flips, a walking stick, and always wearing the iconic symbol of peace round her neck, with which she has become associated.

Pat, now aged 88 is a terrific character and a delight to talk to; she is a funny, witty, intelligent, gritty, tough woman, and has seen a lot of adventure in her life. In the care home setting she is always piping up from the back: **“What about the rights of the people?”** or **“What about the ordinary people?”**

Talking about her early life she tells how she was brought up near Torquay, Devon, in an upper middle-class family – father a vicar and mother, a housewife and her two brothers. They had a childhood of freedom and adventures.

She talks of how her father would do magic tricks at the children’s parties and then donate the money to the church, and how her brothers called her Trunky, as she was a tomboy and youngest sister to two elder brothers, her body resembling the straight and strong trunk of a tree.

Her early rebellious streak, later to become her trademark, got her expelled from her boarding school and she was placed in Cheltenham Ladies College where she attracted some of the controversy that was to become the hallmark of her life.

When VE day was declared, Pat says: **“I wanted to go out and mingle with the crowds. I knew this was completely forbidden, so I climbed out of the window and off I went cycling into town. I rode around on an American army jeep along with a whole lot of other women. Much, much later, I went back to my window that I’d left open to go back in, and the voice of my houselady, Miss Garside, said. ‘WHAT are you doing, Pat?’”**

“I was whisked away incommunicado into the sort of sick bay of the house – I was, you know, too wicked really to mingle with the other girls in the house and was shipped off to the school sanitorium. But I knew that I’d managed to celebrate VE day and nobody else in the school had.”

Despite her rebelliousness, she arrived at Newnham College, Cambridge, to read history and this setting focused her attention. She says she very soon got caught up in the Crusade for World Government in Cambridge, the purpose of which was to achieve a world in which there would be no Third World War.

“There wasn’t any anti-nuclear weapons movement at Cambridge when I went there. The first time I ever spoke in public,” she says, “was at a tannery at Letchworth, to factory workers in their lunch hour in the canteen, on the importance of world government.”

After Cambridge and a Fulbright scholarship in the US, she was soon involved in organising a protest at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment in Aldermaston.

Dismissed from her work at a psychiatric hospital for petitioning (about nuclear tests) in the workplace, Pat ended up working full-time as one of the organisers of the CND march and pilgrimage to Aldermaston.

“We were expecting 50 people assembling in Trafalgar Square,” she recalls. “We got 8,000, so we were sort of amazed at this large throng.”

Pat went on to fight for lesbian and gay rights, Amnesty International and campaigning for British troops to leave Ulster in the 1970s. She has been to prison eleven times because of her anti-nuclear, anti-arms trade and other political protests. She was twice adopted as a Prisoner of Conscience by Amnesty International.



Pat’s direct action stunts are legendary. She once stood up during a Women of the Year award lunch, brandished a rubber bullet, yanked open her cardigan to reveal a Troops Out tee-shirt, and shouted: **“I’m not here for Women’s Lib. Get English troops out of Ireland.”**

She is also famous for her heckling skills. In 1979, she stood in the constituency of James Callaghan, the outgoing Prime Minister. After a long series of heckles during the election night speeches, Callaghan eventually invited her to make a speech, whereupon he and everyone else left the building...

Perhaps predictably, her father did not approve of her lifestyle and left a clause in his will to say she could only inherit if she married. With her characteristic sense of humour and defiance, she married a male friend to meet an inheritance condition, then annulled the marriage the same day and donated the money to campaigns she believed in.

Amid her rich and exciting life, Pat has found time to be an author of fiction and poetry. Her works include an autobiography, *I Should Have Been a Hornby Train* (1995). Pat says that the title comes from an incident just after she was born when her father told her two older brothers there was a surprise waiting for them in the living room. They were expecting a Hornby train set, but got a sister. And quite a sister she turned out to be!



Reviving musical memories with the Lost Chord



Music and singing for those with dementia has a special place in our activities. Research shows that music, ahead of other art forms, is the most emotive, able to trigger memories and connectedness with people, places, times of one's life or shared moments.

The high Dependency Unit at Spring Lane has been working with **Lost Chord**, a charity dedicated to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of people in residential care by using interactive musical performance and stimulation to engage and connect with residents, particularly those living with dementia.

Highly trained singers and musicians sing a programme of music from the Mikado, Irving Berlin, Fauré or traditional English well-known songs. As the singers heard more about the lives and personalities of the residents, they adjusted the musical programme to reflect the people. Pierre Gourmain, for instance, a Frenchman, was sung to in French with works by Fauré and Delibes.

Alzheimer's can totally destroy the ability to remember family members or events from one's own life—but musical memory somehow survives the ravages of disease, and even in people with advanced dementia, music can often reawaken personal memories and associations that are otherwise lost.

The effect on some of our residents has been transformational and a pleasure to behold.



A touch of Tai Chi, with a sprinkle of Yin and Yang



Is Tai Chi a latte with nutmeg, a Chinese foot massage or type of martial art?

If you chose the last answer, then you will have joined the many of our residents who think and experience the benefits of this gentle but rigorous form of meditative exercise and martial art.

Rachel Hewitt comes to Spring Lane each week and has generated a very keen fan club of around 40 people. The residents form a large circle for seated Tai Chi and it has the most profound results. Resident **Kitty Gale** says: *"I just love it"*, and **Gwen Lawton** says: *"It's so relaxing and peaceful."*

Tai Chi today is practised for both its defence training (not much needed in a modern care home!) and its health benefits.

The term taiji refers to a philosophy of the forces of yin and yang, related to the moves. Yin and Yang describe how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may be complementary and interdependent in the natural world.

It is said that focusing the mind solely on the movements of the form helps to bring about a state of mental calm and clarity. Certainly, this is the case with our group at Spring Lane. You only need to watch them at work with Rachel each Thursday morning to see the benefits.

Why a handful of clay is good for you

A handful of clay can be good for you, reckons **Sue Feldman**, a local artist who has introduced an exciting new ceramics programme to Spring Lane this spring.

Sue says: *"The art of clay modelling is relaxing and good for you. In pottery there is no competition, no right and wrong way but infinite possibilities for creating pieces that speak to you and about you."*

The feel of clay is wonderful in the hands, and gives a sense of relaxation. The repetitive motions involved in shaping the clay can be very soothing.

It is a gentle activity that is strengthening to the hands, wrists and arms. Our hands are an outlet for creative expression, the sense of touch is highly important.

"All this" Sue says, *"has many benefits for people with dementia. The possibility of transforming a lump of clay into a shape provides self-control and builds up confidence. Clay as a material has many qualities. Its softness and smoothness has a calming effect. Making something new each time is stimulating, you can work to build something and express yourself in some new way on every occasion."*

Her words are borne out by some of the wonderful creations our residents already have under way.



Springview



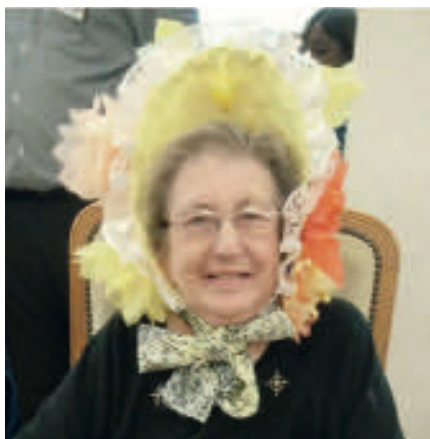
The bonniest bonnets for the Easter Parade

Residents had a lot of fun making Easter bonnets ready for their Easter parade. Tissue paper was used by many to make colourful displays of flowers on different styles of bonnets.

The afternoon was filled with fun, thanks to one of our favourite entertainers, **Ronnie Goldberg**, performing some old favourite songs. Wonderful memories were invoked whilst listening to the Easter parade song streamed from YouTube, the excitement building as people tried to guess the winners from the parade and laughter triggered again as they watched staff and relatives compete in the egg and spoon race.

Gladys Gathergood came first with a bonnet she made using natural materials, **Joan Rowe** came second with a more traditional style of bonnet and **Irene McBride** came third with her wonderful and colourful effort.

The prizes received with huge smiles – and bashfully by some – were, of course, Easter eggs.



THE KING LIVES

as Springview rocks the afternoon away

To celebrate the birthday of **Elvis Presley**, Springview enjoyed rocking the afternoon away. The King of Rock'n'Roll made an appearance and had some of the ladies swooning. Full circle skirts added a wonderful visual scene as they swished and swashed as people jived and bopped along to the songs our Elvis impersonator sang.

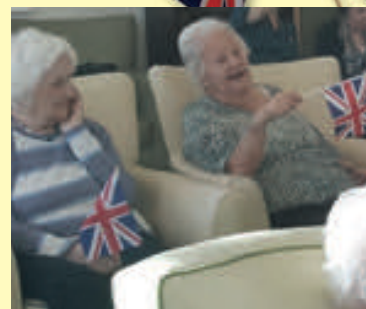
The residents had enjoyed making decorations beforehand for the event, and were pleased and proud to see them displayed and the effect they created. Memories were recalled and new memories created. Foot tapping, songs sung along to and laughter matched the many smiles that filled the room. Elvis definitely lived on that afternoon.



Flying the flag to herald the joys of spring



To celebrate the first day of spring, Springview laid on a cheery programme of entertainment to mark all that is great about Britain. The Great, Great Britain Show had residents smiling, singing, clapping hands and tapping toes, dancing, sitting or standing and waving Union Jack flags.



Hard to say what costume was the best...but for many it had to be the good old-fashioned bathing suit accompanied by an old-time favourite, "Oh I do like to be beside the seaside."

Springview also hosted a number of charity events, as the home is supporting the **London Air Ambulance** this year. A wonderful afternoon was had by many in February as residents and visitors enjoyed a lovely cream tea followed by entertainment from **Lawrence Simmons**. A good sing-along had people smiling, singing and clapping. Some magic tricks created a sense of amazement, while there was balloon modelling that brought back memories for many.

The charity London Walk was held in March. It was enjoyed by those participating and was a huge success, with **Ellie** and **Leah-Rose**, the grandchildren of **Dawn**, our dining room supervisor, raising £930 between them. So far more than £4,000 in total has been raised for the air ambulance.





It's been a long life, but I've been blessed, says our right Royal 105-year-old

"We may share the same birthday but I've got a few years on Her Majesty, you know," laughs **Gladys Gatherwood**, whose 105-year lifespan makes the Queen look like a mere stripling at 92. *"I can remember as clearly as can be when she was born and I was a 13-year-old schoolgirl."*

Gladys has been a resident at Springview for the past three years and is reminiscing about an extraordinary life that began when George V was on the throne, Asquith was prime minister and women didn't even have the vote. *"It's been a long life but, do you know, I've been blessed. Truly blessed."*

Gladys was born in Stratford, east London, before moving to Leytonstone, where she lived until she got married in 1940, eventually moving to Forty Hill, Enfield, a borough where she has been resident for the 78 years since. Her father was a fitter on the Great Eastern Railway, and her grandfather, also a railwayman, built the first bridge at the then new Liverpool Street station.

It was a world where horse-drawn transport still ruled and games of five stones and hopscotch were still played in the street. *"My sister was 11 years older than me. It was a bit like having two mums. And I was always a bit different from the rest of the family, perhaps I was the milkman's,"* she laughs

Gladys's upbringing was typical of girls at the time – but one that would be barely recognisable to young women today. Starting school at five and leaving at 14, she was coached by her teacher in her final year to go into service. *"I was taught cooking, laundry and various household tasks. I remember being asked how much space you needed for a nursery."*

But a servant she wasn't to be. *"I had a lucky break.*

The war had opened up lots of new opportunities for women and the school had three old Oliver typewriters. So encouraged by my parents I learnt Pitman's shorthand and typing, which allowed me to enter the modern world of women's work."

Her first job was as a shorthand typist at Caribonum, the carbon paper and typewriter ribbon manufacturer, in Leyton, where she earned a princely ten and sixpence a week – 50p in today's money. She spent several years going to evening classes to keep up her speed at shorthand and went on to learn how to use the dictaphone machine.

"I've packed in a lot of activities and stayed healthy."

Among the joys of life at Caribonum were the splendid sports facilities, with wonderful playing fields at Chingford where Gladys learned to play hockey, becoming part of the team that played on Saturdays.

"They asked me if I knew how to play the game – because girls of my standing were not taught how to play hockey. They gave me a stick and told me to wallop it, which I did."

Even though she knew nothing about cricket, either, she was thrilled to be appointed captain of the company's first Cricket Club for Women which played in the London Business House League.

But World War Two was approaching and with it marriage to her husband Harry in 1940, who was a draughtsman at Waddell's steel equipment company in Stratford where she was working at the time. There



was no honeymoon – in fact there was an air raid on their wedding night.

After marrying Gladys gave up her secretarial life for a domestic one. Does she wish she had a career like women of today's generation? *"I say good luck to them. I did what I was brought up to do – to look after my husband and two daughters, Christine and Janis (now aged 77 and 74). They were different times."*

But life has always been busy. Gladys is a stalwart of the Baptist church, was an officer in the Girls's Life Brigade, sung with Enfield Light Opera and founded the Armfield Road pensioners' club with more than 150 members. *"I've always loved music and we formed a group called the Armfield Follies where we travelled round entertaining people. We were blooming good, you know."*

Along with her distinctive sprightliness and zest for life, Gladys is a truly rare person – one of only 850 people in the UK of 105 and over. To what does she attribute her long life? *"I've packed in a lot of activities and stayed healthy. I've never smoked. And I've always drunk plenty of milk."*

"If I say thank you to the Lord for anything, it is for allowing me to live in the period I did, where we had few luxuries, but friendships counted for more than personal possessions. My only regret is that I didn't get into computers when they first came along. Now it is too late for me."

These days Gladys's eyes are dimmed because of macular degeneration so she can't read books or watch television, but she still has her beloved music and can sometimes be found tinkling the piano keys at Springview. *"And I'm happy despite everything. Very happy. In fact I could not be more cossetted."*

**Call for
volunteers
and
donations**

The homes are always interested in anyone who would like to come and participate in some of the activities in the homes. Perhaps you are retired or have an area of interest you would like to share with us. Some of the topics we would love to expand are:

- Creative storytelling/sounds
- Art talks
- Talks on history, travel and literature
- Chair-based dancer x 2
- Bridge teacher
- Chess teacher
- Reading groups participant
- Scrabble players
- Coffee morning in the community.

Don't hesitate to let us know if you would like to join in.
Telephone: 020 8815 2000.

