



Birtley
House

House & Home

The Newsletter for Birtley House

Edition 3 • 2022

THE JOY OF CELEBRATION

The festive traditions
of Birtley House

The art of
celebratory cuisine

Celebrating Nature –
Winter in the Woods

We've made
the finals!



“There is one constant theme at Birtley House and that is the celebration of life itself”

Welcome...

to the latest edition of the
Birtley House Newsletter

Although this has been a year of some wonderful celebrations – the 90th anniversary of the founding of our nursing home business by my great-grandfather Dr Lloyd Driver at Eyhurst Court in Sutton; the memorable celebration of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee; an amazing 100th birthday for one resident (over 15 years at Birtley House and counting!) and, not least, a rather special birthday for my mother Caroline in October, it has also rather sadly been countered by the passing of Queen Elizabeth.



However, the theme of this edition of House & Home is one of ‘Celebrations’, and if we can’t celebrate the long life of our 96-year-old former monarch then I don’t know what we can celebrate! The Queen lived a life of incredible and unstinting duty, during which she was to physically embody those values and principles which we in this country hold dear. And she did it every day for more than 70 years – she really is an inspiration to us all.

So, while we cannot quite match the Queen’s 96 years, we are rather proud of having achieved 90 years of continual nursing care (also every day, without a pause!) making us probably the oldest family-run nursing home in the UK. That really is something to celebrate!



I hope you enjoy this Celebration-themed edition of our newsletter. Elsewhere you will read about all the different things we like to celebrate at Birtley House, from the lavish themed-supper nights that our Head Chef Steve and his team produce on a regular basis, to the celebration of nature found around the Birtley Estate.

Over and above these is one constant theme at Birtley House which can often be quite intangible but which we try to instil in every action, interaction, and forethought, and that is the celebration of life itself.

We often welcome new residents to Birtley House who, for whatever reason, have found living at home over the preceding months or years particularly challenging and tiring, and they have sometimes lost their zest for life. What we try to do is to always show the positivity of each situation, and this, combined with the professional and tender care of our staff has helped so many residents over the years to find a new lease of life and a reason to find the strength to enjoy what we do here.



We cannot do anything about Old Father Time, but we can make life at Birtley as cheerful, positive, and full of celebration as possible.

Frank Whalley
Director

Celebrating is good for us

As we approach the latter part of the year, and with the evenings drawing in, we are in a reflective mood. After what has been a tumultuous year, for multifarious reasons, we wanted to look back to happy times we have enjoyed over the years at Birtley.

Building on the theme of our last edition we can arguably boast nine decades of good times. Gathering socially and coming together is so important and, at Birtley House, it's something that we are rather good at. We are social creatures, and we're happier when we connect with each other to share conversation, laughter, and excitement. Celebrating is good for us!

Over the years, Birtley has played host to many a celebration. Some of you might not know that on 28th June 2003, Frank and I had the inaugural wedding party in the parkland at Birtley.

We celebrated with extended family, friends, neighbours, and work colleagues here after celebrating our nuptials in Northern Ireland, a month before. We like to look on this happy occasion with fondness and joy, and less that we were the guinea pigs in what turned out to be several years of other wedding parties hosted on Birtley's hallowed turf. No new vows were exchanged by us that day but that didn't preclude me having another excuse to don my wedding dress. Not many brides can make that boast.

Fast forward 19 years and with two teenage children in tow, we are older, greyer, possibly wiser, and (global pandemic notwithstanding), looking forward and ahead to more opportunities to get together and celebrate. Just this year alone we have enjoyed the 90th anniversary party with residents and their families.

Of course, as well as the joyful reasons to come together, in our business, there are the inevitable sad ones too. We can once again more freely extend invitations to our residents' families and friends the use of the house and gardens for wakes and other family occasions. I have felt privileged to have played some small part in the organisation of these events over the past months. The joy in the reflections of gratitude for lives well-lived is an important source of strength for us all.

Never has this reflective sentiment been more evidenced than in what we have witnessed in the recent passing of the late Queen Elizabeth, after 70 years' faithful service to the country. As one commentator so sagely put it, despite the obvious outpouring of grief and lamentation following this significant loss, arguably the more dominant feeling in the aftermath, and in this period of reflection, is that of thanksgiving, gratitude, hope and positivity for the future. I for one applaud that way of thinking!



Sinéad

Sinéad Whalley
Resident Liaison Director

Contents

Page 4:

Let's all celebrate

Page 6:

Why we must celebrate success

Page 7:

A history of celebration at Birtley

Page 8:

Celebratory cuisine

Page 10:

What a year for the garden!



Page 12:

Christmas traditions at Birtley

Page 14:

Celebrating nature – winter in the woods

Page 16:

Family trees

Page

17:

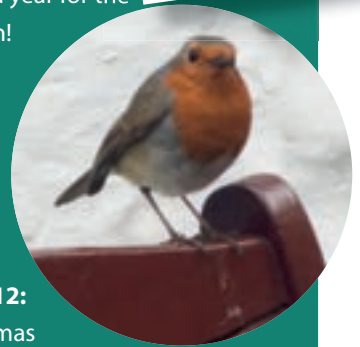
Resident recollections

Page 18:

Musings from the Mews

Page 19:

The latest news from Birtley





Let's all
celebrate



The activities department at Birtley House never needs an excuse to celebrate! Its bustling schedule is packed with celebrations throughout the year. Tina Bell, our Head of Activities, tells us more.

Celebrating always plays a part in our monthly activities schedule in some shape or form – from the smallest of occasions to the more memorable dates in the calendar.

Burns Night, St. David's Day, St. George's Day, and St. Patrick's Day are great examples of our themed afternoons. On these occasions, we organise a relevant craft activity which is often followed by beautiful, themed treats from our kitchen.

Easter, Christmas, and other festivals are celebrated in earnest within the department and our Chaplain, Liz Tilley, will often join us to take part in our themed activities. Our monthly communion services are well attended, as are our 'Songs of Praise' afternoons every couple of months. We ask residents to choose a favourite hymn beforehand, then we come together to rejoice and sing our hearts out.

We know that music plays a big role in creating atmosphere and uplifting our moods, so our celebrations

at Birtley often involve a singsong. For our larger celebrations, we love to invite professional singers and musicians to join us for the occasion.

With music being so good for the mind and body, many of us get up to dance – and everyone, whether sitting or standing, will tap their feet and move their arms to the music. Hearing our residents sing and watching the smiles on their faces is hugely rewarding. I believe in the many health benefits that music can bring.

Every resident is celebrated on their birthday at Birtley – with a card, flowers, and a splendid cake from our kitchen. And wow, do they produce some amazing cakes! On their special day, if a resident so wishes, they can choose what activity we do. Regardless of their choice we always aim to fulfil their wishes.

The late Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration was a huge hit amongst our residents. My team and I spent many hours on the floor making bunting and decorations for the home. Our sore knees were worth it, and

Celebrations boost everyone's morale, strengthen professional relationships, and help to form connections between staff and residents and their families

the home looked vibrant.

Another of my favourite celebrations this year was our version of Ladies' Day at Ascot. Our residents made fascinators in the lead up to the event. Some of the creations were very comical so – as is often the case at Birtley – laughter could be heard throughout the home. The activities team secretly made hobby horses for the main event and they were a resounding hit. What a fantastic afternoon that was, with residents and staff coming together to watch the racing!

We guarantee fun and laughter in the activities department and always welcome new company at our events. With a coronation on the horizon, we are already looking forward to the celebrations to come!

Tina Bell
Head of Activities
and Wellbeing



Why we must celebrate *Success!*

Our registered manager, Sylwia Indycka, is always bursting with positivity. Here she talks about the importance of taking a moment to celebrate our small wins as well as our greatest achievements.

I see every day as a gift and therefore I like to celebrate each day – no matter how challenging or rewarding it is for me.

When you do what you love, every day is a celebration. And I am so lucky to say that most of my days are filled with greatness. Those days that are not provide me with reflection and create a learning pathway for future decisions.

Celebrating our amazing staff is one of the key priorities of my role. Our dedicated staff, across all departments, are extremely special people who enrich the lives of our residents every day – no matter how big or small their involvement may be.

Our staff members are incredible people. Each day they go beyond meeting the basic needs of our residents and their families to enhance lives. They are a special group of human beings who are naturally filled with

kindness and dedication. They provide comfort to those who need it and for these reasons I am insistent on celebrating their work.

One important initiative is our monthly gathering where we meet over tea and cake to recognise the contributions of our team. We celebrate our employee of the month and pay compliments to our team members. Even meeting together to talk, listen, provide support, and share stories feels like a mini celebration to me.

In our daily work, we also celebrate each step that our residents take through their everyday challenges, limitations, happiness, and joy. Our residents are the reason we wake up every morning and come to work. We are invited into their lives and their trust in us feels extremely special.

As a team, we reflect on our work, striving for improvement each day, but always making sure we celebrate our successes and the things that matter. These



“Celebrations boost everyone’s morale, strengthen professional relationships, and help to form connections between staff and residents and their families”

may include the completion of projects, work anniversaries, birthdays, the achievement of personal goals, or great feedback.

Celebrating both big and small successes adds value to what we do, and that gives us a joy and accomplishment which benefits everyone.

Sylwia Indycka
Registered Manager



A history of celebration at Birtley

As a business and a home, Birtley House enjoys celebrations on an almost weekly basis. Our chairman, Simon Whalley explains why there is so much to celebrate.



real quality of life by our dedicated team is recognised with regular monthly team gatherings and the nomination of those who have even outperformed this high standard for special awards. We also celebrate regional and national awards such as our registered manager, Sylwia Indycka winning the Southeast Best Care Manager Award and coming second in the national finals.

We are currently in the finals for several business awards in both local and national competitions. This recognition is exciting for our teams, and we encourage the well-deserved festivities.

Over the years we have had many significant dates to celebrate both from the founding registration of the nursing home by my grandfather in 1932 and of the move to Birtley in 1945 just as the War was ending – a great celebration in itself!

We have also celebrated special occasions with several well-known authors and personalities including three

from the founding family of the Scouts & Guides and many well-known biographical, travel and whodunnit authors all of whom had lives that were celebrated across the world.

So, after 90 years and with so many of us living and working at Birtley – I guess our celebrations will go on!

Simon Whalley
Chairman



In our somewhat unusual situation where the owners also live with their customers, there is always so much to celebrate. These celebrations come in several guises. Clearly there are national occasions we all join in with, like the recent Jubilee of our much-missed late Queen Elizabeth, and in a sense too, the Queen's funeral which was a celebration of an amazingly dedicated life of service.

And of course, there are also the personal celebrations of residents and staff that happen frequently at Birtley House – from birthdays and anniversaries to the birth

of a grandchild or great-grandchild.

We have lost count of the number of 100th birthday parties we have celebrated over the years – with one resident's 107th birthday celebration a particular highlight.

Staff anniversaries are always embraced, with some of our staff members exceeding thirty years of service. One nurse came to us having retired from the NHS at 60 and worked a further 15 years very actively.

The care given to our residents at Birtley is also something we regularly celebrate. Providing a



One of the most rewarding elements of my role as Head Chef is being able to surprise and delight our Birtley residents. Whether organising a themed dinner, planning for a resident's birthday, or preparing for another special occasion – we love to make a difference.

Birthdays are especially enjoyable to plan for. After all, who doesn't love a birthday cake?

Unlike many celebratory cakes, at Birtley House our residents choose their own! The fun part for us is to make them look pretty and taste delicious.

We offer a variety of buffet packages at Birtley

for a variety of occasions. These are very popular with families – with the summer

gatherings particularly special when enjoyed outside in the grounds.

I have cooked and managed three Christmas lunches during my time at Birtley House and Christmas Day is a fun day to work. My first was a large affair with around 80 residents and family members to cater for. The guests enjoyed canapés, Christmas lunch, and wine.

Simon and Caroline love to get involved in the occasion and all the family help serve. It's a busy day but there is always a buzz in the air!



Celebratory *cuisine*

No matter the occasion, our talented kitchen team is always at hand to make a celebration extra special.



Our themed meals at Birtley are quite well documented! We run several themed events throughout the year including curry nights, Chinese nights, bonfire night and more. We recently catered for the Queen's Jubilee event at Birtley and an 'End of Summer' theme. Haggis is served on Burns Night, and we even serve haggis canapés for

“No special event is too much trouble for my team, and we enjoy rising to the occasion”

residents to enjoy with a whisky!

No special event is too much trouble for my team, and we enjoy rising to the occasion. It gives us a great opportunity to use our creativity. And in conjunction with the Activities Team, who are excellent at dressing the interiors for each event, we

can proudly say we put on quite a show!



Steve Hounsham
Head Chef

Record-breaking temperatures took their toll on Britain's gardens this year – including those at Birtley. Like everyone else, we were grateful when the rain returned! Here our Head Gardener, Matt Miller, tells us about this challenging year for the Birtley gardens.



What a year for our garden



It is no secret that a trend is developing with hotter spells, drier winters, and seasons that seem to be merging into one another.

The upshot of this is that I am having to do some serious re-organising in the gardens – bringing in plants and planting schemes that can better tolerate these extreme heatwaves. I'm not yet going full Mediterranean with my planting, but I am starting to head in that direction.

Though, saying that, in late summer the rains well and truly returned! Lawns that not so long ago were dry and straw coloured sprung back into life in no time at all. Lush new green growth took over and the mower, sat redundant in the shed for the best part of eight weeks made a welcome return to the day-to-day routine.

All in all, it was not the easiest of summers or the most productive. More time was spent trying to keep on top of the watering than

anything else and this meant traipsing back and forth with watering cans!

But these things are sent to try us, and if it was always straightforward then it would be no fun at all. Difficulties in one area present opportunities in another. Warm dry days are perfect for weeding and the lack of rain meant very little re-growth. I'll say it quietly so as not to appear cocky, but we got well and truly on top

of the weeding in the formal gardens!

Hours usually spent mowing were put equally to good use ensuring all the fruit trees had a summer prune. And all the long grass that usually gets flattened by summer rains created a wonderful display of seed heads, staying upright and therefore making it far easier to trim down and collect.

Notable successes this year



have been an abundance of courgettes. They soaked up the sun and it was a struggle to keep on top of picking them, to the point where the kitchen doors had to be locked to avoid another tray being presented to the chef! Apparently, there is a limit on how many they need per day!

Our apples have done well too, particularly the eating varieties. This resulted in Birtley's ducks spending

many a happy time feasting on the thousands of smaller crab apples. The sunflowers in the kitchen garden grew to well over 10ft, with the huge seed heads saved for next year.

Now we are at the end of season, the process of putting the garden to bed for the winter has well and truly started. Perennials have been cut back, split, and divided to produce free plants. Lawn edges that have

“These things are sent to try us, and if it was always straightforward then it would be no fun at all.”

a habit of going a bit wonky throughout the year will be re-cut to give them a nice clean edge again. The last of the summer veg has been harvested as the attention turns to which pumpkin will grow the most. And, as ever, we watch the leaves fall and let out a collective sigh as the wind, once again, isn't blowing in the right direction!

I hope you've all had a good year. If I've learned any lesson from this year, it is the minute a hose pipe ban is issued, dust off the umbrellas and make sure the waterproofs are nearby, because it's a sure-fire signal that the rain will be on its way.

Matt Miller
Head Gardener



Many households have their Christmas traditions and Birtley is no exception! Caroline reveals Birtley's traditions – old and new.

Christmas

We love Christmas traditions at Birtley. Goodness knows how many times our Christmas angel has been expertly placed on the top of the Birtley Christmas tree. She never ages (well, not that we've noticed!) and should anyone suggest we replace her for a younger angel, I think there would be an uproar!



I remember my first Christmas in England in 1970 which was spent with the Whalleys at Birtley House. Coming from South Africa I had never seen snow so I was hoping against all the odds that we would have a white Christmas! As we came out of the midnight service in Bramley church, the snowflakes were falling. I was overjoyed and stayed up into the early hours watching, mesmerised as the outside world became a winter wonderland. My wish had come true!

A now ex-tradition, but one that survived up until about 25 years ago, was the "polishing of the fruit" that would be on the lunch trays for the residents on Christmas

Day! Remember, this was before we had the luxury of the Orangery Dining area and prior to that, not even a lift, so moving residents from their rooms was much more complicated. Hence the trays! They looked wonderful with festive napkins, crackers, sweets, and the polished fruit! My father-in-law was strict about this polishing and I've no doubt that Frank and Tim remember it well!

Up until a few years ago we were always able to cut Christmas trees from our own woodland but nowadays we source them from a local Christmas tree farm. The arrival of the trees (we have at least six these days) causes great excitement, heralding that the festive season has well and truly arrived. The tallest tree traditionally goes in the Main Hall, and year after year is admired by everyone of all ages.



A more recent tradition is that the activities tree is decorated by the residents with many delightful decorations that they have made themselves. And on another smaller tree we hang the Christmas cards that we receive from staff (past and present) and residents' families.

This year, we very much hope that we will be able to welcome the Blackheath & Bramley Choral Society again to sing carols. Having been a firm fixture in the diary for about 20 years, Covid put a halt to this lovely tradition. Families and staff are invited to join

"We hear year after year that Christmas at Birtley is really very special."



traditions at Birtley



us for this occasion when we offer mulled wine (always made by Simon who has his 'secret recipe') and mince pies. This evening marks the beginning of Christmas and gets us all "in the mood".

Many years ago, residents who were able, would come downstairs and have a sherry and Christmas cake around

by a local florist, and arranged under the tree for our residents on Christmas Eve.

Of course, the highlight of the day is always the delicious traditional Christmas lunch, prepared by our own Birtley chefs. Served at festively decorated tables, crackers are pulled, jokes are shared, and bubbly and wine are served

residents before the end of the meal. I do hope this delightful tradition will be resumed this year. Frank and Tim remember doing this when they were children, and they would echo the comments we hear year after year that "Christmas at Birtley is really very special".

Some new traditions have been introduced since Covid put paid to families visiting over the festive season. Sylwia (our Registered Manager) delegated her husband, Darek, to dress up as Santa Claus and with Sylwia as Santa's "elf" assistant, together with other willing members of staff, each resident is visited by them, usually on Christmas Eve, to enjoy gifts, cards, and a chat with Santa! The smiles on everyone's faces speak volumes!

Another recent trial which will no doubt become a favourite tradition, is Santa's Grotto, first

established to enable outdoor visits with families during December 2020 and 2021. A simple gazebo is transformed by a willing group of staff into a surprisingly cosy area for happy family get-togethers.

Christmas is always a time of giving and thinking of others less fortunate than us. Over the years we have supported Crisis at Christmas, Shoeboxes for Romania, and more recently our local food bank in Cranleigh. Long may this tradition of charitable giving live on at Birtley, not only at Christmas time, but throughout the year.

Wishing everyone a Joyful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Caroline
Caroline Whalley
 Director



the tree, and my father-in-law would distribute individual gifts to everyone. However, these days, we tend to give a colourful pot plant, delivered

by members of the Whalley family.

Up until the Covid years, our grandchildren would distribute the gifts to our





Celebrating nature

Winter in the Woods

Many of us enjoy a yule log at Christmas, but how many of us know where this tradition comes from? In this issue we look deeper into traditions that stem from nature.

As mentioned in previous editions of House & Home, the name Birtley has its origins in Beorc Leah – old English for clearing in the birch woods. On these isles, in the pre-Christian era, celebrations were centred on nature with a focus on the need for good seasons to come. Many of our modern traditions have grown from these old rituals.

The Winter Solstice was a time for celebration and sending up prayers for the coming year and the return of the sun. The origin of the word 'Yule' is not clear. Some think it is from the Anglo-Saxon *hweol* meaning wheel and related to the passage of the sun through the wheel of the year. Others believe it relates to the Old Norse *Jól*.

Yule was celebrated over twelve nights starting on the eve of the solstice. A family would go into the woods and drag back a large tree trunk of oak, birch, or cherry. This log would be decorated

with evergreens, berries, and fir cones – representing the relationship between the Earth and sun and as a reminder of the coming Spring. On the night of the solstice the end of the log was pushed into the hearth and lit with the remains of the previous year's log. This symbolised the rebirth of the sun.

The length of the log was pushed into the hearth as it burned away. It had to be kept alight for the 12 days of the celebration to bring luck for the coming year. The last portion of the log was stored for the following year and ashes were kept under beds for good luck and to offer protection against lightning.

The chocolate yule log we know today stems from a French creation, called *La Bûche de Noël*. It is thought to have been created in the 19th century by Parisian bakers for families who no longer had a hearth at home but wished to maintain the



“Songs are sung to the trees and a cider-soaked toast is placed in the branches of the biggest tree in the orchard to ensure a good harvest”

tradition of a yule log.

Traditionally, the Twelfth Night is the night for wassailing. Groups of people went to the large houses of the district and sang wassailing songs in return for



alms – the origin of carolling.

A second element to wassailing is the seeking of blessings for the apple orchard. To this day wassailing is practised with much enthusiasm in cider producing areas of England. A cup or wassail bowl of warm spiced cider is shared as an animated group of people travel to the cider apple orchard making as much noise as possible – banging saucepans and pots and playing instruments to rouse sleeping tree spirits and ward off evil.

Songs are sung to the trees and a cider-soaked toast is placed in the branches of the biggest tree in the orchard to ensure a good harvest.

Perhaps we should go a-wassailing in the Birtley House cider apple orchard this Twelfth Night!

Birtley launches its limited-edition brandy



Within the 48 acres of grounds of the Birtley estate sits a cider apple orchard of 700 trees.

The apple orchard was planted in 2012 and is managed with environmental care.

Birtley is delighted to announce that apples from the orchard are now used to produce a small batch of premium apple brandy, in the style of Calvados.

The cider is matured on the estate then distilled at Silent Pool Distillery in Albury.

The spirit is then aged in oak barrels before bottling.

Birtley has named its new brandy BEORC LEAH - the old English name for the Birtley Estate.

Birtley's delicious, limited-edition brandy retails at £70 per 50cl bottle and is available to purchase now.

Please contact juliet.b@birtleyhouse.co.uk or call 01483 678394



The ancient Oak



The Medlar



Variegated Tulip Tree



Weeping Willow



Beech tree with a witch's face



Gingko biloba

Family trees

Simon Whalley, Birtley's chairman, is passionate about the flora and fauna at Birtley. In this edition of *House & Home*, Simon explains the history of some of the special trees in our grounds.



It is humbling to think that some of Birtley's trees have been around for the full ninety years since our care business began – but many are, of course, far older than 90!

The trees of Birtley hold many memories for me. They have played, and continue to play, an integral role in our enjoyment of Birtley's grounds. Some of our trees have an interesting history and some have special stories attached to them.

The ancient **Oak** in the parkland at the front of the house is the most significant tree on the estate being around 450 years old and registered on the Woodland Trust's list of veteran trees.

There are several large **Lime** trees around the estate which were probably planted by the Cubitt family when they owned Birtley in the 1880s.

The **Medlar** down the Long Walk is around 150 years old and was a favourite climbing tree of mine in my childhood. It has subsequently housed a honey-bee colony for several years in a hollow trunk.

Our **Variegated Tulip** tree is one of the largest in the UK, so we understand.

Although not technically a tree, the **Wisteria** on the south front of the main house is equivalent in scale. When the family first came to Birtley, the main trunk was over six feet in circumference under the centre window of what is now June's Apartment. Although this trunk died, it had layered itself all along the front of the house. It must have been planted in the early 1800s to have reached this size by the 1940s and is therefore one of the earliest **Wisteria** to have been introduced to England.

Some time ago, we rescued a seedling growing in a crack of an old maple that has turned out to be a rare form of **Whitebeam** cross (**Swedish Whitebeam** is the nearest clone we have identified). This now grows in the Lodge Garden where its five trunks form a candelabra shape. It has white flowers and orange berries and is probably the result of inter-breeding between a Whitebeam and a Rowan.

On the island in the pond is a **Weeping Willow** planted by my grandfather when he dug out the pond in the late 1940s.

On the slope above the pond, sits the **Wellingtonia** which was planted around 1958. It has certainly put on a lot of growth in only 50 years!

The avenue of **Beech** trees down the main drive was planted around the late 1950s or early 60s. If you look carefully at the middle tree, you will find a natural witch's face on the lower trunk which always amuses our grandchildren. We often have a big crop of good-sized **Sweet Chestnuts** from trees in the wood that we try and harvest – in competition with the badgers who have a very large sett almost among the roots.

The **Gingko biloba** on the island in the front drive was planted to celebrate Simon's 60th birthday in 2005. Gingkos are very ancient trees that are fungus resistant as their lineage pre-dates most other types of trees. This results in the nickname 'memory tree'.



Our large **Holly** trees are also found across much of the estate giving us a good source of holly berry branches for ornament at Christmas (so long as we remember to enclose some in bags in November to protect them from the birds!).

Trees are important to Birtley as they have hosted generations of owls and many bird boxes plus five bat boxes!

The trees at Birtley have witnessed and sheltered an active estate for nearly 900 years and we can only wonder what they could tell us – but let us hope that our efforts now will give future generations the opportunity to tell the story of Birtley's trees to their successors too.

Simon Whalley



Resident recollections

We can all recall celebrations from our past that were particularly special. Whether that be a notable Christmas, anniversary, or birthday. We asked our residents to share their fondest memories of celebrations gone by.

Mary remembers her favourite birthday present of all time – a new bike that she received for her fifth birthday. She also recalls that near to her 7th birthday her family took her to a Christmas pantomime which she really enjoyed.

One of **Marion's** happiest memories is of celebrating VE day when she was a 15-year-old. A street party with a huge bonfire was held in the cul-de-sac where she lived and the bonfire melted the road! For Marion's 11th birthday she was over the moon to receive a new bike with only two wheels – a proper grown-up bike!

Receiving a card from the Queen for her 60th wedding anniversary was a particular highlight for **Maureen** and her husband.

The earliest birthday present that **Pat** can recall was a lovely pale blue jumper with a fleece lining. With her birthday being in November, she remembers it being a lovely, warm and cosy gift!

Maggie recalls the trips she took to Ireland with her father where they drank, danced, and sang.

And one of our most romantic recollections belongs to **Gee**, who remembers the day her husband, a doctor on the ward where she worked as a nurse, got down on his knee and asked her, "Will you marry me?"





Birtley Mews is a unique development of eight apartments situated in a peaceful courtyard setting behind Birtley House. The accommodation offers an independent lifestyle for those not yet requiring care, but appreciating support on hand should they require it.

Musings from the Mews

The Mews may be a small part of the Birtley community, yet as a tight knit group our highs and lows are keenly felt. And as within any family, we love to get together and join in unison when the occasion allows.

Our most senior resident, Robin, joined us at The Mews in March of 2018. This year we have felt very honoured to participate in his 95th birthday celebrations and, at the same time, acknowledging his sixth year in The Mews.

Robin has, in many ways, been a foundational member of the current group of residents and up until very recently loved to pop into town or go to church in his wonderful classic car.

We do like to celebrate each

resident's birthday as part of The Mews family, with a cake supplied by our wonderful kitchen team, along with cards and all other good things.

We took great pleasure in celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this summer. It was decided that we would throw a small garden party in The Mews courtyard for the greater Birtley community.

The Activities department and a few other helpers gathered paraphernalia to bring the party alive and make the residents feel comfortable. The kitchen staff created a wonderful tea and good fun was had by all!

We celebrated the Jubilee, and in such a short time, we greatly mourned the loss of Queen Elizabeth. Again, The Mews community came

“We have always been in awe of the expanse of knowledge and experience which is in our tender care”

together, blessed her long life and accomplishments, and raised a glass in her honour. Even with the Queen's tragic passing, we also celebrated and cheered our new King.

In September I celebrated my first year with the Birtley family. My short time with Birtley has been a joyous education and all along the way I have been well “schooled” by the residents. I am eternally grateful to the wonderful team with which I have the great honour to work alongside.

We have always been in awe of the expanse of knowledge and experience

which is in our tender care. Our residents have lived and travelled all over the world and in celebration of this, The Mews has dedicated a wall in our dining room to encourage discussion and inspire memories.

As I write, we are working on a memory scrapbook, putting in not just our formal celebrations, but also marking the passing of seasons. Living here in this stunning setting surrounded by such beautiful countryside, the seasons become quite visceral and – as our residents love to walk in the gardens, stroll by the lakes and wander in the woodland – we felt all this should be celebrated too.

Ania Klementowicz
Mews Coordinator



Recognition for Birtley House!

We are delighted to share the news that Birtley House has been shortlisted for seven awards! Reaching the finals and being recognised by industry experts for our exceptional work is a great boost for the team.

Finalists – Surrey Care Association

Birtley House has been shortlisted for five Surrey Care Association Awards. These awards celebrate the hard work and determination of Surrey-based social care staff who deliver the best possible care despite the everyday challenges the sector faces. Birtley has been shortlisted as follows:

Finalist – Nursing Home of the Year 2022

Finalist – Team of the Year 2022

Finalist – Family Engagement 2022

Finalist – Registered Manager of the Year 2022

Finalist – Resident Involvement Champion 2022

The winners will be announced in mid-November 2022. We can't wait to hear the results!

Finalists – Caring UK Awards

Birtley House has been shortlisted for two Caring UK National Awards. These prestigious industry awards recognise excellence in care. We have been shortlisted in the following categories:

Finalist – Care Home of the Year (South)

In this category, the judges

have selected homes with a strong focus on nutrition, innovation, and dignity within care. Finalists in this category demonstrated a genuine passion and commitment towards care – with a facility to be proud of. It goes without saying that we had so much to share here!

Finalist – Best Outdoor Environment

This award is for care homes with outstanding outdoor facilities that engage residents. We know that our beautiful grounds make such a difference to those who live and work at Birtley House – and the judges agreed!

The winners will be announced in early December 2022. We're keeping everything crossed!



Surrey Hills Enterprises – 10 years young

Congratulations to Surrey Hills Enterprises, of which Simon Whalley is the Chairman, for celebrating their 10th anniversary this year.

Surrey Hills Enterprises works with local businesses to support the rural economy and promote, protect, and enhance the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

A decade on and Surrey

Hills Enterprises continues to go from strength to strength. As part of this landmark anniversary, Surrey Hills Enterprises presented three special businesses with the coveted Gold Trademark Awards 2022.

Awards were bestowed in recognition of the winners excelling in their dedication towards improving environmental sustainability, the inspiration they provide to others, and their collaboration and connection with other Surrey Hills Enterprises members and their local community.



Simon Whalley talking at the Surrey Hills Enterprises 10 year anniversary

Did you know?

- **Jeremy Hunt MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, came to Birtley on the 30th of September to talk to residents and staff while joining in our MacMillian coffee afternoon**
- **In honour of HRH Queen Elizabeth II, Birtley House will be planting a royal rose in the rose garden. We would like to take this opportunity to thank HRH Queen Elizabeth. Thank you, Ma'am, for everything.**





Birtley
House

90 YEARS CARE EXPERIENCE



KINDNESS • INTEGRITY • POSITIVITY • ADAPTABILITY

House & Home

If you would like more information about Birtley House Nursing Home, or you would like to subscribe to (or unsubscribe from) this newsletter, please email info@birtleyhouse.co.uk or write to:


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