

# THE DOWER HOUSE

*Residential & Nursing Care* | WINCHESTER

# MONTHLY

# NEWSLETTER

MAY

SHARING NEWS FROM OUR WONDERFUL HOME



## EASTER EGG HUNT

A community Easter egg hunt was held in the beautiful, sunny gardens of the Dower House Residential and Nursing Home in Headbourne Worthy, Winchester.

Children were greeted by a giant Easter Bunny as they excitedly embarked on an Easter egg hunt following maps with clues to find the eggs.

In addition to their chocolate rewards, each child received a gift, and everyone enjoyed refreshments, homemade chocolate nests, outdoor games, and colouring while socialising with residents and friends.

Residents enjoyed sitting outside in the sunshine whilst watching all the excitement, and the highlight of the afternoon was the smashing of a giant easter egg by two of the children who gave the egg a good 'whoop!' breaking the egg into hundreds of pieces for all to enjoy.

'I felt like I was at home – not in a care home – this is family', is what resident Patricia said when describing the afternoon.

All proceeds raised went to the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, The Dower House resident chosen charity.

Meanwhile, on Easter Sunday, Chris Golding, Chief Operating Officer and his youngest daughter took the giant 4kg egg on a trolley tour to every room for residents to see before it was broken into tiny pieces to distribute, at the same time as delivering over 135 Easter Eggs to every resident and staff member of staff at The Dower House.

The Dower House is an independent privately owned care home in Headbourne Worthy, Winchester, set in five acres of beautiful, landscaped gardens offering both residential and nursing care.



## NEWS FROM CHRIS OUR CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

What an amazing first month I have had – thank you to everyone for such a warm welcome. My instincts were right: The Dower House really is a special place.

Easter was great fun. Well done to Christine and the team for putting on such a wonderful Family Fun Day – it was so good that the Hampshire Chronicle even featured an article about it! And Matron was an excellent sport, climbing into the inflatable bunny suit. It has also been lovely to see so many people returning to the restaurant. The pantry team have worked hard to create an ambience that truly matches the quality of the food produced by Meryl and the kitchen team. With summer on the way, we look forward to welcoming even more people in the evenings – perhaps for a pre-dinner drink and a nibble.

I've enjoyed seeing residents pop out for shopping trips, cheese and gin tastings (not together!), gardening club, and lunches with guests – including a wonderful surprise visit from one family who travelled halfway around the world from Toronto.

At the heart of everything we do at The Dower House is care. Whether that's personal support, clinical care, holistic wellbeing, or food and nutrition, everyone's circumstances are different, and we tailor our care accordingly. I've been privileged to hear some of these experiences first-hand, and I am extremely grateful to Mrs Jackson, Mrs Morris, Mrs Rampling, Mrs Ottewill, and Mrs Read for sharing their stories on camera.

These videos help reassure our local community, and those considering care, that The Dower House truly has residents' best interests at heart. Three of the videos are now live on our website:

[www.thedowerhousewinchester.co.uk](http://www.thedowerhousewinchester.co.uk)

My very best wishes,  
Chris

### PRESENTATION ON AUSTRALIAN FLOWERS BY SPEAKER CAROL

This month we enjoyed a wonderful and very interesting talk from Carol, a talented photographer who shared her experiences of travelling around Australia with her husband in their campervan. Their journey took them across Western and Southern Australia, where they explored some truly beautiful and remote areas.

Carol has a real passion for photographing orchids, and we were amazed to learn there are around 1,497 native orchids in Australia. She showed us some fascinating varieties, including donkey orchids, cowslip orchids and the delicate daddy longlegs orchids, each with their own unique shapes and colours.

Alongside the flowers, Carol also introduced us to some of Australia's wildlife. We heard about kookaburras, wombats and galahs (the lovely pink and grey cockatoos), as well as a rather memorable pelican called Malvin, who apparently had quite the attitude!

It was a relaxed and enjoyable talk, full of beautiful images and entertaining stories, giving us all a real glimpse into the diversity of Australia's landscapes, wildlife and plant life.





## And Off We Go!! On Our Minibus trip to Haskins in West End.

There is never a dull moment at The Dower House! Our driver for the afternoon was Matron, Ellie. Residents thoroughly enjoy leisurely wondering around this huge garden centre with so much more to offer than plants. We enjoyed eyeing up the clothing dept. fill up our stocks of birthday cards and finding the odd luxury biscuits or cake to enjoy. Once sitting down for a relaxing rest in the restaurant, we just couldn't decide which cakes to taste as they all looked so inviting! So, we tried a variety to share! I think our favourite was the banana cake. After making our purchases and feeling a little tired it was back home just in time for supper!

Thank you Ellie for a wonderful trip.



## Gin Tasting Delights

Last week, our residents enjoyed a refined and fun gin-tasting session right here at the home.

Many will remember last year's outing to the Bombay Sapphire Distillery in Whitchurch, and once again, we gathered to explore the world of botanicals. We learned all about how gin is crafted, with a focus on the special ingredients that give each bottle its unique character—from juniper berries to coriander seeds, angelica root, and citrus peels.

Our tasting journey included the classic Gordon's gin and tonic, the vibrant Neil Whitney gin with rhubarb and ginger, and the sophisticated Sipsmith gin. But, in a delightful twist, it was the timeless Gordon's gin and tonic that stole the show!

We can't wait to continue trying new flavors and experiences together as the year unfolds!



## NOTES FROM BEN



### WHATS BEEN HAPPENING IN THE GARDEN



May is the month of the start of sunny days and longer evenings; the bees are buzzing, and the birds are busy feeding their young. The garden is pushing towards full bloom, in spring the garden has lots to look at all the perennials are shooting up as are the roses and shrubs that are now coming into bud.

Since our last newsletter Terry and I have finished a lap of the garden and are now back at the beginning ready to start another! We will start putting the supports for the plants and feeding the tender perennials on. We have been prepared to start

### GARDENING CLUB

With the weather beginning to brighten and the sun shining, we were delighted to hold our first wonderful to see residents gathering to enjoy the gardens as they come back to life.

Ben kicked off the session by inviting questions from everyone, creating a relaxed and welcoming discussion. Moira was keen to hear about the plans for the wild bed this year. Ben explained that, for now, he is waiting to see how the wildflowers develop over the coming months before making any firm decisions. He did mention that changes may be on the cards next year, which could involve digging out around a foot of soil and replacing it with fresh, nutrient-rich compost to give new planting the best possible start. The conversation soon turned to the beautiful tulips currently in bloom, with Ben sharing insights into their colours and seasonal appeal—adding a real sense of excitement for what's to come in the garden. To round off the session, everyone got hands-on by planting seeds, marking a lovely and hopeful start to the gardening year ahead. We look forward to watching everything grow and to many more enjoyable Gardening Club gatherings in the months to come.

**Our next Gardening Club will be on  
Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May.**



## WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH?

Solomans Alpcas, Open Afternoon Event  
Matthew playing the Ukulele  
Winchester College Entertainers  
Water Colour Painting  
Pod Cast 'Heroes' -Margaret Cavendish  
Bridge Club  
Thereapy Dog Olga  
Gardening Club  
Brian Budden on the Piano  
Sarah Hobbs Singing  
Cider tasting request!  
Holy Communion  
Matrons Meeting  
Jonathan on the Guitar  
Keep Fit, Knit & Natter



## MINIBUS TRIP TO HILLERS GARDENS WITH A GUIDED TOUR ON 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY

## MEET OUR FAMILY



**BEN**

Hello, my name is Ben. I have been the Head Gardener at The Dower House for 10 years. My role is keeping our beautiful gardens in top condition for all to enjoy. When you see me in the garden do come and say hello there is so much to see and talk about. My interest are nature, the outdoors and a spot of fishing! I am very lucky as my job keeps me in the fresh air.



**MERYL**

In my role as Cook at the Dower House, I am very lucky to use lots of seasonal, British and local produce. I encourage our residents to let me know if there's anything they would like to see on the menu and we always try to accommodate people's needs and requirements. In any spare time I have, the garden is where you will find me. Flowers and vegetables, digging, planting or relaxing with a book.

**BEV**

My role as Administrator includes dealing with enquiries for prospective residents. co-ordinating maintenance/ contractor services, supporting compliance and documentation. Assisting residents, their families and visitors. I enjoy the variety of my role and love to take time to stop and have a chat with our residents. Hobbies: Walking, gardening, music and improving my guitar playing.



## KATE GOULD PLAYS CELLO AT THE DOWER HOUSE

On Saturday 18th, The Dower House was filled with magic as Kate Gould on Cello, Director of the Winchester Chamber Music Festival, and Julian Milford, on Piano, played to our residents. Their performance was stunning, leaving our residents in awe. This was just a glimpse of the talent to come at the Winchester Chamber Music Festival, running from May 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> in Winchester.



## FREDA BATES SPEAKER - 'VAN EYCK IN GHENT'



Freda Bates Freda Bates our wonderful speaker who upon retiring trained as a blue badge guide in London and later moved to Winchester and guided visitors around Winchester Cathedral.

This month, we take a closer look at the story behind one of the world's most extraordinary masterpieces, created by Jan van Eyck in the historic city of Ghent.

Known today as the Ghent Altarpiece, this remarkable work of art has endured a long and dramatic journey through history. It has been stolen on several occasions—once by Napoleon Bonaparte, and later during the Second World War under the orders of Adolf Hitler.

At one point, it was hidden deep within a salt mine alongside other looted treasures. Thankfully, the story has a positive ending. American and British soldiers recovered the artwork and ensured its safe return to Ghent, where it remains today.

For many years, parts of the altarpiece were only revealed during special occasions such as Christmas, adding to its sense of mystery and reverence. Those lucky enough to see it were struck by its beauty and significance.

What makes this masterpiece truly unforgettable is its astonishing detail. Every panel is filled with intricate imagery, rich symbolism, and a level of craftsmanship that continues to captivate viewers centuries later.

It is little wonder that Jan van Eyck is often considered one of the greatest painters of all time. His work not only showcases exceptional artistic skill but also tells a powerful story of survival, history, and enduring cultural value.

## MAY'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH IS 'BLUEBELLS'



The bluebell is a flower that, though simple in nature and appearance, is entrenched in deep cultural significance. In Scotland, for example, the flowers are actually referred to as "harebells." This is because it was believed that witches turned themselves into hares and hid among these flowers. In Victorian culture, bluebells were viewed as a way to communicate your feelings and thoughts – usually, those related to humility – to others. This is probably because the flowers appear to bow modestly as they tip down on the flower spikes.

Bluebells were often used to call in fairies, too. You could "ring" a bluebell like you would a normal bell and the fairies would come to you. However, there was also a superstition that if you heard a bluebell ring, somebody close to you could die.

**The Bluebell is the sweetest flower  
That waves in summer air:  
Its blossoms have the mightiest power  
To soothe my spirit's care.**

~ Emily Bronte

### 6 facts about Bluebells

1. During Queen Elizabeth I's reign, the big ruff collars were stiffened using starch made from the crushed bulbs of bluebells.
2. During the Bronze Age, feathers were stuck on arrows using the sticky sap from bluebells.
3. The gummy sap was also used as glue for bookbinding. As the sap is so toxic, it stopped certain insects from attacking the binding.
4. Herbalists used to use bluebells to help prevent nightmares.
5. 13th century monks used them to treat snakebites and lepers – very much a kill or cure remedy given that bluebells are poisonous.
6. Scientists are researching how the toxic chemicals in bluebells could one day help treat cancer.

It has always been said to be very unlucky to bring the bluebell into the house, and children would have once been warned to avoid picking them, in fact, it was once believed that a child who picked a bluebell would never be seen again, and an adult who did so would be forever followed by a woodland goblin!



# WHATS ON DURING MAY

	MORNING	AFTERNOON
<b>Tuesday 5th</b>	<b>11am Keep Fit</b>	<b>3pm Ipad Tuition</b>
<b>Wednesday 6th</b>	<b>11am The Word Game</b>	<b>3pm Matthew on the Uke</b>
<b>Thursday 7th</b>	<b>11am Games of Legs</b>	<b>3pm VE Day celebrations</b>
<b>Friday 8th</b>	<b>11am What the Papers Say</b>	<b>Garden Walks with Phil</b>
<b>Sunday 10th</b>	<b>Free Time</b>	<b>3pm Film Club</b>
<b>Monday 11th</b>	<b>10.30 Knit &amp; Natter</b>	<b>Garden Walks with Carers</b>
<b>Tuesday 12th</b>	<b>11am Keep Fit</b>	<b>1.30pm Minibus Trip to Hillier Gardens Romsey</b>
<b>Wednesday 13th</b>	<b>11am The Word Game</b>	<b>3pm What the Papers Say 4.20pm Entertainers from Winchester College</b>
<b>Thursday 14th</b>	<b>11am Dingbats</b>	<b>3pm Bridge Club 3.15pm Crafts with Air Clay</b>
<b>Friday 15th</b>	<b>10.30pm Coffee at Cobbs</b>	<b>3pm Pod Cast - Heroes 4pm Pet Therapy Visit</b>
<b>Sunday 17th</b>	<b>Free Time</b>	<b>3pm Film Club</b>
<b>Monday 18th</b>	<b>10.30am Knit &amp; Natter</b>	<b>3pm Craft Time</b>
<b>Tuesday 19th</b>	<b>11am Keep Fit</b>	<b>3pm Crossword</b>
<b>Wednesday 20th</b>	<b>11am Gardening Club</b>	<b>3pm Sarah Hobbs</b>
<b>Thursday 21st</b>	<b>11am The Word Game</b>	<b>2.30pm Car Trips</b>
<b>Friday 22nd</b>	<b>Enjoy a Coffee in the Conservatory</b>	<b>3pm Brian Budden</b>
<b>Sunday 24th</b>	<b>Free Time</b>	<b>3pm Film Club</b>
<b>Monday 25th</b>	<b>11am Dingbats</b>	<b>3pm Film Club</b>
<b>Tuesday 26th</b>	<b>11am Keep Fit</b>	<b>3pm Matrons Meeting</b>
<b>Wednesday 27th</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>	<b>Alpacas Visit - Event</b>
<b>Thursday 28th</b>	<b>11am The Word Game</b>	<b>3pm Cider Tasting</b>
<b>Friday 29th</b>	<b>11am What the papers Say</b>	<b>3pm Jonathan on the Spanish Guitar</b>

