

# RMBI NEWS



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# WELCOME NOTE FROM MARK LLOYD



In 2019, our charity has continued to provide care services for older Freemasons and their families across our 18 Homes in England and Wales. Around 600 residents moved into our

Homes over the last year with a third of our residents being directly referred by local Almoners. This reflects our continued focus to support the Masonic community.

It has been a successful year for RMBI Care Co. with the achievement of 'Outstanding', 'Good', and 'fully compliant' regulatory outcomes from our English (CQC) and Welsh (CIW) regulators. Our charity was rated a 'Top 20 mid-size care group' in the Care Home Awards based on recommendations on leading care website Carehome.co.uk. Our HR Team was also nominated in the HR Excellence Awards for their Learning and Development strategy.

In May, we gained planning approval in Berkshire for our first new build development in a decade. This will involve a new specialist nursing and dementia care home built, followed by over 60 retirement community apartments with fine dining and leisure facilities. The new Home will demonstrate our commitment to offer modern care services and facilities and will extend our services to the younger retirement community.

I would like to thank our dedicated staff who support our residents and work hard to deliver our values every day and our Trustees for their guidance.

**Mark Lloyd**  
Managing Director

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Resident joins war against plastic

Eunice Holding who lives at James Terry Court in South Croydon, is supporting the 'war on plastic' by making handbags out of old carrier bags. She is selling her recycled bags to raise money towards activities for residents. "It's important to do what we can to preserve the planet for future generations," she says.



### Get fit with motortone

Earlier this year, Cadogan Court residents in Exeter became the first Home to try Motortone, a new gym designed for older people and is part of Exeter Sports Academy. Motortone offers low impact exercise to help people with joint mobility, weight loss or management, toning, circulation and rehabilitation.



### The Big Knit for Age UK

Cornwallis Court residents in Bury St Edmunds have been busy knitting tiny hats to support Age UK's Big Knit. The campaign is raising funds to support winter projects to keep older people warm through befriending, warm meals and other services. The hats will be placed on Innocent smoothie bottles and 25p will be donated to Age UK for every smoothie sold.



# WORLD'S OLDEST MAGICIAN RETIRES AT QUEEN ELIZABETH COURT

World famous magician and wartime entertainer Mark Raffles, is enjoying his retirement in Llandudno after 80 years in show business.

Born in January 1922 in Manchester, Mark discovered he had a gift for magic from an early age. His family were in showbiz – his grandfather was a comedy star at the beginning of music hall in the 1800s and his mother Amelia appeared with film legend Charlie Chaplin in the original stage production of Casey Court.

Mark became a regular on TV during the 60s, appearing on popular variety shows under the stage name of Ray St Clair before his famous pickpocket act as Mark Raffles. During the Second World War, he became part of the Entertainments National Service Association, which was set up to provide entertainment for British armed forces personnel. Mark entertained servicemen and women in army barracks and theatres all over the UK.

Mark, who was known as the oldest working magician in the world before his retirement,

said: "I've had a marvellous life and I am lucky to have been able to continue for as long as I have. Magic has led me to meet all sorts of interesting people and enabled me to serve my country."



Speaking about his wartime service, Mark said: "Many times I was approached after an ENSA show by a serviceman saying he was a magician. Out would come his treasured pack of cards, ropes and thimbles. Magic was very much alive in the armed forces during the war."

On one occasion, before a show at a Royal Airforce Base in Lincolnshire, Mark recalls: "We were given a piece of chalk and shown buggy loads of bombs. We were invited to chalk our signature, messages or cartoons to Mr Hitler and we did it with gusto. Later that night, some members of our audience had to deliver those bombs and I couldn't help but think, had we delivered the last bit of laughter and glamour some of those airmen would ever see? It certainly made you work hard to please."

Living at Queen Elizabeth Court, Mark enjoys watching the entertainers that visit but is often busy with his own activities such as writing to magazines. Above all Mark enjoys "the Home's location to the beautiful area of Llandudno," which he visits daily. "The wonderful staff are so attentive and everyone is so happy," he added.



**Right and below:**  
Queen Elizabeth  
Court resident  
Mark Raffles at the  
Home in Llandudno.



“The wonderful staff  
are so attentive and  
everyone is so happy.”

# IT'S UP, UP AND AWAY FOR CONNAUGHT COURT RESIDENT

Staff at Connaught Court in York are helping 96 year old resident Ron Shelley, to fulfil a life-long ambition to fly in a hot air balloon over Yorkshire.



Above, Resident Ron Shelley with his wartime medals and his father's medals from the First World War.

Ron Shelley, who has lived at the Home for three years, confided to staff that he would love to take to the skies to mark his 97<sup>th</sup> year, so they are duly set about making it happen. Adventurous Ron was delighted when staff revealed the surprise and he can't wait to fly over the glorious countryside of North Yorkshire with his son, Peter.

Ron said: "I thought it would be a thrilling one off experience, a once in a life-time trip, so I'm seizing the chance while I still can!"

Ron was born on 3 September 1922 in India where his father was posted with the British Army and came back to

England when he was three years old and grew up in London. During the Second World War, he was a wireless operator. He was sent to France six days after D-Day, aged just 22.

He was involved in sending out false missives to "confound and confuse" the enemy. Ron explains: "It worked. My dummy messages, which I sent from a radio truck, led the enemy to believe that there was a whole division of 3,000 men, too many to take on, so they didn't attack."

Ron has enjoyed a life full of travel and adventure with army postings all over the



Above, Ron as a young man in the British Army.

world and continued his passion for radio as an amateur radio enthusiast. Later Ron met and married the love of his life, Thelma and they had two sons. They lived in Fulford and for a while they ran the Masons Arms public house on Fishergate in York. Sadly, Thelma passed away in 2018 after 64 years of "wonderful marriage". Ron now has five grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

He is remarkably active and youthful, which he says is because he has: "always been sporty and used to be a physical training instructor in the army." He enjoys regular walks round the Home's parkland and takes part in all the activities and entertainment at Connaught Court.

"I thought it would be a thrilling one off experience, a once in a life-time trip, so I'm seizing the chance while I still can!"



# FARNFIELD COURT RESIDENT

## GIVEN THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF LONDON

**Rita Upchurch MBE, 85, has been recognised for her outstanding contribution to society.**

Among her many achievements has been her work improving the lives of those with facial disfigurement caused by burns and medical conditions.

She attended a special ceremony at London's Guildhall, accompanied by family and friends, where she was presented with a framed certificate – a confirmation of her being granted the Freedom of the City.

Born in 1932 in Hampstead, Rita spent her early childhood in North London, and after being evacuated during the war, the family settled in South London. Rita has contributed through her work in education and with various well-known charities, including the British Red Cross. She developed a new camouflage make-up technique which continues to help people with different forms of disfigurement in hospitals across the UK.

Rita received an MBE in 2016 and her work has also been recognised by the London British Design Centre, where she won a medical award for

**Top right,** Rita receiving her Freedom of the City of London with Freemasons William Browning and Michael Cawston.



creating a make-up range providing coverage for scars. In 2002, Rita founded the AZOOR Society, a charity which funds research into a rare genetic eye disease called Azoor, a condition which can lead to total blindness. Her daughter had developed the disease and no research was being carried out at the time, so Rita decided to set up her own charity, of which she is now Chairperson.



*“The great honour in having this award has confirmed that this is where I truly belong.”*

Receiving the Freedom of the City of London, Rita said: I am a Londoner by birth, and have lived here all my life. My work has taken me all over the world, but coming home to this great city has always been an uplifting experience. The great honour in having this award has confirmed that this is where I truly belong.”

Rita was nominated for the Freedom of the City of London by fellow Freemasons, William Browning and Michael Cawston.



# AN OPEN LETTER

Below, MCF supported Connor and Kian to have fun days out during the summer holidays.



Dear MCF,

Since my husband died, money has been tight. While he was ill, I was his full-time carer so keeping my job just wasn't an option, but the benefits we received helped us to get by. Once he died, those benefits disappeared and things became very difficult.

As a single mother, taking care of my two young boys, Connor aged 10 and Kian aged 7 can be tough. Making sure we have enough money to cover our everyday expenses is difficult enough, without thinking about the additional experiences I'd like to give them.

The help I have received from the MCF has made such a difference to our lives. As well as receiving support to cover essentials like school uniforms or lunches, they also get the chance to have a bit of fun with their friends at football club and music lessons. We have also been fortunate to receive grants towards a holiday and days out – things that I would never have been able to budget for.

Over the summer holidays, the boys were lucky enough to enjoy two holidays which would never have been possible

without the help of the MCF. We decided to take advantage of the unusually hot weather to enjoy a proper British seaside holiday! In July we set off on the ferry across the Solent to enjoy a week of outdoor fun on the Isle of Wight. We spent a lot of time crabbing and swimming at the beach – the boys love anything outdoors so this was such a treat. We also took in lots of the local attractions like the Needles and learnt about dinosaurs at the Dinosaur Isle museum.

A few weeks later we were off down south again, this time to Bournemouth. The sun was still shining so we enjoyed playing and swimming at the beach as well as visiting the arcade and eating out.

The chance to get away was absolutely brilliant for the boys, and I got to enjoy a much needed holiday from the housework.

I can't change that they will forever live without their dad but I can help them make amazing memories which is the most important thing. Happy, family memories are everything. Thank you will never be enough."

Kim

The MCF can support freemasons and their life or widowed partners, and children and grandchildren who are under the age of 25 and in full-time education. If you have a financial, health, family or care-related need, get in touch with us today:

Phone: 0800 035 60 90  
Email: [help@mcf.org.uk](mailto:help@mcf.org.uk)  
Web: [www.mcf.org.uk/support](http://www.mcf.org.uk/support)

# ZETLAND COURT RESIDENTS AMONG THE FIRST TO TRY LATEST MAGIC TABLE TECHNOLOGY

The Home has installed a Mobii magic table to floor system in its dementia support house for residents to enjoy an abundance of stimulating sensory activities.

Mobii magic table is an award winning technology, developed in the UK by OMi. It consists of a portable projector that throws interactive, colourful and moving light games and activities onto a table, floor or any other surface. It can even project onto a duvet or bedside table, so that those who are less mobile can enjoy it.

It responds to any movement, projecting scenes and sounds

from nature, physical games, quizzes, reminiscence experiences and painting activities to stimulate and engage residents.

Residents at the Home have enjoyed playing with fish swimming across a pond, working together on a giant jigsaw puzzle, throwing a beach ball to one another and even playing tennis. They have made a virtual

cake, cracking eggs with a splat and whizzing together the ingredients.

Zetland Court Activities Coordinator, Karen Casey, said: "Our residents adore the Mobii magic table. It's amazing to see the impact it is having on their health and wellbeing. It has certainly proved to be a wonderful way to encourage social stimulation among our residents with dementia. We are very grateful to The All Souls Lodge in Weymouth for generously contributing to the cost of installing this cutting edge technology in our Home."

Similar magic table technologies have also been installed at Queen Elizabeth Court, Prince Michael of Kent Court, Cornwallis Court and Lord Harris Court with thanks to the Homes' Association of Friends and other supporters.

**Left:** Zetland Court resident, Wendy Leddin and Activities Coordinator, Karen Casey, put the Home's cutting edge technology to the test.





# PLANS UNVEILED FOR NEW BERKSHIRE CARE HOME

Below, An architect's illustration of the proposed purpose built care home.

Plans for a brand new building for Lord Harris Court in Berkshire will commence in 2020.



Planning permission has been given to transform the site on which the current 1970's building sits, replacing it with a new purpose built care home and in due course, a Retirement Community development with 60 apartments.

The construction for the new care home will commence in January 2020 and will provide 45 placements for residents from the Spring of 2021. During this time the existing Lord Harris Court will continue to operate.

The new Home will offer nursing and dementia care facilities with the latest assistive

technologies and design to ensure a personalised approach to care and support.

After completion, the existing Lord Harris Court, which has been rated 'Good' by CQC, will close to make way for the new Retirement Community development which will offer a range of one and two bed apartments with leisure and restaurant facilities on site.

Work on the new care home will be in partnership with our builders Castleoak who have a long established track record in the design and construction of care homes.

This partnership is underpinned by our professional consultants, including our Architects Carless and Adams, and our Project Managers Faithfull & Gould.

RMBC Care Co. Managing Director Mark LLOYD, said: "We are delighted that our exciting plans for our first new purpose built care home in a decade have been approved. We are committed to investing in our existing care homes as well as creating new build developments which reflect the current and future care needs of older people, including specialist end of life care provision."

# APPLYING AT AN RMBI HOME

At RMBI Care Co., we provide residential care, nursing and dementia support to older Freemasons, their families and people in the wider community.

We have been caring for older people for over 170 years and today we support over 1,000 residents across 18 care homes in England and Wales.



**1 Albert Edward Prince of Wales Court, Bridgend**  
Tel: 01656 785 311

**2 Barford Court, Hove**  
Tel: 01273 777 736

**3 Cadogan Court, Exeter**  
Tel: 01392 251 436

**4 Connaught Court, York**  
Tel: 01904 626 238

**5 Cornwallis Court, Suffolk**  
Tel: 01284 768 028

**6 Devonshire Court, Leicester**  
Tel: 01162 714 171

**7 Ecclesholme, Manchester**  
Tel: 01617 889 517

**8 James Terry Court, Croydon**  
Tel: 020 8688 1745

**9 Lord Harris Court, Berkshire**  
Tel: 01189 787 496

**10 Prince Edward Duke of Kent Court, Essex**  
Tel: 01376 345534

**11 Prince George Duke of Kent Court, Kent**  
Tel: 020 8467 0081

**12 Prince Michael Of Kent Court, Watford**  
Tel: 01923 234 780

**13 Queen Elizabeth Court, Llandudno**  
Tel: 01492 877 276

**14 Scarbrough Court, Northumberland**  
Tel: 01670 712 215

**15 Shannon Court, Surrey**  
Tel: 01428 604 833

**16 The Tithebarn, Liverpool**  
Tel: 0151 924 3683

**17 Zetland Court, Bournemouth**  
Tel: 01202 769 169

**18 Harry Priestley House, Doncaster**  
Residential care for adults with learning disabilities.  
Tel: 01405 814 777

Contact your preferred Home today to find out more about our services.

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