The Dower House

Residential & Nursing Care | WINCHESTER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER

SHARING NEWS FROM OUR WONDERFUL HOME

100th Birthday Banquet Fit for a Queen



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CENTENARIANS

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There's something very special happening at The Dower House! We are incredibly proud to have four residents aged 100 and over!

HARVEST FESTIVAL SUPPER

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Our Harvest Festival supper is always a memorable occasion, celebrating good food, friendship, music and the joy of giving. With wonderful company, plenty of laughter and money raised for charity, what more could we ask for?

FACINATING LOOK AT WINCHESTER COLLEGE

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Speaker, Freda Bates, who worked at Winchester College, was able to give us a wonderful insight into some of the school's unique traditions and language.

A NOTE FROM CHRIS & ELLIE

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November will be the month for our Resident Survey. Your feedback is incredibly important to us. It helps us understand what we are doing well, and where we can improve.

A FESTIVE OUTING

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With Christmas on the horizon, we asked a group of our residents where they would most like to visit on our next minibus outing, and there was a unanimous decision Brambridge Garden Centre!

100th Birthday Banquet Fit for a Queen



A very special milestone was celebrated at The Dower House in Headbourne Worthy recently, as resident Mrs Hirst marked her 100th birthday surrounded by family, friends and fellow residents.

The celebrations began with a truly memorable moment when a birthday card from Their Majesties The King and Queen was presented to Mrs Hirst by Major General Alastair Bruce of Crionaich on behalf of the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire.

Major General Bruce, well known as a former Governor of Edinburgh Castle, historical advisor to Downton Abbey and royal commentator, attended in full military uniform, as a Deputy Lieutenant for Hampshire, and presented the card in front of Mrs Hirst's family and guests ahead of a special birthday banquet.

Speaking at the celebration, Major General Bruce said: "My family has known Mrs Hirst for many years, and I was honoured when the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire asked me to attend. To be able to present a birthday message from His Majesty on such a significant occasion makes it even more special."

Mrs Hirst was delighted by the occasion and the opportunity to celebrate with those closest to her. "I've had such a wonderful day, especially receiving a card from Their Majesties The King and Queen presented by Alastair, and of course being able to spend time with my family and my wonderful great-grandchildren."

The celebrations continued with a specially prepared banquet in The Dower House's elegant drawing room, where family and friends gathered to mark a remarkable century of life, memories and achievements. Mrs Hirst's daughter, Georgina, said: "The Dower House put on a wonderful birthday celebration for Mum. She was understandably reluctant to leave her own home just six weeks ago, but from the day she arrived she has been made to feel welcome. She often comments on how kind everyone is and now truly calls The Dower House home. We can completely understand why. What a wonderful way to celebrate such an important birthday."

Mrs Hirst now joins a remarkable group of centenarians living at The Dower House. With four residents aged 100 or over, the home is proud to support an extraordinary generation whose lives have spanned periods of immense social, cultural and historical change.

Chris Golding, Chief Operating Officer at The Dower House, said: "Reaching 100 years of age is an extraordinary achievement and it was a privilege for all of us to celebrate this milestone with Mrs Hirst and her family. Seeing her surrounded by loved ones and so clearly enjoying every moment of the day was incredibly special. Our aim is always to help residents continue to live rich, fulfilling lives, and this was a wonderful example of that."

The Dower House would like to extend its thanks to Major General Alastair Bruce of Crionaich and the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire for helping to make the occasion so memorable.

400 Years of Life, Love and Memories at The Dower House!

There's something very special happening at The Dower House, where we are incredibly proud to have four residents aged 100 and over!

Reaching the grand age of 100 is an extraordinary milestone, but our residents have certainly gone above and beyond!

Following our recent 100th birthday celebration, Jill celebrated her 102nd birthday just days later. During the summer, Mrs Read reached the remarkable age of 103, and the celebrations continue next month when Miss Vernon turns 102!

With so many wonderful milestones to celebrate, The Dower House has plenty of reasons to bring out the prosseco, bake a large birthday cake and enjoy a good celebration!

Each of our residents has a lifetime of stories, experiences and precious memories to share, and we feel privileged to be part of their lives and celebrate these very special occasions with them.

Four centenarians under one roof — now that really is something to celebrate!
We are immensely proud of our wonderful residents and look forward to making many more happy memories together.



In a typical medium-sized care home of 40 residents, having even one person aged 100 or older is a notable statistical outlier. Having four centenarians at the same time means roughly 5% to 10% of the home's entire population is 100+, which is rare! .... *a relative recently said when they heard this statistic, 'Well it's because the care is so good!!*

A Harvest Supper Full of Fun, Food and Festivities!







What a wonderful evening we enjoyed at The Dower House as our residents came together to celebrate Harvest Festival! There was a delicious supper, plenty of laughter, music and a fantastic atmosphere throughout the evening.

Chris Golding, Chief Operations Officer, and Matron Ellie Abrams joined Helen and Rev Paul Bradish, who kindly said grace before our talented kitchen team, led by Meryl, treated everyone to a hearty bowl of warming soup, and imaginitve ploughman's lunch followed by a delicious harvest fruit fool for dessert. Mulled spiced apple juice proved popular, while others chose to raise a glass of Prosecco and join in the celebrations!

There was plenty of entertainment, too. Our Activity Co-ordinator had organised a fun quiz, music and a selection of lovely poems, read by Matron Ellie and Christine. These added a special touch to the occasion, bringing everyone together for a truly enjoyable evening.

A huge thank you to Meryl and her team for preparing such a delicious supper and presenting it so beautifully. The care and effort that went into making the evening special for everyone were clear for all to see.

As the evening continued, it was time for the raffle draw, with all donations going towards our chosen charity, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. We had four wonderful prizes won by the residents. Thank you to everyone who generously supported this very worthwhile cause.

And just when we thought the evening couldn't get any better, our residents chose some of their favourite ABBA songs! The room came alive with music and a wonderful buzz of excitement, bringing our celebrations to a lively and cheerful close. ABBA certainly knows how to get everyone in the harvest spirit!

We would also like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated tins and dried foods for The Winchester Beacon, our local homeless charity. These generous donations will be delivered in the days following our event and will help support those in need within our community.

Our Harvest Festival supper is always a memorable occasion, celebrating good food, friendship, music and the joy of giving. With wonderful company, plenty of laughter and money raised for charity, what more could we ask for?

It was truly an evening filled with harvest cheer, community spirit and happy memories at The Dower House!

A Sunday Afternoon to Remember!





One Sunday afternoon, The Dower House came alive with music, laughter and some truly heartwarming moments!

It all began when Mrs Cox was enjoying her music in her room. Allen, one of our residents, happened to be standing by her doorway, and knowing how much he loves music, Mrs Cox kindly invited him in to listen.

Our wonderful care team saw an opportunity to spread the joy and decided to bring the music down to the Drawing Room for everyone to enjoy.

What happened next was truly magical! Allen rose from his wheelchair and began to dance, bringing smiles and happy tears to those watching. His wife was completely overwhelmed with emotion and, through tears of joy, said, “Thank you! You have given me my husband back.” A truly touching moment that reminded us all of the wonderful power of music.

But the fun didn't stop there! The afternoon continued with games, including Tin Can Alley, and plenty of laughter as a giant beach ball bounced around the room.

Feeling a little peckish, everyone enjoyed a selection of nibbles, along with traditional Dandelion and Burdock, small beers and a little sherry for those who fancied the occasional tipple!

It was a wonderful afternoon filled with music, movement, memories and togetherness — a perfect example of how the simplest moments can create the most precious memories.







A Fascinating Look at Winchester College by Speaker Freda Bates



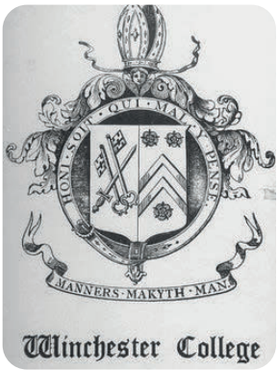
The Trusty Servant



Scholars & Commmoners



Wearing Their Stratts



Manners Makth Man - Motto

Winchester College is regarded as one of the most prestigious schools in the world, with a fascinating history stretching back more than 600 years.

The school was founded in 1382 by William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. He established the college for 70 scholars, supported by a choir of 16 young Quiristers, aged up to 12. Following the devastating Black Death, which killed around half the population, William used his wealth and influence to provide education for future generations.

The college is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and was one of the first schools to have surrounding walls, providing protection and ensuring that many of the pupils' needs could be met within the college grounds.

As the school grew, fee-paying pupils known as Commoners joined the Scholars. Numbers increased greatly during the 1860s with the addition of ten boarding houses. The Scholars still live in the school's beautiful medieval buildings, including its courtyards, chapel and famous Cloisters.
One of the school's best-known mottos is “Manners Makyth Man”, reflecting the importance placed on character, good manners and conduct as well as academic achievement.

Winchester College even has its own unique game, Winchester football, known as “Winkies”, which is played during the spring term with competitions between the houses.

Another fascinating tradition is The Trusty Servant, a painting which has hung outside the kitchen since 1579. It depicts a mythical creature with the body of a man, the head of a pig, the ears of an ass and the feet of a stag, representing the qualities of the perfect servant — hardworking, trustworthy and dependable.

Freda, who worked at Winchester College, was able to give us a wonderful insight into some of the school's unique traditions and language. For example, when pupils are going to a lesson, they may say, “I'm going up for a book.” Scholars wear long black coats, while Commoners traditionally wear sports jackets and coats.

The War Cloister, built in 1924, is a memorial to Wykehamists who lost their lives in the two World Wars. Visitors can also tour areas including the Chapel, College Hall, Cloisters, School and Museum.
The school has continued to evolve. From 2022, girls were accepted as day pupils in the Sixth Form, and in 2025 Winchester College merged with The Pilgrims' School. In September 2026, its first girls' boarding house, St Cross, opened, with a second, St Catherine, completed the same year.

It was fascinating to hear Freda's first-hand knowledge and learn how Winchester College has preserved so many of its traditions and historic buildings while continuing to change with the times.

A NOTE FROM FROM CHRIS GOLDING CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER & ELLIE ABRAMS MATRON



As the clocks change and the nights draw in, we see another side of The Dower House. The curtains are drawn, the lamps are switched on, and the warm, elegant and homely ambience comes into its own.

Everyone talks about how beautiful the gardens are at The Dower House, and rightly so. However, we are fortunate to have some wonderful spaces inside too. The Drawing Room, with its welcoming fire, comfortable armchairs, piano, radio and TV, is the perfect place to enjoy a pre-dinner aperitif. So too are the Conservatory and Library, each offering a comfortable place to relax, meet friends or simply enjoy a change of scene.

It has been lovely to see so many people enjoying dinner in the dining room recently, and a particular highlight for me was sharing our Harvest Dinner together. We have also enjoyed some very special birthday celebrations - it amazes me when I read these monthly newsletters how there is always something to celebrate within our community.

Looking ahead to November, and dare I say it, December(!) there will be many opportunities to celebrate, remember, care for and support one another. On that note, please do look at some of our key dates in December at the back of this newsletter and save the dates in your diary!

Finally, please take the time to complete our 2026 Resident Survey. Christine and Sara will be setting aside time to support anyone who would like assistance, as your feedback is incredibly important to us. It helps us understand what we are doing well, where we can improve, and how we can continue to make The Dower House an even better place to live. The best ideas for improving life at The Dower House are likely to come from the people who know it best.

My very best wishes
Chris



A NOTE FROM MATRON ELLIE

Throughout my nursing career, one principle has always guided me: every person is unique and deserves care that reflects who they are, their life story, and what matters most to them. At The Dower House, that belief is at the heart of everything we do.

As a team, we understand that great care is about much more than clinical expertise alone. While our nurses and carers are committed to delivering the highest standards of professional care, it is often the small acts of kindness that mean the most. Taking time to listen, celebrating a resident's interests, sharing a smile, or simply being there when needed all help to create the warmth and sense of belonging that make The Dower House such a special community.

Families play a vital role in the lives of our residents, and we are privileged to work alongside them. When loved ones cannot always be here, our team is proud to step in with warmth, friendship and support, helping residents feel valued, connected and at home. Equally, we understand the importance of respecting independence and ensuring that each resident remains at the centre of every decision we make.

Creating that balance between professional care, genuine companionship and individual choice is what makes The Dower House such a special place. It is a privilege to support our residents every day and to be part of such a vibrant and caring community.

Warm regards
Ellie Abrams

Rotary Shoebox Scheme
"Spreading a Little Happiness"

Supported by Rotary Great Britain & Ireland

Spreading Christmas Cheer Through the Shoebox Appeal





Our lovely Knit and Natter ladies, who join us every Monday, are members of the Winchester Rotary Club. When they asked for our help in supporting the National Shoebox Appeal, residents and staff at The Dower House were delighted to get involved.

Our kind-hearted residents generously donated a few pounds each to help purchase much-needed winter essentials, including warm gloves, hats and socks, along with fun toys to bring smiles to children's faces this Christmas.

It was heartwarming to see so many people in our home eager to help those less fortunate. Every contribution, however big or small, helps to spread a little extra warmth, happiness and Christmas magic to children who might otherwise go without.

The Wessex Rotary CIO Shoebox Scheme has been bringing joy to children for the past 20 years, and we are proud to play our part in supporting this wonderful cause.

A huge thank you to our generous residents, dedicated staff and our lovely Knit and Natter ladies for their kindness and enthusiasm. Together, we are helping to make Christmas a little brighter for children who need it most!

A Cosy Autumn Welcome in our Drawing Room



Just a little reminder to our lovely residents and families that our beautiful Drawing Room is especially inviting at this time of year!

With the fire glowing, comfortable armchairs to sink into, and a good book, the radio or TV for company, it's the perfect place to relax, unwind and enjoy a little peace and quiet.

Why not settle down with a lovely hot chocolate... or perhaps something a little stronger, like a warming hot toddy!
As the evenings draw in and the weather turns chilly, there's nothing quite like a little warmth, comfort and homely atmosphere.

Come in, get cosy and make yourselves at home!

A Festive Outing to Brambridge Garden Centre









We asked a group of our residents where they would most like to visit on our next minibus outing, and there was a unanimous decision Brambridge Garden Centre! It had been a little while since our last visit, so everyone was looking forward to returning.

Our usual volunteer driver, Toni, arrived in a brand-new minibus, complete with automatic doors, which delighted us all! We were soon on our way, ready for an enjoyable afternoon outing.

With Christmas on the horizon, we naturally found ourselves browsing for gift ideas and exploring the Christmas department. We were captivated by a wonderful miniature Christmas village, complete with revolving roundabouts, moving trains, a Ferris wheel and lots of other magical details. There was plenty to admire, bringing back happy memories and getting us all into the festive spirit!

After all that exploring, we made our way to the café, where we settled down to enjoy a lovely cup of tea accompanied by freshly served scones, jam and cream — a very welcome treat!

We spent a little time chatting and reflecting on our lovely afternoon before climbing back aboard the minibus for our journey home. We returned with some tired but very happy residents, having enjoyed a wonderful outing filled with Christmas cheer, good company and a delicious cream tea.

A big thank you to Toni for driving us and helping to make our afternoon so enjoyable. We look forward to our next adventure!

NOTES FROM BEN





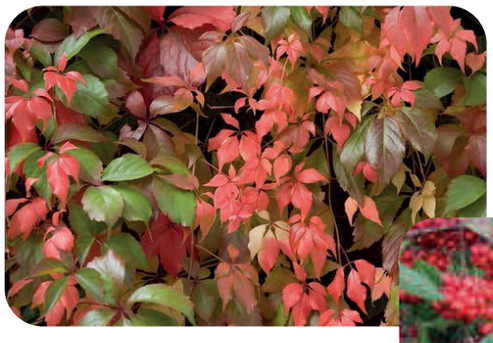
WHATS BEEN HAPPENING IN THE GARDEN DURING OCTOBER

November is here, bringing with it the fiery autumn colours of orange, red and yellow. From the vibrant Virginia Creeper to the beautiful Prunus trees, the berries of the Cotoneaster and the striking stems of the Cornus, the garden puts on a spectacular display.

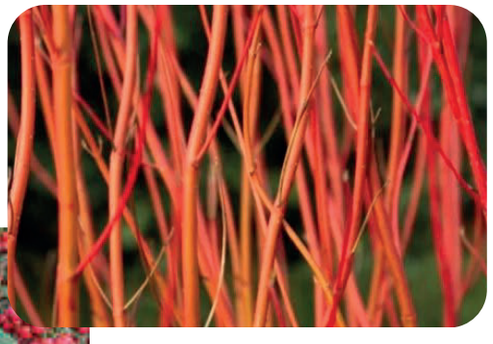
Although our winters are generally warmer than they used to be, nature continues to treat us to this wonderful seasonal transformation each year, marking the changing seasons and the clocks going back.

Over the past month, Terry and I have finished cutting all the hedges and shrubs, and our attention has now turned to the borders and patio gardens. We are working our way around the grounds, cutting back and dividing perennials to keep everything looking its best. We will also be gathering the beautiful fallen leaves to add to our compost, helping to nourish the garden for the seasons ahead.

Over the coming month, we will continue working hard to bring the grounds back into tip-top condition, ensuring everything is neat, tidy and ready for the winter ahead. Even as the garden begins to rest for winter, there is still plenty to admire and enjoy in our beautiful surroundings!



Virgina Creeper



Stems of the Cornus



Cotoneaster berries

Our Fabulous In-House Laundry Service!

At The Dower House, we are proud to offer a fabulous in-house laundry service, combining excellent facilities with a personal touch.

Our fully equipped laundry room boasts industrial-standard equipment, but it is the care and attention to detail from our dedicated laundry team that truly makes the difference. Every garment is carefully logged, washed, ironed and lovingly cared for before being returned to each resident, with our next-day service provided as standard.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone for your lovely feedback and kind compliments about our laundry team. Your appreciation means so much!



Here we see Valerie putting our new iron press to good use, helping to keep our residents' clothes looking their very best!

We are so proud of everyone at The Dower House following many recent 5 * reviews.
COO Chris Golding, sent an email to all the heads of Departments saying
"A BIG thank you to each and everyone for woking together, for the benefit of those that we care for".

Its so nice to be appreciated, and knowing that you make a difference to peoples lives.



Blooming Marvellous at The Dower House!

Earlier in the year, we were delighted to welcome James from our local flower farm, Stem & Green, who gave our residents some wonderful training in the art of flower arranging.

Having learnt a few new skills and gained plenty of confidence, our residents decided it was time to put their knowledge to the test and have a go on their own!

Ten enthusiastic residents rolled up their sleeves, put their creative skills together and set about creating some beautiful floral arrangements. The results were truly wonderful, with each arrangement reflecting the residents' own creativity and imagination.

But the best part wasn't just the beautiful flowers it was seeing everyone getting involved, sharing ideas, helping one another and, most importantly, enjoying themselves!

It was a lovely opportunity for our residents to try something new, discover hidden talents and spend time together in such a colourful and uplifting way.

A huge thank you to James at Stem & Green for inspiring our budding florists. It looks like his training certainly paid off!









CHRISTMAS DINING ARRANGEMENTS

It's that time of year when we start planning where and with whom we'll be spending Christmas!

FESTIVE DINING – £77 PER PERSON

The cost for dining on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day is £77 per person.



This includes:

- Bubbly for the celebratory toast
- Wine and Christmas crackers
- A delicious main course followed by dessert
- Cheese and biscuits
- Coffee and mints

...and of course, wonderful company!

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST WITH RECEPTION

BY FRIDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

We will do our very best to accommodate as many as we are able and aim to confirm your reservation on 4th December.

Thank you for your understanding. We look forward to sharing a wonderful and festive Christmas together!

The Dower House
CARE HOME

Together at Christmas

A FEW OF OUR FESTIVE DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

Not to be Missed!

The most magical time of the year is nearly here, and December at The Dower House promises to be filled with Christmas cheer, wonderful music, festive celebrations and special moments shared with family and friends!

WED 2ND DEC — **Mike Sidaway's Christmas Show**

WED 9TH DEC — **Residents' Christmas Party**
Residents are welcome to invite one or two family members to join the celebrations!

THU 10TH DEC — Minibus Trip to See the Christmas Lights

FRI 11TH DEC — **Princess Mead School Choir**

MON 14TH DEC — Westgate School Choir (am) & Sarah Hobbs' Christmas Singalong

TUE 15TH DEC — **Jonathan Pragg – Guitarist**

WED 16TH DEC — Kings' School Choir

THU 17TH DEC — **The Dower House Christmas Carol Service**
Residents, family & friends are warmly invited to join us for this special celebration.

MON 21ST DEC — Hannah Spires on the Saxophone

TUE 22ND DEC — Pippa on the Violin

WED 23RD DEC — Bridan Budden – Christmas Piano Tunes

THU 24TH DEC — **The Matron's Christmas Party!**

Let the Festivities Begin!

With wonderful performers, school choirs, Christmas music, parties and our special carol service, there is so much to enjoy this December.
We look forward to sharing the magic of Christmas with all our residents, families and friends

The Dower House

WHAT'S ON IN NOVEMBER

Every Monday at 10.30 Knit & Natter with our ladies from Inner Wheel
Every Tuesday at 11am Keep Fit
Sunday afternoons at 3pm 'Film Club'

Monday 2nd
3pm Painted Dragonfly Pottery Class
Tuesday 3rd
3pm Making Firework decorations
Wednesday 4th
11am Games of Sundial
3pm Name the Film Stars
Thursday 5th
11am The Word Games
3pm Bonfire Quiz
Friday 6th
11am Ben on the Piano
3pm Making Jam Tarts
4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 9th
3pm Team Crossword
Tuesday 10th
3pm Music Appreciation Club
Wednesday 11th
11am Games of Legs
3pm Target Practice
Thursday 12th
11am The Word Game
3pm Quiz Time
Friday 13th
11am Morning Chats & Games of True or False
3pm Marcus Singing our Favorite Songs
4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 16th
2.30 - 3.30pm Room Visits
3.30pm Therapy Dog Olga
Tuesday 17th
3pm What happened in your 21st year of birth
Wednesday 18th
11am Team Crossword
3pm Sarh Hobbs Singing
Thursday 19th
11am The Word Game
3pm Making Rag Wreaths
Friday 20th
3pm Cont.Making Rag Wreaths
4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 23rd
3pm Lent Reflections with Helen Bradish
Tuesday 24th
3pm Games of Rummikub, Scrabble, Snap
Wednesday 25th
11am Room Visits
3pm Holy Communion
Thursday 26th
11am The Word Game
3pm Matrons Meeting
Friday 27th
11am Games of Legs
3pm Brian Budden on the Piano
4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 30th
3pm Lent Reflections with Helen Bradish

Christmas FAYRE

AT THE DOWER HOUSE CARE HOME

Springvale Road, Winchester, SO23 7LD

Friday 4th December

Commences at 3.30pm

The Mayor of Winchester

will be turning on the Christmas lights at 4.30pm

Come and join us in the festive fun!

LOTS OF STALLS SELLING

- Christmas gifts
- Handmade jewellery
- Fantastic animal prints from the artist
- Skincare & crystals

Mulled wine, mince pies, cake, tea & coffee

ALL IN AID OF

HAMPSHIRE & THE ISLE OF WIGHT AIR AMBULANCE