

Larchwood Life

A Word From Alison



**By Alison Boote,
Operations Director**

A warm welcome to our Spring newsletter, where we celebrate the wonderful moments and experiences shared across our care homes. Through the start of the year, our Community Champions initiative has seen great participation, especially during Random Acts of Kindness week, where everyone came together

to spread joy and positivity throughout their local communities. I want to say a huge well done to our teams and I can't wait to see your positive community outreach continue throughout the year. At Larchwood, we believe in the power of animal

therapy to bring comfort and joy to our residents' lives. From the birds of prey at Oake Meadows to the miniature Shetland pony, Daisy, visiting Diamond House, and the antics of Monty the Pygmy goat at Cranford Care Home, each encounter has brought smiles and laughter to our residents' faces.

In the midst of these heartwarming visits, we've also celebrated remarkable milestones with our beloved residents. From Edith Turner's 101st birthday surrounded by family and friends at The Hollies, to Dorothy Violet Davis's 101st celebration at Cameron House, each moment reminds us of the importance of cherishing every day.

With the arrival of spring and it's warmer days, I hope you enjoy your gardens and outdoor activities. We are so glad to have you all as part of our Larchwood Care family!

Warm regards,
Alison Boote
Operations Director, Larchwood Care

Avonbridge Care Home Celebrate Scottish Heritage with Highland Dance Performance

In a heartwarming display of Scottish tradition and culture, Avonbridge Care Home in Hamilton recently played host to an extraordinary event that had its residents beaming with patriotic pride and joy. The Hamilton Highland Dancers, in collaboration with the gifted young performers from the Nicola Boyle School of Highland Dance, brought an afternoon of exceptional entertainment and cultural celebration to the home, creating an atmosphere of fun and happiness.

Emma Duffy, home manager at Avonbridge, shared her enthusiasm and the positive impact the event had on the residents, saying: "We were absolutely

delighted to welcome the Hamilton Highland Dancers and the young talents from the Nicola Boyle School of Highland Dance to our home. Their performances were not only a showcase of the rich Scottish heritage but also a source of great joy and pride for our residents. It's moments like these that truly enhance the sense of community and belonging among our residents. We are deeply thankful to the dancers for sharing their talents and spirit with us."

The successful Highland dance performance is a testament to the home's commitment to celebrating Scotland's rich cultural heritage, bringing joy and a sense of belonging to everyone involved.





Diamond House Residents Revel in a Day of Vintage Glamour



In an enchanting collaboration that seamlessly wove together the elegance of yesteryear with the vibrancy of modern-day creativity, the residents of Diamond House Care Home were treated to a day of glamour and nostalgia, thanks to the photographic prowess of Chelsea Savage from Sauvage Photography.

The corridors of Diamond House, located in the heart of Downham Market, were transformed into a scene from a bygone era, as residents donned vintage hats and gloves, kindly donated by Watton Antiques, for a special photoshoot. Chelsea, with her camera in hand, was not just capturing images; she was encapsulating stories, emotions, and the unique essence of each individual who sat before her lens.

Chelsea shared her thoughts on the day, saying: "Every person has a unique tale to tell, and I wanted to ensure their portraits echoed their individual narratives and that their personalities came through in the final shot. Photography captures emotions, memories, and each person's individuality. We were able to sprinkle a touch of timeless glamour into the portraits thanks to the lovely Watton Antiques."

The photoshoot was more than just an activity; it was an experience that brought joy, laughter, and a sense of camaraderie among the residents. Chelsea added: "The photoshoot was great fun for me. One of the best parts of the day was just speaking to the residents at Diamond House, hearing their stories and being able to capture the little candid joyful moments! I am so pleased that the residents enjoyed it and really got into the swing of it."

Allison Webster, the activities coordinator at Diamond House, reflected on the impact of the day, saying: "Witnessing the transformation and the sheer joy on our residents' faces has been nothing short of magical. Chelsea's vision and photography skills have not only gifted us with stunning portraits but also given us some wonderful pictures to hang in the home."

Pam Haylett, one of the residents who participated in the shoot, expressed her delight, saying: "It was like a step back in time! Chelsea's warmth made the entire experience really fun. She really put us at ease. It's been really fun looking back at the pictures."

5 Minutes with Holly Garrett

Activity Coordinator at Cranford Care Home

What makes Cranford so special? *Cranford is such a special place to me it really is just like my second home. We have such a cosy homely atmosphere, we are all one big family here. We all have so many special times together at Cranford everyday.*

What attracted you to working in the care sector? *Growing up I spent so much time with my Grandma I loved learning from her, I find I learn so much from all of our residents. One of our ladies even taught me how to knit which I really enjoy. Being able to build meaningful connections with people is so special to me. It is extremely rewarding to me knowing that I can bring happiness to people and be able to share special moments with them.*

Could you tell us a highlight of your work at Cranford? *There are so many it is difficult to just highlight one. One that recently stood out to me which brought tears of happiness to my eyes. Myself and Edna (one of our residents) were invited along to a partnership breakfast at a local nursery who come to visit us. The children spoke about how much their visits to Cranford mean to them and told Edna how much they loved coming to visit her. Was really lovely to see and hear.*

Who inspires you and why? *I find a lot of inspiration from Colleen our home manager & Lizzie our home admin. They provide me support whenever I need it and we can always share a laugh together. Although I find inspiration from everyone at Cranford in different ways. Our residents strength inspires me as well as all of our amazing careers & nurses, housekeeping team, kitchen team and maintenance all inspire me day to day with the pride they have in their roles.*

What do you always carry with you at work? *My iPad, so I can capture so many of our special moments as they happen throughout the day. I love taking lots of photos of our residents and staff, I then do a monthly memory board of our photos for all to see within the home.*

What hobbies do you have outside of work? *Spending time with my 5 year old daughter brings me so much joy everyday. We enjoy doing crafts and watching movies at the cinema together. I love travelling to different countries. New York being my favourite place I have visited and can't wait to visit again.*



Celebrating Our Centenarians

We've recently been marking some landmark birthdays in our homes with cards from royalty, lots of cake and most importantly family, friends and lots of love.

In a heartwarming celebration at The Hollies care home in Burghfield Common, Edith Turner, marked her 101st birthday surrounded by the warmth of her family, the staff, and fellow residents. Edith stands as the matriarch of a loving family that includes a son and daughter-in-law, two granddaughters, six great-grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter. When probed about the secret to her longevity and health, Edith attributes it to "a good sprinkling of luck" and a life remarkably free from serious illness.

Dorothy Violet Davis marked her milestone of 101 years at Cameron House Care Home in Basildon, surrounded by family, friends, and the joyous tunes of the 60s, 70s, and 80s. The special day was graced by the presence of her son Roger; Deputy Mayor of Basildon, Cllr Yetunde Adeshile; fellow residents, and her favourite entertainer, Charlie Regan.

Dorothy's story is one of love, resilience, and finding joy in everyday moments. Her marriage of over 70 years to her beloved husband, John, known affectionately as Jack, and their life with their son Roger and four grandchildren, Amber, Joe, Mia, and Isla, stands testament to the power of family and love. Reflecting on her secret to a long and happy life, Dorothy shared, "Take each day as it comes." And her sage advice to the younger generation: "Behave yourself and don't get into trouble."

Muirton House in Blairgowrie honoured resident Marjorie Scott's 100th birthday.

Born in Gosforth in 1924, Marjorie's early years took her to Edinburgh's St George's School for Girls, setting the stage for a lifetime of dedication to others. Her post-World War II service with the Voluntary Aid Detachments in London marked the beginning of what would be a lifelong commitment to helping those in need. Marjorie's later years continued to reflect this ethos, with significant involvement in her local Church of Scotland congregation, particularly known for her exquisite floral arrangements and the much-anticipated annual daffodil charity tea.

Marjorie's personal life saw her marrying Raymond Scott, a Dundee jute manufacturer, in 1950. Together, they built a loving home in Rosemount, raising three sons and, over the years, welcoming eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren into their family fold.

Reflecting on her birthday, Marjorie shared, "A life lived for others is a life well spent. I have never been one to overindulge and always enjoyed life's treats in moderation. My Christian faith has always been important to me, and I have always tried to help others where I can through my involvement with the Church of Scotland. I think that it is very important that you should do your utmost to live a good life, help people if you are able to and make the world - or even your little town or village - a better place."



Care Homes Enjoy Benefits of Animal Therapy

Across our care homes, residents (and staff) love to welcome different types of animals and birds. Research has consistently shown that interaction with therapy animals can significantly reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and increase social interaction and physical activity among care home residents.

Here are some of our favourite furry and feathered visitors to Larchwood Care homes so far this year. At our Oake Meadows Care Home in Taunton, residents were treated to an encounter with birds of prey. This wonderful experience allowed them to interact closely with these majestic creatures, offering a chance to hold, stroke, and observe their flight up close.

The residents of Diamond House Care Home in Downham Market were treated to a special visit from Daisy, a miniature Shetland pony. The visit was facilitated by Miniature Dreams, an organisation known for providing animal therapy sessions to care services, offering a unique experience to the home's residents.



Daisy, accompanied by her handlers, made her way through the communal areas of the home, before proceeding upstairs to meet with residents who were less mobile, allowing them the opportunity to stroke her and feed her carrots. The sound of her tiny hooves along the corridors marked a significant departure from the usual pet therapy visitors the home is accustomed to, which have included lizards and rabbits. Cranford Care Home has had some baa-rilant days. The corridors were filled with an unusual sound recently - giggles and goat bleats, as Monty, a diminutive Pygmy goat with a big personality, trotted in. Monty's visit to the Aberdeen care home, courtesy of the innovative FARM STOP initiative, turned a routine day into a fun and therapeutic experience for residents and staff alike. But Monty wasn't the only recent visitor to Cranford. The arrival of Jimmy, a cuddly lamb, was met with joy and excitement. Residents eagerly gathered to interact with the fluffy newcomer, stroking its soft fleece and marvelling at its playful antics. For many, the experience brought back fond memories of rural life and childhood encounters with farm animals.