



Birtley  
House

# House & Home

The Newsletter for Birtley House

Edition 2 • 2022

## THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

A party  
to remember

The history of  
Birtley House

How times  
have changed

A trip through our  
kitchen archives



*“I hope that my great-grandfather would approve of the home that we have created for our family of residents.”*

# Welcome...

to the latest edition of the  
Birtley House Newsletter



**W**elcome to this special edition of *House & Home* where we celebrate the 90th anniversary since my great-grandfather, Dr Lloyd Driver, registered a care business in 1932.

Within this edition my father, Simon Whalley, will reveal more about the history of our family business and how it has changed over the years, plus we will share photographs and stories from our celebratory tea party in July where we marked this important milestone with our residents, their families, and our staff. A great day was had by all, with huge thanks to those who helped to give our residents such a happy time.

Several residents at the party told me that they feel so at home at Birtley because of the friendly and caring staff, which is always lovely to hear. However, one resident revealed that it is our family values she appreciates the most. This struck a chord with me as I recalled an article in our archives from a 1940s magazine which stated that Birtley House was founded so as provide, “exceptional nursing care for the elderly in a homely environment”. We hope this still holds true today.

We expanded on this concept a couple of years ago when we devised our Birtley Core Values of Kindness, Integrity, Positivity, and Adaptability – principles that filter through to all aspects of our daily work at Birtley House, and which are based on family values.

We are, quite possibly, the oldest family-run care home in the country, and I believe our family’s commitment to care has fostered the creation of our unique, homely atmosphere.



After all that my great-grandfather’s small nursing home business has seen and endured over the past 90 years, I like to think that if he were alive today, he would recognise Birtley House for having the same strong family values and principles that he instilled in the business back at its inception. I hope that he would approve of the home that we have created for our ‘family’ of residents.

**Frank Whalley**  
Director

# The importance of belonging

Anyone who knows Birtley House recognises the strong family ties that form the bedrock of the business and its ethos. It is not just that it is family-run, spanning four generations of the Whalley family, and that Simon and his siblings were born and brought up here. It is also that intangible feeling of 'family' and 'belonging' which shines brightly.

It's no coincidence that this well-loved newsletter is called *House & Home* because, in our minds, the two are intertwined. When someone chooses Birtley House they become part of the 'family' and we take great pride in that.

To belong is to feel happy, content, inherently comfortable, and part of something. Having a sense of belonging is arguably one of humanity's basic needs, crucial to our life satisfaction, happiness, mental and physical health and even longevity. It gives us a sense of purpose and meaning.

Research has shown that a loss of belonging has been associated with stress, illness and decreased wellbeing and depression.

That 'home from home' environment is what we strive to achieve and after 90 years we think we are nailing it! Of course, living in a care home isn't the same as being in one's own home but we know, with time, that the feeling of being settled comes and when it does come it makes such a noticeable difference to the resident and their loved ones.

Trust is an often-used word but at Birtley House it comes from that innate sense that our team can be depended upon to take outstanding care of our residents. That feeling of home cannot be manufactured. Frank and I feel lucky to live and work alongside our family. Indeed, some members of our staff have been with us for decades so are classed as part of the family.

As we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the business, we are full of optimism that the constancy and longevity of excellence in care will continue to thrive and for that we are most grateful.



*Sinéad*

**Sinéad Whalley**  
Resident Liaison Director

*“When someone chooses Birtley House they become part of the ‘family’ and we take great pride in that.”*

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Dr. Driver Circa 1914



Joan Driver

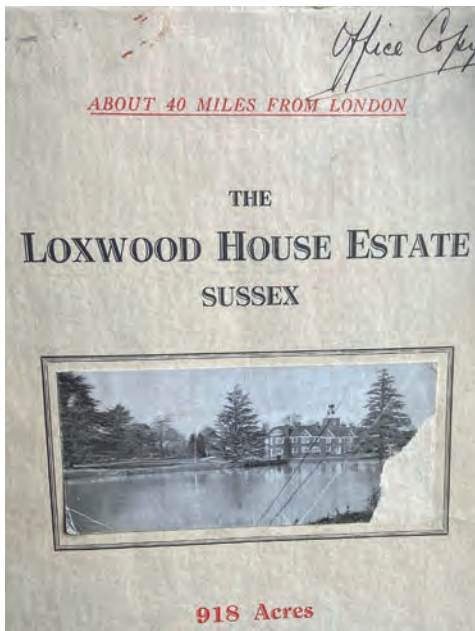


# The History

Birtley House, is long-established as one of Surrey's best-known, high quality Nursing Homes. It has been located on the Birtley House site for over 75 years but the business was first founded in 1932 at Kingswood. In this edition, Simon Whalley provides a potted history of this much-loved care business.

Birtley occupies one of the most beautiful and sheltered locations in the Surrey Hills National Landscape. We are surrounded by a wonderful panorama of wooded hills and meadows and the house, and its lovely gardens, parkland and woods have a long history. Under its original name, *Berkeley*, from the Old English 'beorc leah' – a clearing in the birch wood, records of Birtley House go back to the 1200s when it was part of the largest manorial estate between London and the South Coast.

In 1231 Birtley was held by a Henry Polsted. The Polsted



# of Birtley House

family was still present in Surrey in the 16th century when Richard Polsted married Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir William More of Loseley.

After Richard's death Elizabeth married first Sir John Wolley (no connection that we know of!) and then Brian Annesley. Birtley is recorded as being held by a Brian Annesley in 1604, by which time the name had changed to *Burtley*. This was probably Sir Brian Annesley – a gentleman pensioner of Elizabeth 1st.

Sir Brian was challenged by his elder daughters who tried to have him declared insane so that they could claim his estates (mostly in Kent). His youngest daughter, Cordell, defended him in court and the 'cause célèbre' was part of William Shakespeare's inspiration for 'King Lear'.

Birtley was later acquired by Lawrence Street, in the reign of James II, by which time it was an estate of around 800 acres. He died in 1696 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Thomas. In 1755 John Street, son, or grandson of Thomas, purchased Bramley Foundry.

John's daughter-in-law would later sell the land where the foundry and brewery were established in Bramley High Street (currently the car showroom and art shop). The foundry continued in existence until the 1950s and some of the original Birtley Lodge steel diamond pane

windows (removed in 2001), which were made in this foundry in the 19th century, are still kept on the grounds. Others have been donated to the Brooking Collection in Cranleigh.

In 1757 the road from Guildford to Arundel was turnpiked, which probably resulted in more use of the road past Birtley. By 1811 another development was under consideration, but it was not one that found favour with the then owner of Birtley.



This was the proposal to build a canal to connect the rivers Wey and Arun.

By the late 1870s the estate was so heavily encumbered with charges and annuities that it was sold to Henry Cubitt MP, later Lord Ashcombe (the builder of the Albert Hall and many other key Victorian sites). The Cubitts owned Birtley House until the end of the war in 1945, though it was let or leased for much of this time. During this period the main house was substantially extended, and the estate grew

to 1,200 acres with ten farms, four substantial houses and fifteen cottages.


In 1906 the house was occupied by a widow, Mrs Barton, whose late husband had contracted a young man as head gardener. The young man was Fred Streeter, later well-known as the first 'media personality gardener'. He redesigned the gardens, probably with some input from his friend Gertrude Jekyll who was a regular visitor. When Mrs Barton died, Birtley

most of the running of the business devolved to the Driver's youngest daughter, June, and her husband, Dick Whalley who, although born in London, grew up in Canada and had come over with the RCAF during the War.

The 'family home' atmosphere has always been a key factor in the popularity of Birtley with residents and their own families, and new generations sometimes move in who remember parents or even grandparents in the Home!

Birtley is now run by myself (Dick and June's eldest son), my wife Caroline and our two sons, Frank and Tim plus Frank's wife Sinead. A strong focus on the highest standards of nursing and care has always been at the heart of the home's ethos with a strong emphasis on providing the right level of support appropriate to each individual.

We are extremely proud to live and work on this historic estate, and to share the joys of its beauty and history with the residents who live here.

  
**Simon Whalley**  
Chairman



House had a succession of occupants, including the establishment of a girls' school in the 1930s and an evacuated firm of electrical engineers during the Second World War.

The house, with 48 acres, was bought in 1945 by Eyhurst Court Ltd, a nursing home company run by my grandfather, Dr Lloyd Driver, his wife Joan, and various members of their family. The Home had previously been located at Loxwood during the war years but had been registered since 1932.

After Joan's death in 1952,



# A party to remember

**This year, Birtley celebrates a significant milestone – 90 years of providing care. To mark this occasion, we invited our residents, their families and staff members to enjoy a garden party on the lawn with live entertainment. Here we look back on this special celebration.**

In early July, a marquee stood proudly on our lawn with views of the lake and house from the open side. The sun shone and a singing duo, *My Favourite Things*, created a happy atmosphere by performing songs from the 1940s and 1950s.

members, whilst enjoying the music and afternoon tea provided by Steve Hounsham, Birtley's resident chef. Drinks, sandwiches, and a colourful cake selection were presented on vintage cake stands and crockery. Commenting on the celebrations, Frank Whalley said:

Guests chatted to staff members, whilst enjoying the music and afternoon tea provided by Steve Hounsham, Birtley's resident chef. Drinks, sandwiches, and a colourful cake selection were presented on vintage cake stands and crockery. Commenting on the celebrations, Frank Whalley said: "We're very proud of Birtley



*House and our long history of care. It was important that everyone was involved in the celebration. This is the first Birtley House garden party for several years and it was lovely to see our residents and their families enjoying a very jolly afternoon together."*

Simon gave an emotional speech at the party on behalf of the family, expressing

the pride of being part of the care industry and capturing the history of the business which originated at Eyhurst Court in Sutton, then moved to Loxwood House in West Sussex, before finally settling at Birtley House in 1945. We can't wait to enjoy further garden parties in the future.





# Jubilee

## memories

**Birtley's 90th anniversary is not the only long-term service milestone we are celebrating in 2022. In the Queen's 70th Jubilee year, we have been reflecting on precious memories. With many of our residents recalling the Queen's Coronation first-hand, our Activities department was keen to find out more!**



**W**e love to celebrate at Birtley House, and this year's Jubilee gave us the perfect opportunity. With corridors of red, white, and blue bunting, joyful music, and a themed afternoon tea, we celebrated Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne.

Many of our residents recall the Queen's Coronation and joining in the street parties 70 years ago. The Activities

department asked residents to share their recollections of this monumental moment. These are the memories they shared:

*"I slept on the pavement on St James Street overnight so as not to miss the ceremony the next day. I was awoken at 4.30 am by someone shouting, "They've climbed Everest!". The news had reached Britain on coronation day."*

*"My family had seats booked opposite Westminster Abbey. I had my own box camera to take photos. It was raining heavily, and I noticed one woman, without a brolly, waving to the crowds – it was Queen Salote of Tonga."*

*"My sister was married four days before the coronation, and I remember thinking that the streets had been decorated for my sister's wedding!"*







*“I was a teenager at the time. My family bought a television especially for the occasion. It was so exciting. Our family and friends joined us, and we all huddled around a small screen.”*

**Tina Bell**  
Head of Activities and Wellbeing



# Music *to our ears*

Over the past decade I have made over one hundred performances to what is undoubtedly my favourite care home. Birtley House has as a way of looking after people that I do not see anywhere else.

Everything about it is a pure joy for me. From the warm welcomes and reactions I receive to my music, to the beautiful surroundings I get to perform in. The Activities team has made me so welcome over the years as have all the residents who have listened to my performances.

I enjoy playing the piano, violin, and singing songs to suit a wide range of tastes;

*“Birtley House has a way of looking after people that I do not see anywhere else.”*

**Kevin Jacot has performed over one hundred times at Birtley House over the past decade. He tells us about his music and why he enjoys visiting our Home.**

from sing-a-longs to Sinatra, to folk, opera and just about everything in between!

Music is not only a gift that can be enjoyed by listening, but it can be experienced in a physical way too. As I play, I allow residents to feel and touch the instrument that I am playing. The reaction is marvellous!

Congratulations Birtley House on your anniversary. I look forward to the next 100 performances!

**Kevin Jacot**



# Caring

for more than residents

Birtley's long history of care goes above and beyond the care of its residents. Caroline Whalley tells us about the charity and community support that Birtley provides.

It goes without saying that our primary aim is to meet the needs of our residents at Birtley House and to ensure that they lead a happy and fulfilling life. The team at Birtley also believes in supporting a variety of charities and community projects.

Christmas is naturally a time of giving and for many years we supported the *Shoeboxes for Romania* appeal. Residents, families, and staff were encouraged to contribute gifts or cash and it was heart-warming to witness the generosity shown. For several years we packed well over 30-40 boxes, finally reaching the goal of 50 in 2018.



In May of this year, our creative chefs, Steve, Mariuz, and Barry planned a special themed lunch in aid of the Ukraine Appeal. We raised a staggering £516 from resident and staff donations.



Other charities that Birtley supports include Dementia UK (£116 raised this year at a *Time for a Cuppa* event), the *Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal* (£150 raised in November), and the Community Foundation for Surrey.

Combining fundraising with activities at Birtley House keeps our charity contributions up



while ensuring that our residents enjoy a variety of events throughout the year. Charity most certainly begins at our Home.

*Caroline*

**Caroline Whalley**  
Director



I then became aware that food banks were appealing for more support, and it was unanimously decided that we should make our Christmas charity the *Cranleigh Food Bank*. For the past three years we have packed three to four very large boxes filled with various items.

Over the years we have supported the Macmillan Coffee Morning – or *coffee afternoon* in our case. Sadly, the pandemic has halted this event for a couple of years, but with the reputation for a “good afternoon out at Birtley with a fantastic raffle and delicious cakes”, we raised in excess of £1,000 each time. Our suppliers and local shops were very generous with donating prizes for the raffle.



# What an achievement!

**As a manager, I believe in celebrating success. It is vital if we are to feel appreciation and accomplishment. And it is so easy to overlook success – especially in a busy environment! Therefore, as Birtley marks its 90th anniversary of care, I want to shout about this phenomenal achievement.**

When Simon Whalley's grandfather founded Birtley House, he called on his experience as an army surgeon in the First World War to pioneer the private care of those with mental health problems.

This new approach to care offered an alternative to generational living, with medical support, many years before the NHS was conceived.

Over the last nine decades, the Whalley family has continued to launch many unique concepts to the care industry, including:

- New ways of paying for care – offering lifetime licenses (where residents do not have to pay tax on the lease)
- New methods of retirement living – such as the Birtley House Mews independent living apartments, introduced in the 1990s

- Homegrown food on site, challenging nursing home food stereotypes.

These are huge achievements, and it does not stop there. The family continues to challenge the ways that things are done in their efforts to improve the care sector and the recognition of social care.

In the care industry, we continue to watch things change in a fast-paced world. We are adapting daily to new technology, new ways of working, and new regulations.

But there is one factor that is always essential – a caring approach. We would not be able to make improvements or change if empathy was not present.

For this reason, I was determined to work for a care home that had strong core values, a caring approach, and an aspiration to put people's needs first – those of residents, their



*A wartime photo of Dr. Driver with nurses*



*A nurse pictured in the Birtley House Gardens*



*Nurses today*

families, and staff. Lucky me. I found one. It's called Birtley House!

This year Birtley celebrates its 90th anniversary. Proof that strong core values and a caring heart will help you succeed in the care industry. I could not be prouder to be part of this success story.

I wish to thank the Board of Directors for their continuity in the care sector which still stands strong. Your dedication shows that you truly care.

Be proud of your achievement and may this successful journey continue for years to come.

**Sylwia Indyicka**  
**Registered Manager**



*“I was determined to work for a care home that had strong values, a caring approach, and an aspiration to put people's needs first.”*

A photograph of a garden scene. In the center, a rustic wooden bench with a curved backrest sits on a green lawn. Behind the bench is a brick wall. The garden is filled with various flowers, including a large bush of purple flowers in the background and several pink roses in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and summery.

# Summer in bloom

*“The garden is ever  
changing, and it should  
be enjoyed whatever  
stage of its lifecycle it’s in”*

**The gardens at Birtley House have a charm of their own all year round, but they are at their most colourful during the summer months. In this edition of *House & Home*, Birtley's Head Gardener, Matt Miller, shares his highlights from the summer months.**

**A**s always, we're busy out in the gardens, keeping on top of things whilst continuing to further develop the formal garden and wider estate for the enjoyment for all our residents and visitors alike.

Mid-summer has come and gone, and the year continues to march on. It is sometimes all too easy to think too far ahead, when maybe we all need to slow down a bit and enjoy the here and now.

A garden is never under control. The chaos is only just round the corner but our hard work, mulching in the winter and a lot of spring weeding, has meant that things are looking pretty good.

The mass planting in the Long Walk has meant all but the toughest of perennial weeds are being smothered out. A few gaps have appeared, and these will be filled with plants moved from elsewhere.

There are a couple of beds at the end of the kitchen garden that have been taken over by bindweed and my plan for the autumn is to lift and clean all the herbaceous plants, adding them to the Long Walk planting and thus giving a chance to dig out



the persistent root of the bindweed.

In the Rose Garden my hard pruning has paid dividends and most roses have survived and are now in full bloom. A few didn't make it and I'll take some cuttings of them.

I'm pleased to say the hedges we planted in January have taken and are growing on nicely. The lack of rain in May wasn't ideal but regular watering allowed them to get established. In a year or two they should really start to take shape.

HALOW continue to manage the kitchen garden and despite some early setbacks, with newly planted crops being munched by rabbits, a few temporary fences have kept them protected and a variety of plants are now soaking up the summer sun. These will provide the kitchen with produce throughout the summer.

Hot dry weather in June meant the shallow side of the pond dried out and although not ideal for the wildlife it allowed us to the chance to give it a good clean. Nearly 20 years of build up was removed by hand and the rich organic material, spread out over the shrub borders,



will help improve the sandy soil.

I never believe a garden is ever at its best, as each season and indeed each month brings something different. Whether it be some well dug bare soil, a border in full bloom or the first of many falling leaves, the garden is ever changing, and it should be enjoyed whatever stage of its lifecycle.

**Matt Miller**  
**Head Gardener**



# Food is the heart of the Home

As we celebrate our 90th anniversary, Birtley's Head Chef, Steve shares some interesting finds from our archives and considers how attitudes have evolved.

It is so important that we continue to eat well as we get older. We may need less energy (calories), but we still require the same amounts of protein, vitamins, and minerals to maintain our health and well-being.

Creating delicious and nutritious home cooked food for our residents is something I enjoy very much, supported by our kitchen vegetable garden.

## From bland to flavoursome

Personal choice and variety are at the heart of my menus.

And worldwide cuisine, including Indian, Chinese, and Thai are regularly included in our choices.

Times have certainly changed in that regard! Looking through our archives we noted that smooth textures – with no strong flavours – were actively encouraged.

Liquids and easily digested foods, such as white fish, chicken, and bread were staple foods in nursing homes. I'm glad that we now add as much flavour as possible!

## A more personal approach

The terminology used for nursing home residents has also changed. Historically, residents were often referred to as invalids and convalescents, as we noted in the following advertisements:

"Bovril is a great appetiser and is most useful for invalids. When tired of all other 'invalid' food a cup of Bovril is generally acceptable."

*Bovril advertisement from Portsmouth Evening News, 13 September 1924*

"It is suggested that those who have the care of an invalid or a convalescent on their hands should try giving the patient Ovaltine. Its flavour is delicious, and it is always welcomed even by the most capricious and fastidious."

*When Food is Distasteful, Arbroath Herald and Advertiser, 18 March 1938*

Today, our approach is person-centred, with everyone's needs considered

– from their dietary requirements to their individual care.

## The dining experience

When leafing through the archives, we discovered that meals were served to residents in their rooms. Now it couldn't be more different!

Dining at Birtley House is an experience that takes place in our dining room, where our diners are encouraged to be part of a community (should they wish to). We love to hear the conversation over dinner, and the feedback on our menus!

It has been a joy to read through old menus and ephemera, but I am glad that an individual approach, care home cuisine, and dining have all improved for the better.

**Steve Hounsham**  
**Head Chef**





*“It has been a joy to read through old menus and ephemera, but I am glad that an individual approach, care home cuisine, and dining have all improved for the better.”*



## How times have changed

As Birtley House celebrates its 90th anniversary, we have been discussing how much life has changed over the past century, we have seen advancement in all areas of society and the way we live has changed drastically. Our Mews residents have been reflecting on times gone by.

The Mews is in its infancy compared to much of Birtley House, yet its beautiful apartments house some extraordinary stories.

With most of our residents born in the 1920s, 30s and early 1940s, the changes they have witnessed are phenomenal.

Take technology itself – from the days of dialling the exchange to make a phone call and looking up numbers in the telephone book, to today's smart phones and instant messaging.

Our residents reminisce on the days when streets were quiet, and cars were rare. Few owned a car and some of those who did would still start it with a crank starter. Now we have the silence of electric cars.

Coal fires and paraffin heaters kept us warm before the days of central heating. Now we look to solar panels and offshore windfarms for energy.

For one of our residents, life changed dramatically in the 1990s when printing

moved from the presses to the new growing technology of computerisation. This was the point that he chose to sell up his printing business and retire, buying a special car for to explore the corners of Britain with his wife. Far from wanting a new vehicle with all the modern gadgets, this car is still his pride and joy to this day, and as he says, "Nothing beats a good solidly built car!"

The world turns and change is inevitable. But it is the technological changes that have made the biggest impact. For many of us it gets

harder and harder to keep up!

As we look back, it is quite amazing to see how much has changed in such a short period of time. Our residents often refer to their failing memories, yet one needs to think about just how much knowledge is being stored! I think of it as a cup full of good wine. If you keep pouring more in, some must overflow and get lost!

The great perspective that comes with the movement of time is the opportunity to look back and see patterns, trends, and developments.

And our memories of youth are often the brightest.

Our ladies and gentlemen spend many hours in the dining room chatting over their lives, sharing stories, and finding interesting co-incidences within their history. They know the same places and have often lived in the same regions of the world. They wonder if their paths have crossed and marvel at how small the world is.

Ninety years is a vast expanse of time in some respects, and yet just a flicker of light in others.

Sometimes it's good to think back, take time to share memories, be grateful for one's blessings, and revel in the developments that improve our lives today.

**Ania Klementowicz**  
Mews Co-ordinator







## Local connections

We often talk about *continuity* as one of the characteristics of Birtley that has helped us to thrive over such a long period. It is a strand that runs through many aspects of the business including the relationships we have with some of our key suppliers.

The longest standing continuous contract we have is with David, our window cleaner, who has been keeping the views of the beautiful countryside around us crystal clear for over 30 years!

It was interesting to be reminded by him the other day how techniques have changed over the years. When David began at Birtley, he used a ladder and buckets of soapy water. These days, David cleans most of the windows from ground level using an extendable pole-and-brush system which sprays 'pure' water (water

that has been deionised and treated to remove any impurities).

Our pest control expert, Alan, worked for a firm that closed just over 20 years ago. My grandfather, Dick Whalley, asked Alan to continue to manage pest control of destructive creatures around Birtley.

Alan explained to me that Dick resisted a formal contract for years – hampering efforts to pro-actively manage these pests. And Alan explained that techniques in pest control have changed significantly during his tenure and the reduced use of poisons and other toxic substances now puts a greater emphasis on monitoring bait stations and only very targeted use of poison.

I am sincerely grateful for Alan's patience and resilience in sticking with us throughout this time, and I'm happy to say that we do now have a very comprehensive contract in

**Birtley has always used local suppliers to help service and maintain the building and its equipment. Tim Whalley describes the relationships that Birtley has built with some of its longest serving and most trusted suppliers.**

place and that any unwanted guests, furry or otherwise, are quickly and discretely encouraged to move on by appropriate means!

I was also pleased to be able to reminisce with Nigel who precedes my own full-time involvement of 18 years. Nigel comes to site at least twice a year to inspect, service and repair our hoists and specialist baths. The trust that has built up over the years is hugely valuable.

Another long-standing hero of Birtley is Bo who inspects all our portable appliances on an annual basis. When Bo started coming to us in the early noughties, he and a colleague used to 'blitz' the place. Starting in communal areas and offices at the crack of dawn, the two of them used to work well into the evening to get the whole site done in one day - probably around 1,000 items! Bo now works on his own and is exceptionally good with our residents.

Wherever possible we seek to use local firms who share our ethos and provide

an exceptionally responsive service.

Matt runs the Cranleigh-based plumbing firm we use to help us with refurbishment and the odd pipework-related disaster! Likewise, Godalming-based Richard has become a regular fixture as our resident electrician.

There is a huge amount of work that goes on behind the scenes at Birtley. Adding to the efforts of the 75 staff we currently employ, we have regular visits by over 50 individual companies providing services of one sort or another keeping the building and its facilities going and ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for all.

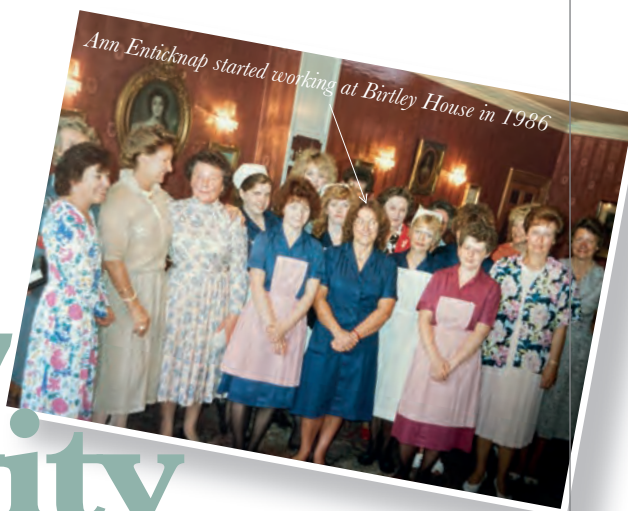
**Tim Whalley**  
**Nominated Individual**



# An update from HR



## A tale of loyalty and longevity



In a changing world where long service is somewhat of a rarity, we were delighted and honoured to celebrate the 35 years of service of one team member last year. Ann Enticknap started working at Birtley House in 1986. Since then, members of her family have joined the team. Here we recount their story.

Ann first joined the Birtley House team in 1986 as a sewing lady, making soft furnishings such as chair coverings and aprons. Ann recalls that she was a mother to teenagers at the time and applied for the role via an advert in the Surrey Advertiser.

Interviewed by Mr Whalley Senior, she was offered the job on the spot. Little did Ann know that she would go on to work as a pastry chef, housekeeper, kitchen porter, activities assistant, and carer (known as an auxiliary nurse at the time) at Birtley House. Quite a CV of roles!

Now retired, Ann still holds monthly book and film clubs for the residents at Birtley House.

During her years of employment at Birtley, Ann could often be seen cycling the eight miles to and from work or doing two round trips totaling 32 miles if covering a split shift!

Speaking of her memories of Birtley, Ann recalls that during the October 1987 storms she was up at 4.45 am to get to work at 6 am, tackling blocked roads and a tree blocking the Birtley driveway. Birtley House was one of the lucky few to have a generator in 1987, but it was a tiring shift for those who made it in that day!

Pondering some of the changes she has witnessed over the years, Ann notes how the nurses' handwritten notes (sometimes illegible) have now been replaced with computer files, and how formal nurses' uniforms have become more relaxed, with white caps no longer required.

Ann also mentions how the house has evolved over time and how there is no longer a sewing department onsite. Historically, there was not even a dining room when Ann joined Birtley – everyone ate in their rooms!

Ann's daughter Rachel

joined the Birtley team at 16 years old working part-time at the weekends. She formally joined the kitchen staff in 1992 as pastry chef. Rachel went on to become one of our head chefs and worked here for 20+ years! By this time, Ann and Rachel were lift sharing so the bike was put out to pasture!

In 2003 Ann's sister Mary joined the team at Birtley, serving coffee on a Sunday and helping with lunch. We are very proud to say that, nearly 20 years on, Mary is still working with us at Birtley.

Ann's fondest memories of her time at Birtley House include the good friends she made, the lunchbreaks she enjoyed in the garden with the housekeeper (or in the poly tunnel if it was raining), social outings to the coast or to the river.

Summing up her time at



Ann's Book club

*"I loved, and still love, being with the residents. They are all so interesting and have led such wonderful lives."*

Birtley House, Ann said:

"No two days were ever the same! I loved, and still love, being with the residents. They are all so interesting and have led such wonderful lives, and they are filled with so much gratitude."

Thank you, Ann, from all of us at Birtley House, for such dedication, commitment, and loyalty.

# 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 apples are harvested and fermented, and the cider is distilled, at Silent Pool Distillery in Albury. The cider is then matured in oak barrels before bottling.

Birtley has named its new brandy BEORC LEAH after the old 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](mailto:juliet.b@birtleyhouse.co.uk) or call 01483 678394**



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](mailto:info@birtleyhouse.co.uk) or write to:


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