

Newsletter

By Lynn Fearn, Managing Director

As the world deals with the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19), the health, safety, and wellbeing of our residents and dedicated team members remains our highest priority. With older people in care homes amongst the most vulnerable to contracting the virus, we have taken preventative steps to protect those in our care and employment.

At the time of printing, Wren Retirement Living Care Homes remain closed to all visitors. We believe that reducing the number of people entering our homes will positively reduce the risk of our residents and teams contracting the virus. We are constantly reviewing our approach in line with the latest guidance from the UK government and Public Health England.

Alongside the risks COVID-19 poses itself, the risk of social-isolation for older people has never been so great. We have been working hard to ensure that any restrictions on visitation do not significantly reduce your ability to stay in touch with your loved ones. As always, you can phone your Wren Retirement Living Care Home at any time to find out how your loved one is doing. We can also arrange for you to speak to them directly over the phone if you do not have your own means of direct phone contact.

All of our homes now have video call capabilities

via a variety of apps allowing you to chat to your relative face-to-face. You can also find regular updates on important information, daily activities, and a sense of how life is continuing at the homes by liking your Wren Retirement Living Care Home's own Facebook page.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to safeguard your loved ones in these unprecedented times, and to thank you for your patience and understanding.

I am sure you will join with me in offering sincere thanks to our outstanding workforce at this time. It takes a vast array of individuals, many of them unseen, pulling together to deliver high quality services to our residents.

I have personally witnessed over many years a great number of these individuals putting our residents needs above their own, and those of their families. We are hugely indebted to them and are incredibly proud that at this time of national crisis they have once again stepped up to the challenges we face.



Celebrating in Style at Linden House

There have been lots of occasions to celebrate throughout the last couple of months, and Linden House sure knows how to party in style. Mothers' Day afternoon tea was enjoyed by all residents in the home, and everyone took time to think about their loved ones.

VE Day was great fun! Everyone enjoyed reminiscing about the past and we all took a moment those who served in the Forces many years ago, as well as those who serve today.

As always, we celebrated those who have aged like fine wines and made sure that birthdays remained important to us all, even with a smaller attendance to the parties! Joan Manton turned 93 and Lillian Thomas turned 97.

Paula Windmill, home manager at Linden House, said: "As a home, we know how important our daily

activities are to our residents' routine. We have tried to incorporate as many activities as we can, though some are different to what our residents are used to. One thing is for sure, our residents love a good party, so we've celebrated all we have to be thankful for during this difficult period."



Honouring Edna's Service on VE Day

A resident at Featherton House has been awarded a special edition RBL VE75 brooch for her service during the Second World War.

Edna Sewell, 95, was presented with the brooch by Featherton House's Deputy Manager Rachel Freeman on behalf of Deddington's Royal British Legion on 8 May as part of the home's VE Day celebrations.

Edna was trained as a writer in the Navy for three years, where she worked on signal books for convoys. When the news came through about VE Day, Edna was trying to get to Bury, where she was due to be married two days later but had trouble because of all the celebrations and got stuck at Euston Station. Once the crowds had dispersed, she could then continue her journey to Bury to get married.

Edna said: "My time in the forces was enjoyable, we were all young, so we got on well. I made some great friends. I feel very proud to receive this accolade for my service."

Commander Robert Forsyth RN (Ret'd), Chairman of the British Legion Deddington Branch, said: "The special edition RBL VE75 Brooches have been presented to the four residents of Deddington who served in WWII, two of those who live at Featherton House.

"We all have great admiration and respect for their contribution to securing peace in Europe those many years ago. They should wear their brooches with great pride."

During this period of restricted visits to the home, Featherton House has also come up with new and innovative ways to keep residents entertained. The entertainer who usually visits Featherton has put on special performances via Zoom for the residents. Everyone has enjoyed watching on a big screen to make up for missing his visits.



War Veteran Writes Poem to Celebrate VE Day

Len Goldman, 103, is a published poet and served in Burma during WWII. He's a resident at Patcham Nursing Home in Brighton and wrote a wonderful poem to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day, drawing on his memories of the time.

His poem, *The Gores of War*, paints a vivid picture of battle and eventual victory, and his feelings about the time he served at war.

The former history teacher was born in Weston-Super-Mare and moved to Brighton as a child. In addition to his poetry, he has published a number of books about his life growing up in Brighton, his experiences in India during the war.

Pat Hurst, manager at Patcham Nursing Home, said: "Len is a fantastic resident and is always delighting us with poems. He has a lovely way with words and his VE Day poem really captures the spirit of the day and what it must have been like to be there.

"It is important to us to help all of our residents to continue the activities they enjoyed when they were younger. Exploring creative activities, such as writing helps to keep their minds active and we love seeing the amazing work they produce.

"Len's wish is to have a laptop at the home so he can write more poetry. If anyone has a spare working laptop that they could donate to our verse-writing veteran, he would love it."

Len said: "I am absolutely overwhelmed with the staff and care at this home and my gratitude to all the staff who go out of their way to look after me and that's what inspired me to write the poem."

Here's Len's fantastic poem:
"Gores of War" by Len Goldman

Tens of millions wounded or dead
Yes, the great god of war had sumptuously fed
Orphans and widows grief stricken what a terrible sight
We tried to console them, but the task was not light
In the end the Red Army had the enemy on the run
Yes, the final battle approached once it had begun
The western allies triumphant from our side of the world
And now the bright flag of victory was proudly unfurled

What an outpouring of happiness and relief
In Trafalgar Square on VE Day was beyond belief
There were millions who got safely home
They stayed there with their families never more to roam

Wars are an abomination
We should ban them forever
And handling their weapons one day we will sever

But let's remember that overwhelming feeling
The warmth and the joy so heartfelt and revealing



Keeping Spirits High at Westerham Place

Ensuring our residents continue to enjoy their different daily activities at our home remains a high priority for us. Here's a snapshot of some of the fantastic things that have been going on at Westerham Place in Sevenoaks whilst we are unable to welcome our usual visitors and entertainers into the home.

To commemorate VE Day, the residents shared stories about where they were and what they were doing on VE Day 75 years ago. The staff created a board with the residents' quotes attached and pictures of where the residents lived at that time, and displayed them in the home for all to see.

Westerham Place was also very lucky to have received surprise deliveries from businesses in Biggin Hill including fresh cupcakes, Domino's Pizza and homemade visors from the over 60's club as well as the local secondary school in Oxted.

Residents have also been making cards to send to their families and making bunches of flowers for their rooms.

Claire Davis, home manager at Westerham Place, said: "Spirits have been high at the home and our staff have planned some fantastic activities for the residents. It was lovely to hear the residents' stories about times gone by when we got together for VE Day! The donations from local businesses have also gone down a treat, thank you to everyone who has thought of us throughout the last couple of weeks, we really appreciate your kindness."



Staying Safe

At Wren Retirement Living, we have been working closely with Blue Leaf and other trusted suppliers to make sure PPE such as face masks, aprons and gloves are all readily available to all care home staff. The team at head office are in daily contact with our PPE suppliers to ensure that deliveries arrive as scheduled, and are ready to quickly source items from elsewhere if they are in short supply. Although some items have seen occasional scarcity, in general Wren

Retirement Living has had no major issues in obtaining the PPE required.

Ashley Groombridge, Wren Retirement Living's regional administration manager, said: "Head office is holding a large stock of PPE items and members of the Facilities and Regional Administration Teams have been co-ordinating allocation and delivery. A small number of staff at Head Office have been helping unload pallets of boxes and are all now well versed in the use of sack trucks!"

Community Kindness for Wren House



Many of our homes have been overwhelmed with support from their local communities recently and we would like to say a huge thank you to anyone who has given gifts to our homes.

Wren House has been lucky enough to receive lots of exciting things from local businesses and the community, with treats for staff and residents alike.

Some of the items have included sweet treats, Dominos pizza, wash bags and even Easter eggs. All the items have brought huge smiles to everyone's faces at Wren House and the team has been very grateful for the support of local communities at this time.

Our key workers do an amazing job daily to keep up residents' quality of life and this is reflected through the variety of adapted activities that have been planned at Wren House. Both staff and residents had a wonderful day celebrating the Queen's birthday and enjoyed raising a glass of fizz to Her Majesty.

Lynn Boon, home manager at Wren House,



said: "We're all very grateful at Wren House for the gifts we have received from local businesses. The kindness and generosity shown by our community is overwhelming and has definitely lifted the spirits in the home."

"The wash bags in particular were such a thoughtful gift and ensures that our staff can keep safe when finishing their shifts at the home."

Wren House has also been making the most of modern technology and has been taking part in Zoom fitness classes in place of their weekly exercise class with Hannah Beswick.

Pauline Taylor, a resident at Wren House, said: "Using all this technology is quite new to many of us, but it's been a good experience and opened up lots of new opportunities while we're having to stay safe. We love our weekly exercises, so I'm glad the staff have been able to find a way for them to continue! It's so nice to be able to see our Hannah again."



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Please note: some of the photos in this newsletter were taken before the latest guidance from the government & public health bodies