



Kincarrathie House

Newsletter

Summer 2025

A summer full of sunshine!

Hello and a special welcome to all who are receiving our newsletter for the first time. I hope it gives you a flavour of life at Kincarrathie over the past few months. What lovely surroundings we are in—perfect to enjoy the good weather and all the summer wildlife around us, like the annual brood of little ducklings we had on the pond in June.

At the end of my piece in the last newsletter I mentioned that some staff including myself were going to do a 26 mile sponsored walk around Loch Leven to raise money for the residents' fund. Well, I'm proud to say that we managed it—Katie, Sonia, Paula and myself on June 6th and then Gillian at a later date .

We had a great start to the day of the walk, arriving early morning at Kincarrathie to find a surprise waiting for us - a group of residents gathered at the front door to see us off and wish us luck. Phil was the mastermind of this plan and was there waving a huge Union Jack he had somehow come by. He had even managed to persuade Elaine to get up extra early, which he reckoned was quite an achievement!



After driving to Loch Leven we started off on our walk. For the first fifteen miles all was well, but then we all started to feel it, and there were some complaints that I was walking too fast. By the time we reached the twenty mile mark we all had aches and pains. Luckily, I used to be a girl guide and had come prepared with tape to strap up any protesting joints, so we were able to hobble on despite Katie's sore knee, Sonia's painful leg and my aching feet.

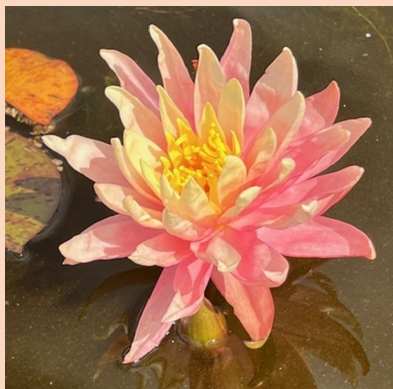
Weather was good - just one short downpour about half way which was actually quite welcome to cool us all down. We are delighted to have raised almost £1,000 towards more activities, events and trips out.

That sponsored walk is just one example of how staff are prepared to go the extra mile for residents (no pun intended!) and on that note I would like to thank the chefs for all that they do for us. It is not just on special occasions like the Garden Party when we see them rise to the occasion, it is every day. As well as preparing a very good basic menu, they will always try to accommodate individual requests and preferences at mealtimes if they can, and there are so many different things prepared for suppertime in particular I don't know how they manage. I know residents particularly appreciate when the chefs give their time to bake extra items like scones and cakes for special visitors coming or a birthday, and the activities team are grateful for their support, not only at regular activities like "cheese and wine" and "pie and a pint" but also for annual celebrations, from Wimbledon's strawberries and cream to haggis, neeps and tatties at Hogmanay. We are not the Ritz Hotel of course, but I think our chefs do a fantastic job with the time and resources they have.

What an enjoyable summer we've had, with residents often just relaxing in the sun on the balcony or sitting in the shade outside reading or doing a crossword together. It's as if we are all on holiday in the Mediterranean.

Best regards as always,

Nicola MaCallum



OUR LOVELY GARDENS

At Kincarrathie we are lucky to have such beautiful grounds for residents, families and friends to enjoy. Look at this water lily which was blooming in the walled garden, for example—isn't it lovely!

We don't always have the weather to take full advantage of our grounds, but this year we have been lucky to have had several extended periods of sunshine in which to enjoy them.

For some residents gardening has been a life-long interest, and when they help to tend our planters and raised beds it brings back happy memories of their own homes. We can provide regular opportunities for this thanks to Jackie's enthusiasm and the support of the Kincarrathie gardening team. The residents' Gardening Club has kept going this summer despite droughts, rainstorms and storm Floris, to keep our surroundings in great shape.

Fruit and vegetables from the gardens have now ripened and how nice it is to have fresh produce from our own garden to use in the kitchen—you can really taste the difference! Well done to John and William for keeping everything growing so well and to the chefs for making good use of their produce in our meals.

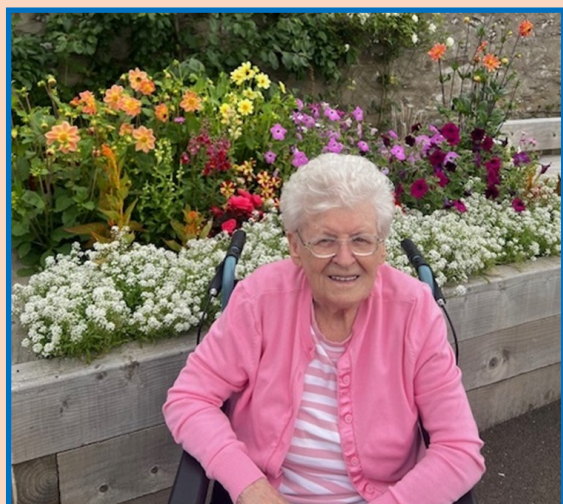


Ripening plums



Apples ripe and ready

Of course the garden is not just a place of gardening. It can be a great source of pleasure just sitting out and enjoying the fresh air, chatting to the gardeners as they work or to other residents as they pass. We also take activities out there when we can, for example the concert by Mike Mooney on June 12th which residents enjoyed tremendously (see more details and photos on page 3)



Staff love taking residents outside to enjoy the gardens together and also perhaps to take a turn around the outside of the house with its lovely views over the city of Perth.



Concerts with a Difference



Concert in the Walled Garden

We love to take our activities outside when we can, and there was a lot of finger-crossing as we approached our concert by entertainer Mike Mooney, planned to be out in the walled garden, weather permitting.

The skies looked a bit doubtful in the morning but we decided to think positive—we went ahead, and what a superb afternoon everyone had.

The concert was very well attended and I know Mike the singer enjoyed it as much as the residents—he said he would come back for a repeat performance any time!



Piano, Recorder and Clarinet Recital

This concert on 22nd August was a performance in memory of Eileen Primrose, a previous resident who had been a music specialist in Perthshire schools.

Some friends of Eileen put together a programme of duets and trios for us including a variety of styles from Elizabethan pieces to jazz.

The concert was well-attended and very much enjoyed by residents.



‘Spotlight on a Resident’

Mary Philip



Mary was born in Walker Street, Edinburgh, and spent all her young life in Edinburgh except for during the war when she and her older sister Jean were privately evacuated to her grandfather's house near Berwick. She was educated at James Gillespie's High School for Girls. "It wasn't a posh school," Mary insists, "but it was a good school."

When she was a girl Mary had an operation during which the surgeon accidentally cut the nerve at the side of her face, leaving her with a lop-sided smile. The headmistress of her school sent for her and tried to console her, telling her not to

worry about it, but Mary remembers leaving the office thinking "What's she going on about? Why would I worry about that – it's just something that happened."

That is typical of Mary's attitude to life, always trying to look on the positive side. She tells a very funny story about her life as a cookery teacher in a rough area of Leith. She was walking a class along a road and they went past some huge graffiti written on a wall which read "Mrs Philip is a sh**". The pupil who wrote that graffiti did not succeed in upsetting her teacher, however—Mary says she just thought "Well, I'm obviously getting through to them!" and laughed it off.

Mary says the most wonderful thing in her life was marrying her husband Norris. He was a padre in the army and as a padre's wife she travelled around the world with him to various postings including Cyprus and Berlin. Mary has had a full life and is also a published author of a book called "Who Wants to Cook?"

Mary says five thank yous every morning, before she even gets dressed. She tells everyone she used to have four, but now she has five, and the fifth is that she is here, at Kincarrathie. Mary really enjoys her life here. What she loves most is walking down to the pond at the bottom of the beautiful walled garden and sitting there, watching the traffic go up and down the road. She says she can get quite lost in her thoughts sitting on that bench, but she doesn't worry about it. "If they lose me they know where to find me," she says.

Out and About !

Many of our residents love going away out and we continue to provide these opportunities on Wednesday afternoons whenever possible.

Many of these trips involve a nice cup of tea or coffee and a cake, and why not!

Here are Gillian and Margaret enjoying a posh tea time at Effie's restaurant in Perth High Street



Our most recent trip to Perth Museum with Jean, Bryan, Margaret, and Avril was very enjoyable. The Stone of Destiny presentation was



unavailable due to vandalism by an Australian visitor (who decided to smash up its glass case just the day before our visit!). However there were plenty of interesting exhibits for us to enjoy.



And of course we had to sample the museum café too!

Pictured here with Jackie and our residents is Ian the volunteer taxi driver who is always so kind and helpful to us on our trips out.



‘Getting to Know our Staff’

Amanda and the Laundry



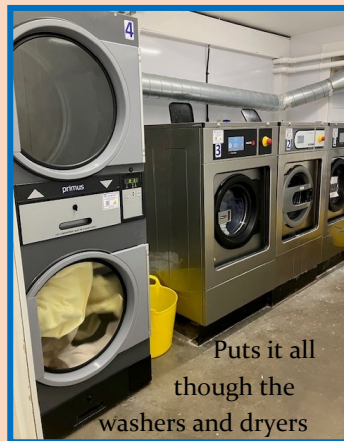
Amanda is the person in charge of the laundry here at Kincarrathie. She loves her job and is keen to look after all our residents' clothing as best she can.

There is a lot to manage each day in the laundry as you can probably imagine, with not only shirts, dresses and trousers etc. but also all the bedding, tablecloths, towels and tea cloths to wash.

Amanda is keen that any residents with laundry-related issues should ask to speak to her personally, so she can understand the problem fully and sort out any issues.



Amanda carefully sorts all the different types of washing.



Puts it all though the washers and dryers



Then organises every item to return to its owner.

Amanda was born in PRI and she has always lived in the local area except for a short spell when she was 18 and her family emigrated to Australia. They decided to move out there because one of Amanda's aunties was a mezzo soprano at the Sydney Opera House, but once there they found the weather too hot and were missing the rest of the family so they came back to Perth after less than a year.

On returning to the UK Amanda trained as a beauty therapist at Perth College and then spent four years working as a beauty therapist in a variety of places locally. She enjoyed her work but when she had her son Andrew she decided to give up and stay at home while he was young. As she says, "What's the point of having kids then going out to work and paying someone else to look after them?"

Seven and a half years later she was tempted back to work, luckily for us at Kincarrathie. Her auntie Christine, who worked in housekeeping, told her they were looking for staff, and after a day of covering an absence in the laundry the management asked her to stay on.

Surprising fact: Amanda's favourite things to iron are shirts!

We Love Our Animals

ZADOK

We are very lucky to have regular visits every 2-3 weeks from Zadok the therapy dog with his owner Caroline. Caroline is such a sociable lady and really enjoys chatting away with residents while Zadok gets petted or hunts around for a stray piece of biscuit that may have been dropped.

Zadok is a very gentle, affectionate dog. He seems to be really fond of our residents—so much so that I sometimes wonder if he would like to move in with them!



THE PETTING ZOO

Residents loved our visit from the petting zoo with their selection of animals including guinea pigs, rats, chinchillas and a tortoise.



MUSICAL MOMENTS



We've had lots of entertainers coming along to play and sing for us over the summer. Pictured on the left are Bryan and Yvonne from "Music in Hospitals and Care" who gave us a lovely afternoon recently, and on the right the group Mole-skin Joe, who are very entertaining and have become regular visitors to our lounge.



But as well as enjoying visiting entertainers residents at Kincarrathie love making their own music, and most weeks at some point we have either Singing or Music Time around the piano.

Singing and Music Time

In our singing sessions residents have worked hard to build up their repertoire and from the four songs we started with three years ago there are now over 90 songs in our lyric folders. Singing in a group is widely recognised as one of the best things you can do for your mental health and happiness so we are glad these sessions are well-attended.

Music Time is slightly different—it is not just singing. Scattered between the songs are some performances of piano pieces and famous songs for residents to listen to and enjoy. We also have the odd comedy song or singing in a round to give a bit of musical challenge.



Each resident also chooses a percussion instrument to play at these sessions, and though we do sometimes learn set rhythms to accompany particular songs, often it is a case of "do whatever you want to the music".

It is amazing the great sound the group can make with their singing and instruments. The suggestion has been made more than once that we would be worthy of an appearance on "Britain's Got Talent".



There are suspicions, however, that residents attend these Music Time sessions more for the enjoyment and the laughs than for the quality of the music. As the shakers, wood blocks and maracas were being collected at the end of one afternoon Eileen and Elaine were asked if they had enjoyed the afternoon. "Oh yes," they said enthusiastically, with a final few bashes on their tambourines. "We just like making a noise."

ART AND CRAFT

Our residents have been busy showing off their talents!

Pressing flowers



Making lovely collage designs with Jackie



Making window flower pictures from tissue paper



Designing and making pens



Making floral table decorations for the garden party



The photos above just show a few of the craft activities from this summer's schedule.

What's Cooking?



It's very interesting talking to the chefs here about food.

Darak says it was his love of eating food that got him into cooking in the first place, while Eugene says he specially likes cooking using very fresh ingredients, like the partridges Sonia on the care staff brought in which made a delicious stew.

CHEFS' SPECIALITIES

Brodie's specialities are chicken curry, poached fish and fruit cake, while Darak and Eugene were persuaded to share a couple of their "trade secrets":

Darak's gravy

The gravy Darak makes for the liver and bacon is really something special. He caramelises shallots in a pan, then adds brandy and sets fire to it to burn off the alcohol. Next he adds the stock, herbs and seasonings. A bit different from just Bisto granules and boiling water — no wonder it tastes so good!

Eugene's tablet

Eugene is renowned for his tablet, in fact Darak says he had heard of Eugene's tablet before he even met him! Eugene says the recipe itself is nothing special but his granny gave him a secret tip—you have to stir it 200 times.



Our residents have also been busy cooking and we are so lucky to have Jackie, who provides regular opportunities for them to use their baking skills. Over the summer they have made lots of nice things including strawberry tarts, pancakes and cheese scones. The baking sessions are very popular, not only with those who wish to be involved in the cookery process but also those who just want to taste the final products!



Manse Musings

From Graham, Minister at Kinnoull Parish Church

What a difference a year makes? This time last year I was lying in hospital having written off my bike and almost written myself off and this year I am celebrating new life with the birth of my wee granddaughter. We fly in a couple of days to go and meet her and I really cannot wait.

In my job with a constant round of baptisms, weddings and funerals you cannot help but wonder at the circle of life. Even today I will be at an event involving people from the age of 94 to 1 at a family gathering. I had a funeral yesterday, a baptism tomorrow and two weddings when I get back from my trip. It really is remarkable.



However there is one thing that links all these life events together and that is the desire for all these things to have meaning, to have significance, to have purpose.

Most people, these days, do not just simply want the bairn done. If they request baptism, it is because of a real faith and desire to bring the child up in the church.

If they want a minister to officiate at their wedding it is because they truly desire a Christian ceremony with the added significance that it brings and they are seeking comfort at a funeral as they listen again to those words of Paul that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ – a far cry from the judgmental words of the past.



In today's culture there has been an attempt to block the church out of life events by those who have either had bad experiences in the past or have believed the rhetoric of the dogmatic aggressive atheists such as Richard Dawkins. However it is very interesting to note that young people today are actually much more open to hearing about the Gospel and including a level of spirituality in their lives as they have found the alternative to be an empty shell with little to offer them as they try to make sense of life.

The circle of life is also the circle of faith and things are changing very rapidly in this area too. If it is causing you to think about things in a new way, please stop me and let's chat. After all, that is what I am around for, as a Chaplain. To provide comfort, yes, to provide a listening ear, yes. But most of all to help you with issues of a higher nature, should you wish to have that discussion.

I will be back on September 9th.

Every Blessing,
Graham

THE GARDEN PARTY



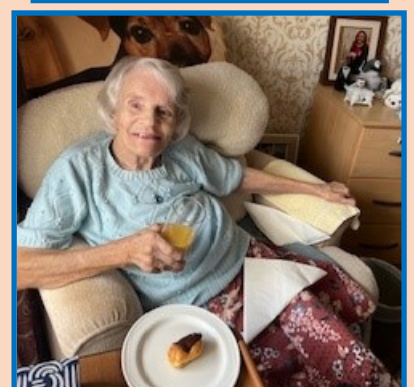
As the end of August approached, there was hardly any subject for discussion except “Are we going to have a nice day for the garden party?” “What a shame,” some said, looking at the forecast for a very wet weekend. “After all that nice summer weather, too.”

But the sun came out for us and what a lovely afternoon we all had—a fantastic spread prepared by the chefs then some great entertainment from Perth Brass Band and Meigle Musicality, a group who sing to raise money for charity and who so far have raised over £27,000.

Residents, Friends and Family Enjoying a Lovely Afternoon at Kincarrathie



And for those who couldn't make it we took the garden party to them!



Drinks, food, music and the best of company. What better way to finish off the summer?