



Generation games: Fun and friendship with St George's College students



Students sang and played for residents at Ingram House

The benefits of intergenerational relationships are well known, and our Community Team have been working hard over the last few years to build links between our charity and local schools, colleges, and youth groups. So, we've been excited to welcome young people back to Whiteley to meet with our residents.

At the end of last month, we were visited by three groups of students from St George's College, who undertook various activities as part of a joint initiative which also supports the college's community outreach programme.

At Ingram House, students helped brighten up their garden flower boxes and later entertained residents and staff with a concert and a quiz. "We had singing, musicians and a theatrical performance and the quiz was lots of fun too. They were absolutely brilliant!" Lisa Sparrow, Regis-

tered Manager, said afterwards.

Another group visited the Golf Club and painted their garden furniture. Afterwards they met up with members and played a few rounds of golf and ended the afternoon with a BBQ.



Residents were also delighted with their colourful planters

Terry Pottinger, President of the Golf Club said: "We had about ten boys and they were great, very polite. They did a good job with the painting and brought us some plants for our club planters and some sausages for the BBQ which was kind, although we'd already bought food for them. As not all the lads had played golf before, some of the members came up and gave lessons in the practice nets."

So, would he recommend other clubs take students next year? "Yes definitely. They were well behaved and worked hard and their teachers helped us supervise. We all had a good chat and

bit of banter about the football too, so I think everyone had a bit of a laugh. Also, I think it's good for older people to have youngsters about. They're fun and it keeps you a bit more positive. I'm lucky to have grandchildren so that helps me but not everyone does, so things like this can be a nice chance to mix with young people," he said.



After the students finished their painting, they joined some of the club members for a round.

At the end of the week, another student group from St George's did some gardening up at the Clubhouse and then helped Sylvie, Dionne and the team with Fish and Chip Friday. Afterwards they entertained everyone with some music and a quiz and chatted to residents.

Tiffany Bicarregui, who organises community outreach projects for St George's College and Junior School, said: "GO! or *Georgian Outreach* is an impactful volunteer programme that offers students a unique opportunity to connect with their local community. During lockdown, students became very aware of how easy it was to feel isolated. When we came out of lockdown, they were vocal about the need and interest to do more with older people and in care homes, so we did just that at Whiteley Village, and the students loved it!"

Our Volunteer Coordinator, Lilian Meagher, said: "We are so grateful to St George's College for helping us arrange these visits, and the students really worked hard. Young people bring a lot of fun and vitality, and it was great to hear how much residents and staff enjoyed and appreciat-

ed their efforts, so I hope this success will help us organise more of these types of activities."

Update from the Estates Team



St Mark's:

As many residents will have seen we had several very large conifer trees removed between St Mark's and the

Old Chaplaincy. This was because the root system, and the large canopy of branches which was



blocking out the sunlight were both causing damp problems for these buildings. in the church and the Old Chaplaincy. Also, in some cases the

tops of the trees had broken off and needed to be made safe, so given the other issues it made sense to remove them completely. This has helped to significantly improve the light for both buildings. Next year we will be grinding the tree stumps out and re-landscaping this area to tidy it up and re-seed the grass. (Above you can see the progress of the job and the difference it's made to the area.)

Lake dredging: We recently had a survey of the lake, which revealed that we have a huge amount of silt which needs to be removed as it reduces the oxygen in the water. The survey also tested a sample of the silt which showed it was clean and not contaminated by any chemicals. Dredging the lake to remove the silt will be very expensive, so we are planning to apply for a grant. To do this we have to complete a biodiversity report on the lake which is expected to take place in September, and we'll keep resi-

dents updated on progress.

Woodland management: Rhododendrons can be very invasive shrubs and prevent other plants from growing around them, so we need to significantly reduce the numbers of them in our woodlands. This will be an extensive and long term piece of work over the next few years, as we have around 100 acres of woodland. We will be applying for a grant from the Forestry Commission to help us pay for it, which is a complex process, and we will update residents on our progress in the autumn.

Phyllis Rowland at 100: An inspirational story



Phyllis Rowland proudly displays her 100th birthday card from the Queen - a milestone she celebrated recently with her family. But given how many near misses she has had, it's truly amazing she's here at all. Phyllis isn't just a survivor however, as she has fought hard for the life she wanted.

What we would now consider as the inspiring qualities of a modern, independent and determined woman were quite exceptional 80 years ago. So, it's not an exaggeration to call her a trailblazer. "My poor mum used to despair, but I was very determined and headstrong. Looking back, I can't quite believe everything I did!" she says.

Knocked over by various vehicles during her life - including a car, a motorbike and most amazingly a lorry when she was just eight, Phyllis also escaped a fall from a third story window aged 11 months (her mother grabbed her just in time from the windowsill), and she survived an almost lethal dose of diphtheria. "People used to

joke I was made of iron," she says.

In the war, an East End chapel she was sheltering in during an air raid, took a direct hit from a V2 rocket. It destroyed the chapel but miraculously didn't explode, enabling those sheltering in the crypt to survive, including Phyllis and her sister Kitty. Ironically, it was the only time the two teenage sisters decided to use a shelter, having decided not to hide anywhere during the constant air raids in defiance of Hitler. "My sister used to say, tomorrow we might be dead, so today we're going to do what we like!"

The oldest of four sisters, Phyllis was born and raised in Hackney. After leaving school, she trained as a dressmaker and machinist, and then spotted an advert for a job making fashion in Nottingham. The distance didn't deter her, and aged just 17 she applied, got the job and found herself accommodation.

While working there she saw another advert for machinists in Woking, making parachutes and flying suits. "I wanted to do my bit for the war, so I applied. I had to travel and organise my own digs again, and the job was much harder than I'd thought it would be." Her employers didn't quite realise what they'd taken on either, as after a while Phyllis decided the salary wasn't good enough as she and other women workers were struggling to pay their bills. So, as a forerunner of the now famous machinists at Dagenham almost 20 years later, Phyllis took the female workforce out on strike for fairer pay. Not only were they successful, but the company realised Phyllis' potential and promoted her!

As an experienced machinist, she was asked to lead on a top-secret new initiative, creating parachutes for small wooden boxes which were to contain carrier pigeons and be dropped behind enemy lines so the birds could fly vital messages between our troops when other types of communications were not possible. "The director stood behind me as I made them, as it had to be done exactly right," she said. "We worked hard, and it was very pressured at times, but we all felt we were making a difference." Job satisfac-

tion was not all Phyllis took from her time in that factory, as her and the other workers were allowed to take home some of the silk off cuts. Phyllis made herself a scarf and dyed it pink, and still proudly wears it to this day as a fond memento of those days.

After the war, Phyllis married and later had a son. She continued as a machinist but now producing high fashion, and worked on the designer, Jeff Banks' first collection. On retirement, her and her husband moved to Cornwall but years later after he died, she moved to Byfleet to live with her son, who eventually helped her move to Whiteley Village. She was still living very independently until she was 97 when she decided to move into Huntley House, our extra care centre.

Phyllis finds the restrictions of old age frustrating - although she accepts this comes with the territory as a centenarian! But it's good to see that the feisty spirit and sense of humour which has served her so well over the years hasn't diminished.

"It's family which keeps me going and I've been lucky to have been surrounded by a wonderful, loving family all my life," she says. Aside from her card from the Queen, the other birthday greeting she is very proud of is the handmade card from her granddaughter and great granddaughter. "You're our inspiration" it says – and it's not hard to see why. Happy 100th Birthday Phyllis!

No sweat!



We were very grateful to employees from local company SHL, who volunteered for us recently on one of the hottest days of the year to help restore some of the garden furniture at Huntley House. Thankfully, we managed to find them a

shady spot and they kept smiling despite the heat and did a brilliant job—thanks guys!

Game, set and munch!



Another great serve! Behind the counter [L-R]: Sanni, Sam, Wendy & Julie from HR, IT & Reception.

A big thank you also to our HR and IT teams for their very successful Wimbledon themed Afternoon Tea fundraiser this week. There were some delicious home-made cakes and of course strawberries and cream - the perfect accompaniment to watch Cam Norrie storm through to the semi-finals!

Head of People, Fiona Mayfield-Smith said: "It was a brilliant afternoon with some great teamwork and we're very grateful to all those who supported us - including Wendy from Reception who was our barista - helping us raise a fantastic £204 for the Trust! "It was lovely to meet residents and have a chat with them too. We had lots of compliments about our cakes and some said they'd like us to do this every month! I'm not sure my baking skills could survive that, but it was a lot of fun for a great cause."



[L-R] Sue, Sam, Fiona, Julie and Wendy from HR, IT & Reception