



Birtley  
House

# House & Home

The Newsletter for Birtley House

Edition 1 • 2022

## Stepping into *spring*

We look at the steps  
Birtley House is taking to  
create a sustainable future

*Reasons to  
celebrate*

A HIVE OF  
**ACTIVITY**

*The power of  
plants*

**Birtley's sustainability values**



*“Our holistic approach to care is our belief that a close connection to nature can have strong health benefits, both physical and mental.”*

# Welcome...

to the latest edition of the  
Birtley House Newsletter



Reading through our newsletter of twelve months ago, I recall the hope and optimism we felt that the pandemic would soon be over. Although there are definite recent signs of a return to a less-restrictive way of life for care homes across the country, we cannot forget that we endured three Covid ‘outbreak’ episodes not many months ago, and so I remain in awe of the stoicism and resilience of our residents and staff to simply ‘get on with it’ each day.

If there are any positives to take as a care home provider, it is my hope that the public now has a better understanding of the difficulties facing care homes. Historically, what happened behind care home doors only came to light when there was a terrible instance of neglect or malpractice reported in the media. The ‘voice’ of care providers has been much more clearly heard these past two years, spearheaded by Professor Martin Green, the CEO of Care England.

Without a doubt, the biggest on-going issue facing the industry is the staffing crisis in this country. As such, the UK has to look at new models of care and creative ways of utilising the staffing resources available, in order to look after the next generation of care home residents.

Birtley House has always been innovative in its approach to models of care, from opening one of the South East’s first warden-assisted developments, Birtley Mews, in 1999, to the concept of our West Wing apartments that allow residents to feel that they have moved home, rather than moved into a Home. Another aspect of our holistic approach to care is our belief that a close connection to nature can have strong health benefits, both physical and mental.

Whilst we realise that we are so fortunate to have a beautiful 48-acre estate on our doorstep for residents to enjoy, we have also worked hard to ensure that the gardens, parkland, and woodland are well-tended and properly managed. With spring upon us, we are eager to enable our residents, their families, and our staff to get outside once again to enjoy the sights and sounds of our beautiful little corner of Surrey. We hope you enjoy this edition of *House & Home*, and we look forward to seeing many of you in the gardens and grounds over the coming warmer months.



Handwritten signature of Frank Whalley.

**Frank Whalley**  
Director



# Sustaining a happy balance



The theme of this edition of *House & Home* is sustainability – looking in closer detail at the initiatives and efforts we make across the Birtley estate to help our planet. I won't profess to wax lyrical on this topic but rather I can turn

this on its head to consider what has figuratively sustained our residents and staff over these often-turbulent times.

The support received from families, friends and advocates has been overwhelming. Fun, laughter, and clear lines of communication have been preserved, despite the unavoidable challenges.

The residents have embraced all our initiatives with gusto, whether that be the Birtley Olympics last summer, or the seasonal photography competitions that began as a way to connect more with nature and which we plan to continue through this year and beyond, such is their popularity.

Launching our Birtley core values last year was an immense privilege to be a part of. The attributes of Kindness, Integrity, Positivity, and Adaptability have served as our constant watchwords and have reinforced what it means to care. Every single department plays a part and deserves the 'Birtley Hero' title.



It is true to say that Birtley is a truly special place to live and work. This year marks the 90th year of the business and in which we will reflect on the decades of continuous care and look forward to the next chapter in Birtley's future.

*Sinéad*

**Sinéad Whalley**  
Resident Liaison Director



## Contents

**Page 4:**  
Mindfulness with Sylwia Indycka

**Page 5:**  
The Chaplain's spring message

**Page 6:**  
A hive of activity

**Page 8:**  
Springing into action - garden update

**Page 10:**  
The power of plants

**Page 11:**  
Don't worry, bee happy



**Page 12:**  
Conscious cuisine

**Page 13:**  
News from the Mews

**Page 14:**  
Birtley's sustainable and eco-friendly values

**Page 17:**  
News from Birtley

**Page 18:**  
Reasons to celebrate

**Page 19:**  
An update from HR







# Mindfulness for the full mind



The beautiful settings at Birtley House provide the perfect opportunity to practice mindfulness. Our Registered Manager, Sylwia, explains why she is such a believer in this ancient practice.

Spring is the ideal time to practice mindfulness with all the changes seen in nature. When days get longer, I feel inspired and encouraged to practice mindfulness.

Paying more attention to my own thoughts and feelings helps me to achieve a sense of calm.

Mental health and wellbeing are important

subjects to me. I am constantly reflecting and considering ways to support my busy working brain, especially during these times that are still challenging.

I encourage staff and residents to practice reflection and mindfulness, knowing how important it is to look after our wellbeing. And with such beautiful surroundings at Birtley House, there is no better opportunity.

A quiet walk around the Birtley gardens, or a gentle stroll down to the



lake, provides a peaceful setting for anyone to mindfully appreciate their surroundings.

Becoming more aware of what is happening around us, including what is happening in nature, can support our connection with people and the world. I try to share this excitement with the people around me so that they can see the true benefits of such connection.

Practicing mindfulness can really help us to enjoy life

and be more positive, and it can impact how we feel about challenges each day.

**Sylwia Indycka**  
**Registered Manager**







# Chaplain's Message

**Spring is one of the most hopeful times of year. And with spring, of course, comes Easter. Our resident Chaplain, Liz Tilley, reveals some of her favourite recent memories of life at Birtley and shares an Easter message.**

**W**e recently enjoyed our own Songs of Praise at Birtley House. Some residents had chosen a favourite hymn and were ready to say a few words about it.

Seventeen residents joined in, and we enjoyed a great afternoon of singing, along with hearing why the hymns had been chosen. We were accompanied by Stuart White on the piano, who also regularly plays for our monthly communion services. He delighted us with a beautiful rendering of a Chopin Nocturne. A truly memorable afternoon to look back on with the anticipation of more to come.

I look out of my window now to see snowdrops, daffodils, and crocuses

*There are so many signs of new beginnings, growth, and potential.*



in bloom, giving such a colourful display. The trees are ready to burst into new leaf, and the birds are busily building their nests. There are so many signs of new beginnings, growth, and potential. Daffodils will give way to bluebells and roses, vegetables will be planted and tended in our gardens and crops will mature in the fields. Spring is such a wonderful season, and we can enjoy it in all its glorious splendour in the gardens at Birtley.

I look forward to celebrating Easter with more freedom than in the past two years, and to singing those great hymns that speak of God's love in sending his Son, Jesus, who died on a cross and rose again. He promises new life, eternal life, to all who believe in him, his presence, peace, and joy, whatever is going on around us and in the world.

A very happy Easter to you.

**Liz Tilley**  
**Chaplain**





# A hive of activity

The Birtley House activities team has been as busy as ever this year. Tina Bell reports on the pastimes that have kept our residents occupied and entertained.



Spring is here and it's so lovely to see our feathered friends returning to us.

Some of our residents participated in The Big Garden Bird Watch this year. Over a weekend in January, our residents sat and recorded the various bird types that visited our gardens. This information was

then fed back to the RSPB.

We continued with the bird theme over the following week, with one of our resident's favourite games, Bird Bingo and an afternoon of bird word games. All very much enjoyed.

### The joy of crafting

This year we celebrated the year of the tiger for Chinese New Year. Our residents love

crafts, so we busied ourselves making some lovely Chinese decorations in preparation for a themed supper. The evening was hugely enjoyed by all who joined us. The beautifully decorated room, delicious three course meal, fortune cookies, and wine, made for a super evening.

Eager to get crafting again, our residents did not need

asking twice when Sylwia, our home manager, asked for a Good Luck hat for her interview with the Great British Care Awards panel. With no hesitation they got on with the job and created a hat made with love and bursting with positive vibes.

### A welcome companion

Our wellbeing companion,





Lotty, has been making the most of the glorious spring days of late by accompanying residents for walks in the gardens, enjoying the snowdrops that are shooting up in the gardens.

As well as being a great companion indoors and out, Lotty brightens everyone's day with her daily jokes. The residents look forward to

having a giggle and often, not so much at the joke, but at Lotty's reaction after she's given the punch line. Her laugh is contagious and it's good for us all to hear!

**Dreaming of day trips**

Now that many of the restrictions have been lifted, I'm hoping that our day trips can resume. I will be asking

our residents where they would like to visit, but a couple of trips to the garden centre will certainly be on the list! Our courtyard needs colour, so we'll be rolling up our sleeves and donning our gloves in readiness for some planting. We can't wait to create a lovely relaxing area to enjoy the warmer weather that will be with us very soon.

**Tina Bell  
Head of Activities  
and Wellbeing**





**With 2022 being Birtley House's 90th anniversary year, an extra emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the grounds and gardens are at their very best to celebrate this milestone – above the usual high standards we set.**

**A**s with every year, the earlier we can get on top of things in the garden, the better. The dry January has allowed Sam to give most of the beds and borders a good covering of organic garden compost\* that will help to retain moisture in the soil and almost suppress some of the annual weed growth. I'm sure he lost count of the number of times he went back and forth with the wheelbarrow, but it must have been well into the hundreds!

In the fern garden under the ancient oak tree, the taller perennials of Golden Rod and Lemon Daisies that were smothering the old tree



stumps have been removed allowing them to be more visible and the hellebores and ferns to take centre stage. The removed plants have not gone to waste, with the large clumps being used to fill in gaps in the long walk and provide more height and texture to the beds.

The pond garden, that had gone a bit wild, has been cleared of unwanted plants and the gravel cleaned out. Hopefully this year the upper pond and waterfall will be fixed to allow the water to circulate once again. Not an easy task considering the number of cracks in the concrete. We are also working on restoring the fountain (solar powered) in the secret garden as the sound of running water has been missed across the estate in recent years.

In the rose garden some major pruning will be taking place. They've all become woody, and several have died back completely so this year they will all have a hard prune and a good feed of well-rotted manure which will hopefully give them a new lease of life. In the four small centre beds the Royal Williams had become so tatty that I



## Springing into ● *action*

*“Spring flowers we will see in April include snowdrops, crocus, daffodils, and primroses. Other early flowers are hellebores, pulmonaria, irises, alliums, tulips and wild orchids. Plus, the blossom from the fruit trees.”*

decided to dig them all out and refresh the soil. Currently they are potted up in the cold frames awaiting re-planting; the new growth they've put on is encouraging enough that the hard work of digging them out was worthwhile.

I've also been doing some re-jigging in the other beds and borders as well with new shrubs added to the shrub border. The Dahlias in the terrace bed have been moved closer to the front edge to allow for easier picking and to be more prominent. The wide beds in the secret garden have been re-organised, moving taller plants that have





being saved for use as plant supports. And in the cider orchard I've been pruning all the apple trees, reducing their height by roughly a third. We may have a smaller crop this year, but they'll be easier to manage now.

**Sustainability at Birtley**

The garden team works closely with the kitchens and with the HALOW volunteer groups. We grow a wide variety of seasonal fruit, veg, and herbs that the kitchen use, with any excess sold or taken to Bramley's Apples in the village. HALOW also provides any gluts of produce to restaurants and food banks in Guildford. Kitchen scraps that can be composted, are. Birtley also captures rainwater in Butts to be used for container plants and veg.

To be wildlife-friendly, we leave piles of brash in the woodland, patches of long grass are left uncut to encourage wild-flowers, and there are some small log piles on the beds to encourage bugs. And HALOW are currently constructing a badger hide in the wood.

We have also been pleased to participate in the planting of upwards of 800 hedging plants to create new hedges

by the fruit cages and in the parkland opposite Birtley Brook. Hedging plants have been acquired through grants and 20-30 native deciduous trees have been replanted in the woodland and in the parkland. All the trees have been collected from self-seeded saplings, dug up and potted on and there are currently over 100 free trees in the cold frames awaiting planting out.

*\* Birtley does NOT use herbicides but does use organic bone meal plant food when planting. We make our own garden compost with three bays down on the yard on a 3-year rotation plus a holding bay in the kitchen garden for waste from the kitchen. However, we do occasionally buy in some composted farmyard manure.*

**Matt Miller  
Head Gardener**



**Introducing Tom**

In November last year Tom joined us as a part time gardener and with his enthusiastic attitude he has taken the lead in further developing the kitchen garden, ensuring all the space is utilised to supply the kitchen with seasonal fruit, veg and cut flowers. He's currently devising the planting schedule and over the coming months a variety of seeds will be sown, and the greenhouse will soon be full of young plants. He'll be working closely with the HALOW groups who continue to provide excellent support in managing the gardens and wider estate.

crept forward back towards the wall allowing the yellow roses to take prominence and not be overrun once the perennials get going.

Spring flowers we will see in April include snowdrops, crocus, daffodils, and primroses. Other early flowers are hellebores, pulmonaria, irises, alliums, tulips and wild orchids. Plus, the blossom from the fruit trees.

During the quieter winter months, Sam, Tom and HALOW have been slowly but surely cutting back the invasive Bamboo that is taking over certain patches in the woods, with the canes



# The power of plants

Caroline Whalley, director at Birtley House, takes a moment to explain how flowers and plants bring joy and wellbeing to those who live here.

Having fresh flowers and potted plants around the home and workplace has been proven to benefit positivity. Plants can lift our mood, boost our energy, and most importantly, reduce stress and anxiety.

Surely then, fresh flowers and plants are a must-have at Birtley. In fact, I recall many years ago that a family told me that they had chosen Birtley for their parents because of "all the fresh flowers around the home". No doubt there were also other important reasons for their choice, but it sounded good at the time!

Spring is here, which is an exciting and uplifting thought, and it was particularly special when I was able to pick the first flowers of 2022 from the garden, despite the rain and cold – a very cheerful bunch of Narcissi to welcome a new resident to the Nursing Home.

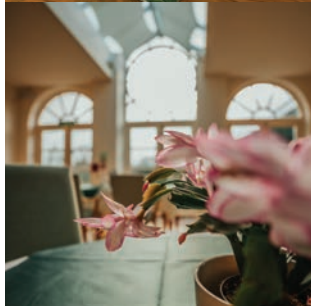
We are extremely blessed here at Birtley with our green space, which is appreciated by so many people of all ages. When it comes to ensuring that there are always fresh flowers in the

home, I certainly feel very lucky that I can enjoy a stroll down the Long Walk, the Secret Garden, the Kitchen Garden and the woodland, to find what I need.

## A natural conversation starter

The benefit is trifold. I love the walk around choosing the flowers, I enjoy arranging them, and mostly I get great pleasure from seeing the happiness and smiles on our residents' faces when they see the fresh flowers adorning their dining room tables, or in the Drawing Room. Flowers are a natural conversation starter – discussions about what the flowers are called, whether they have a scent or not, and other horticultural knowledge is often shared over lunch.

It is not only our residents who appreciate the fresh arrangements but many of our staff comment how lovely it is to have them in the home, showing a genuine interest in the names of the flowers, and stopping to chat to me whilst I arrange them which I find very touching.



*You will see me outside with secateurs and trug, happy to be able to lift everyone's mood with Birtley flowers.*



Indoor houseplants have recently become very popular and thanks to my son Tim's interest in them, several of these attractive plants can be seen in the entrance hall and around the home, bringing a feeling of tranquillity to these areas.

## Beauty all year round

Our beautiful gardens can't be expected to provide us with fresh flowers all year round, so during the winter months, I add "flowers" to my weekly shopping list, trying to select those that I think our residents will particularly like.

I have been known to go from shop to shop before making a final decision! Buying the weekly flowers is not ideal of course if we think of where they are grown and how many miles they have travelled in order to reach our country, but as soon as the garden starts to provide some colour, you will see me outside with secateurs and trug, happy to be able to lift everyone's mood with Birtley flowers.

*Caroline*

**Caroline Whalley**  
Director





Bees are more popular than ever with increasing numbers of honey makers and homemakers taking inspiration from these wonderful insects. Birtley House spoke to Guildford Beekeepers' Chairman, Jonanthan Brookhouse, to find out more about the fascinating art of beekeeping.



Don't worry,  
Bee happy

Did you know that the Guildford division of Surrey Beekeepers Association has active hives within the Birtley Estate?

In fact, beekeeping has been a part of Birtley's history for some time. Birtley House Chairman, Simon Whalley's grandfather, Dr. Lloyd Driver, kept bees on the Birtley House estate during the 1940s and 1950s at the exact same location of today's Teaching Apiary.

It is widely accepted that all insects are in decline globally, which includes the many wild bee species in the UK as well as the managed honeybees. There are many reasons for this decline including the change in our climate.

The aim of The Guildford Division of Surrey Beekeepers Association is to support the art of beekeeping as well as to raise awareness about the environmental and economic importance of bees and biodiversity in Surrey.

This is achieved by running a limited number of structured training courses each year for new and aspiring beekeepers at the Teaching Apiary at Birtley House.



*The gardens at Birtley demonstrate what a mature, pollinator friendly area should look like.*

The training is divided into two parts:

1. A weekly theory programme which happens mostly during the winter months
2. A practical, hands-on, hive management training programme during the summer.

Beekeeping season begins towards the end of April with spring in full swing and the emerging flowers creating a buzz!

Beekeeping is a fascinating hobby and trainees initially learn the basics so that they can manage bees with confidence. Most members

soon find that the more they learn, the more there is to learn and some go onto further their studies with the intermediate and advanced levels.

We aim to create conditions where our members can become proficient and responsible beekeepers whilst enjoying each other's company and sharing knowledge in the process.

At Birtley, we try to highlight the unique environmental pressures that insects face in modern rural and urban settings. We strive to create an understanding of how our bees fit in with the wider ecosystems and how

we individually can support them in our gardens.

The bees at Birtley benefit from the exceptional grounds and beautiful, well-established gardens of the estate including the intentional, wild areas set aside for wildlife. The gardens demonstrate what a mature, pollinator friendly area should look like. It is an absolute delight to wander around and hear the sounds from the birds, to see the flashing colour of butterflies, and to hear the buzzing sounds from the solitary wild bees, the bumblebees, and our honeybees.

The Guildford Division of Surrey Beekeepers Association also hosts talks and practical events for their members throughout the year, as well as taster days, with an annual Open Day for the interested public. Our next Open Day is **29th May at Birtley House** and everyone is welcome to meet our beekeepers and bees (safely inside an observation hive) before enjoying the gardens and a cream tea.





# Conscious cuisine

**Steve Hounsham, Birtley's in-house Chef, loves to use fresh flowers within his dishes for special occasions and themed events – the pop of colour adding an element of sophistication. Our talented kitchen team make the most of all produce grown on site, as Steve explains.**

I'm passionate about using local produce in the dishes we create. Reducing our carbon footprint is important to us – and nothing beats using produce that is grown in the grounds of Birtley House.

We're keen to support local businesses and Birtley uses a local supplier for many of its ingredients. Based just down the road in Cranleigh, the supplier sources products direct from more than 30 growers and farms. I love

knowing that each of our meat orders is handled by the supplier's on-site butcher who has over 30 years of experience.

Spring in the Birtley garden is always good for Asparagus and Rhubarb. This reliable and plentiful produce means the team can plan menus and ensure we get to use these crops when the gardeners bring them in.

I enjoy dressing my dishes with micro cress coriander, basil, pea shoots and more



– all picked straight from Birtley's kitchen garden.

Desserts are always fun to create and my honey parfait, with its homemade honeycomb made from Birtley honey, is a particular favourite with our residents.

The kitchen team at Birtley sends kitchen food waste to a biodigester and our green waste to the compost pile to be reused. We are doing everything we can to be as sustainable as possible.

*Nothing beats using produce that is grown in the grounds of Birtley House.*

**Steve Hounsham**  
Head Chef





# News from the Mews



For many of our residents, moving into our Mews apartments provides a great chance to have a spring clean and declutter.

Moving from a home that someone has lived in for decades into to new 'independent living' accommodation can be daunting, but often we find that residents feel relieved to downsize. Many of our Mews residents comment

that the chance to declutter allows them to focus on the items that are of real value to them.

Residents within the Mews may not be large collectors of consumables and clutter, but they do appreciate the finer things in life such as a good vintage wine.

For the 'make do and mend' generation, sustainability is already an intrinsic part of their values. Phrases such as 'waste not,



*We sometimes see cheeky black Cayuga ducks knocking on the Mews dining door to wish us a friendly Hello!*



want not' while growing up is reflected in plates being polished off at lunch.

Several of our Mews residents enjoy knitting, reading, and a simpler life. And many are avid walkers – keen to share all the best locations on the grounds to find the best spring flowers. Keen recyclers, they are always eager to do their bit for the environment.

Springtime is a lovely time of year at the Mews, and this independent way of living means that residents tend to their own balconies or patios. With well-stocked

bird feeders, the Mews enjoys many a feathered visitor. We even see cheeky black Cayuga ducks knocking on the Mews dining door to wish us a friendly Hello!

**Ania Klementowicz**  
**Mews Co-ordinator**





# Birtley's *sustainable & eco-friendly* values

As a Care Home, Birtley House has always had a strong engagement with community.

This has included significant investment in environmental performance. However, with net zero as the national target and regulations emerging that will significantly impact all business activities, there will be more action required in future years. Simon Whalley and Tim Whalley share the specific actions they have made and the recognitions they have gained so far.

## **C**an you tell us about Birtley's commitment to sustainability?

**Simon:** With Birtley having a known history going back 1,100 years and currently some 48 acres of gardens, parkland, orchards, and woodland, located in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the Surrey Hills), the management of our beautiful and species-rich area has always been important. The site contains a wide variety of habitats, and this was emphasised in the survey undertaken by the Surrey Wildlife Trust in



2008. This survey recorded an unusually broad range of species across the spectrum of plants, insects, birds, and mammals including some rarities and produced a management plan which has been followed as far as possible. The woodland is managed in accordance with the Forestry Commission's Grant Scheme and includes regular coppicing and removal of invasive non-native species. Current work in adding new hedges in the parkland and gardens is being funded by FiPL (the Funding in Protected Landscapes programme) and further work in woodland pond restoration and access is being prepared for later in the year. We also have a Gold Medal for Wildlife Gardening from the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

**What about heating, lighting, and insulation? Birtley is a large and old building which must make this difficult.**

**Tim:** The buildings on

the property have roof insulation but further work is required to install increased double glazing and other improvements in the main house and annex. A wood-fuelled heating system was installed in 2008 and further upgraded in 2014 to meet the new requirements. Gas heating has remained as back up as, with all nursing care, warmth, and hot water are essential for health and safety. The business also won an environmental award from Surrey County Council in 2019.

**Birtley is a long way out in the countryside and not on mains drainage. How does this work for you?**

**Simon:** Birtley has never been on the main drainage system, but we replaced our sewage treatment plant with a reedbed system and this has added a new habitat to the environment as well as reducing energy consumption. Reed buntings and water shrews have

colonised this area and it even attracted a bittern once!

**Care homes, especially though the pandemic, must produce vast amounts of plastic and other waste. Can you reduce this at all?**

**Tim:** A care home, and even more so a nursing home, would seem to be inherently greedy in its use of resources. From medication to year-round heating, from laundry requirements to single use plastics, a nursing home has inputs and outputs per capita that far exceed a 'normal' household. Michael and Tony, two dear residents of recent years who have sadly passed, remained focussed on these problems in ways I feel we have yet been unable to do justice. Tony was passionate, amongst many things, to know that we were doing our bit for the environment. Michael had a very specific desire to see us use less plastic.





*Simon Whalley with the Surrey Hills Enterprise at the Lord Benyon visit, February 2022*

Tony took a particular interest in our biomass boiler. This was originally installed in 2008 and we remain one of the very few care homes in Britain that can boast that upwards of 80% of its heating and hot water requirements are met by burning sustainably managed timber sourced from within a 10-mile radius.

Governed by circumstance rather than choice, we are, almost certainly, the only care home to manage its liquid wastewater without any chemical or mechanical treatment. Since our location has never had a connection to mains drainage, we have run all our liquid outgoings

*We have been here for 90 years, and we are doing our part to be here for another 90 years.*

through a reedbed system. Monitored by the Environment Agency and under tighter constraints due to the proximity of an SSSI, we manage to discharge a staggering amount of acceptably clean water back into nature.

These two remarkable systems epitomise both a long-standing desire and a business necessity to address our environmental sustainability. This has been masterminded by Simon whose passions and knowledge have underpinned these efforts.

The waste generated by this pandemic is a frightening thought. The now habitual use of surgical masks and extra aprons and gloves we have all had to wear, sometimes for mere minutes before disposal are not the only example of the single-use plastic that

Michael urged us to reduce even before the pandemic. From the kitchen to the medication room, disposal plastic is a very real and, at least for now, unavoidable fact of life for us in the Home, and any initiatives for improvement must consider the practicalities of safety and hygiene which remain paramount in this context.

**What else are you doing to compensate for carbon outputs?**

**Simon:** Firewood logs, locally made charcoal, and a wood sawmill on site also utilise Birtley coppice and wood produce.

Since 2012, all our 'trade waste', that which is not segregated for recycling as is our glass, cardboard and newspapers, is sent to the phenomenal Energy from Waste (EfW) facility ▶





...continued

outside Heathrow where it is incinerated through a system that not only generates its own electricity but captures and recycles the noxious fumes given off as a by-product. So, whilst there remains a significant logistical exercise in transporting this waste, it is positive that so much of our waste avoids going to landfill.

Likewise, our laundry. Less than 18 months old, our relatively new machines boast the most modern efficiencies and 'smart' controls that ensure that the temperature of the water, the detergents, and the use of de-stainers are kept to the minimum to be effective. Discharged as it is through our living reedbed, the outputs from the laundry are of a greater significance than that of other Homes.



As with all things electrical, the issues of compatibility and product lifecycle are not in tune to the efforts to improve energy efficiency. Whilst the replacement of 50w halogen downlights in residential rooms with 10w fire-rated LED fittings ten years ago has helped to offset substantial increases in electricity costs, we have deliberately avoided wholesale moves to LED as current trends encourage. I have been very receptive to our electrician's pleas to avoid replacing the good quality fluorescent lighting we have throughout the more utilitarian areas of the Home, and indeed, where we had made such replacements, the relatively short life spans of 'new' LED lighting has been all too clear. It is interesting to consider, in these changes to LED, whether the products' lifespan and inability to repair units is as environmentally friendly as the salesman might tell us!

**What about your commitment to wildlife?**

**Simon:** We also undertake specific conservation work

and have many bird boxes in the estate provided by local bird clubs and several bat boxes donated by a former resident in the care home. There are numerous trees planted in memory of former residents by families who felt that Birtley had been their loved one's real home in their later years. We must have planted well over 1,000 trees on the property over my lifetime plus several hundred coppice stools cut and managed in rotation and some 600 metres of hedging. The pond in the garden and the lake in the parkland were all created to add habitat and are well populated with aquatic species including thousands of tadpoles each spring. The grasslands in the park are also developing a good range of wildflower species and the 450-year-old Oak there also has species that have not been seen in Surrey since the 1970s. Even the main lawn in front of the house has a Red Data Book species of Chamomile! (Chamomile Nobile was planted in lawns in Elizabethan times for its scent when walked on or crushed). We have

prepared a Birtley Birds leaflet – recording all the species we have identified here in over 70 years – and similar information sheets for mammals etc are also being prepared.



*Simon*

**Simon Whalley**  
**Chairman**



*Tim*

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





**Birtley**  
House

# NEWS

## FROM BIRTLEY



Birtley's chairman, Simon Whalley, restocked the Birtley House lake recently and the moment was captured so brilliantly on film. The practice of releasing fish into a river, lake, or ocean to supplement existing populations dates back hundreds of years.

A new copse of ten Birtley House self-seeded oak trees was planted in the parkland at West Horsley Place in March.

The trees were planted by three generations of Whalleys and Bakers in memory of their parents, grandparents and great grandparents, Dick and June Whalley, and Francis and Elizabeth (Biz) Baker.



The tree planting event was part of a project by the Surrey Hills Champions, a local group who contribute to the environmental sustainability of the Surrey Hills.

On the day, a planting was made on behalf of Caroline Whalley's brother, Andy Baker, the first overseas

Surrey Hills Champion.

The youngest of our Champions, Richard Whalley, read out a lovely poem called, "Family Trees" by Adam Coleman as part of the celebration.

Thank you to everyone for making this such a happy and memorable day.



## Your memories of Birtley

This year the Whalley Family Business celebrates 90 years of providing care.

Over the last nine decades, so many memories have been created by local residents, staff, our own residents, and all their families.

**We'd love your help**  
As part of the celebrations, we are compiling a library of our history and we would genuinely appreciate your help.

If you have any photographs (digital or printed), newspaper clippings, ephemera or anecdotes relating to Birtley House, we would love to see and hear them!

Whilst we cannot guarantee

all will be used, we may use some on our social media or in our next publication.

Please send your contributions to:  
jennifer@birtleyhouse.co.uk  
Or post them to Mrs Jennifer Thompson, Birtley House, Birtley Road, Bramley, Surrey GU5 0LB  
Please let us know if you require any original copies to be returned.

## A letter from the House of Commons

Simon recently received a letter from Jeremy Hunt, MP.

In keeping with the theme of this edition of *House & Home*, its theme of sustainability and the environment may be of interest to our readers.





# Reasons to celebrate



The prestigious Great British Care Awards recognise excellence in social care and pay tribute to care homes and individuals that have demonstrated excellence in their field of work. Birtley House was therefore delighted to be shortlisted for five awards in the South East Category.

## Our congratulations go to:



**1. Sylwia Indycka,** who, having won The Care Home Registered Manager Award for the South East, went on to come second in the country with her Highly Commended award at the national finals.



**2. Steve Hounsham,** Head Chef at Birtley House, who was highly commended for The Home Care Chef Award for challenging care home food stereotypes.



**3. Tina Bell,** Head of Activities and Wellbeing at Birtley House, who was successfully shortlisted for Activities Organiser Award for keeping residents entertained during the pandemic when day trips and visitations were restricted.



**4. Tim Whalley,** Nominated Individual at Birtley House, was successfully shortlisted for The Care Innovator Award for continuing to push technological improvements within the care sector.



**5. Birtley House Nursing Home** itself, with its history of almost 90 years of care, was successfully shortlisted for the Care Employer Award.



Frank Whalley, Managing Director of Birtley House Nursing Home said,

“We have an outstanding team of unsung heroes at Birtley House. Every member of staff gives an exceptional level of care. I’m delighted that their dedication and professionalism has been recognised. As you can see by the smiles on our faces, we are extremely proud of our winners and all those at Birtley who were shortlisted for the awards.”



# An update from HR

## New Starters

A warm welcome to:

**On the Care Team we welcome:**

- Antoaneta Getova
- Dawn Meadwell
- Ioana Mihalache
- Saskia Hodder
- Amita Mall
- Maria Orban
- Adele Conte
- Karen Portsmouth

**Nursing team:**

- Melda Easo
- Zoe January

**Housekeeping team:**

- Shirley Martin
- Joanna Northcott

**Mews:**

- Ania Klemtowicz
- Amanda Dinsmore

**Admin:**

- Beverley Fewings
- Keri Vass

**Kitchen**

- Maria Harwood
- Christopher Tuck
- Debra Burt

Replacing Jo Evans in accounts, we welcome Sarah Sutton, and Jennifer Thompson who joins us on a permanent basis in marketing!



Keri Vass



Beverley Fewings



Jennifer Thompson



Melda Easo



## Way to go!

**Congratulations to Rudo Rumveye (Clinical Nurse Lead) for running the Southampton Race for Life.**

## Retiring after 20 years!

Tony Inwood is sadly leaving Birtley after working in Maintenance for over 20 years. There is not a room

in the Home that has not been improved by Tony's handiwork and his knowledge and experience will be hard to replace. Tony has decided to take early retirement and we all wish him luck. He said, "I have worked at Birtley House for over 20 years and although those were some of my best years I am looking forward to the next chapter."







Birtley  
House



KINDNESS • INTEGRITY • POSITIVITY • ADAPTABILITY


# House & Home

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


Birtley House Nursing Home, Birtley House, Bramley, Guildford, GU5 0LB  
01483 892055

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

Find us on social media:

 Facebook: @birtleyhouse

 Instagram: @birtleyhouse\_nursinghome

 LinkedIn: @Birtley House Nursing Home