



New lease of life for Alfie

Alfie Long, 72, came to Magnolia Court in Basingstoke as a lonely gentleman. He had lost his wife of his third marriage, eighteen months ago and found he could not cope on his own. After living with his daughter for 18 months he felt the need to be independent again.

His daughter, a carer, helped him put his name on the waiting list of Magnolia Court that is located close to her and where he wanted to live.

Once a flat became available, he visited the scheme with his daughter and decided straight away this was where he would like to live.

As he already worked as a volunteer part-time for Community Furniture Project he was able to get some very nice furniture to put in his flat. He moved in and with the help of his

family made the flat look very homely.

He met the other tenants joined in the social activities and became a member of the social club attending monthly meetings helping to make decisions about entertainment, speakers and general social events at Magnolia Court.

You could say his life was complete, but he missed not having a woman in his life, a companion to share his new lease of life with. Since his enthusiasm for life had been rekindled through living in sheltered housing, he decided to put an advertisement in the paper under 'lonely hearts'.

Over time, a friendship grew with a lady in Yorkshire and he eventually went to meet her. She had been married before and her husband had passed away two years ago. He returned announcing their engagement under the mantra 'life's too short'. His life is now complete and he

is living life to the full with his new partner.



David prepares for 2008 Paralympics

David Wrighton, 69, certainly knows how to live life to the full.

The super fit resident of Hanover House, Torquay is hoping to represent Britain in the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing, China in his chosen sport, sailing.

Having been a physical training instructor in the parachute regiment of the army for 17 years until tragically, during a front line mission in Malaya, losing his sight, David is no stranger to intense training.

Fitness and activity continue to be part of David's life since moving into sheltered housing and his great love for the sea has seen him become a qualified blind sailing instructor.

In 2008, when he will be 70, David hopes to be one of three crew members in a keelboat in the Sonar class of the Beijing Paralympics and he is currently training hard alongside his team mates on the Solent. He also spends 1.5 hours each day in the local gym and on specialist gym equipment in his flat to maintain strong upper body strength.

He says: "I have quick hands and feet, which enable me to move confidently and quickly around the boat giving us our winning edge. During the race I handle the main sail and traveller. I have to make the best use of my other senses. I feel the wind on my face and listen to the sound of the sails. I don't wear gloves so I can feel the texture of the ropes to identify between the main sail and the traveller – and know even without sight, by the heel of the boat and the swell of the sea whether to let out or draw in the sail which controls the pitch of the boat."

A self confessed 'adrenaline junkie', David has run the London Marathon, powerboat racing, abseiled and sky dived on numerous occasions for charity.



A familiar face

Everyone looks back fondly over their school years, looking at school pictures and wondering what ever happened to their class mates. For one sheltered housing tenant, a funny coincidence lead to her finding out.

Says Vera Stanley, aged 77, from Sindsley Court sheltered housing scheme in Swinton: "At primary school I was friendly with another girl called Ida. Over the years Ida and I lost contact, like I did with many of my school friends. Life went on and we all grew up, got married and had our families.

"I made the decision to move into sheltered housing in November 2003 because

I wanted to remain independent but sought companionship.

"Three years later a new face appeared at the social activities. I found out that the lady was called Ida. Despite her being a new tenant she had a familiar face and I could see that at the social activities Ida was also looking at me also.

"We became good friends and one day we were chatting about the past when we started talking about our school days. Not only did it turn out that we were at the same primary school but also that we were in the same class. We suddenly knew why we were both so familiar to each other!

"Ida and I have great fun chatting about what we used to get up to! We have even dug out a school picture to show our other friends at the scheme. Of course we have changed a lot over the years but everyone can still tell it is us!"



Neighbours Once Again

*Story from
Joan Wright,*

*82, a sheltered housing
tenant of Shepway Court,
Winton, Salford.*

"I made the decision to move into sheltered housing when I realised that I needed extra support but still wanted to remain independent.

"It was a difficult time making the move as it is for many people as you find you are not only leaving behind your home, but also your neighbours and memories. However, I soon settled in and made new friends through the scheme activities.

"I had lived at Shepway Court for many years when we were told that a new tenant was moving into the scheme. When the new tenant (Bob) moved in I realised that there was something very familiar about him and it kept playing on my mind. Eventually I realised that my new neighbour was in fact

my old neighbour of 60 years ago!

"Bob's wife (who had sadly passed away) had been my best friend back then and I regularly used to baby sit for their son.

"Bob and I are good neighbours and friends once more, able to chat about happy memories of the past!"



Destined To Be Together

Back in 1934

Irene Kirk's brother used to have a friend called Des who would regularly visit the house in Patricroft in Eccles to see him.

Both Des and Irene got on very well and would always have a laugh and joke together. She would always look forward to his visits and chemistry developed between them. However, since Irene was from a strong Catholic background and Des was Protestant they were not allowed to court and their relationship

was ended by her father before it even started.

Both Des and Irene went their separate ways. Irene married a lovely man called Doug who served in the forces and went on to have three handsome sons together called Douglas, Roy and Brian. Says Irene: "I knew that Des had also served during the war but our paths never crossed and life went on."

Irene's marriage to Doug was cut short when he died aged 71 years old. Devastated by his death, Irene knew she had to show strength and carry on with her life for the sake of her family.

Over time Irene became lonelier so she decided to move back to the area she had grown up in and into Enfield House, a sheltered housing scheme in Eccles.

One day Irene's brother gave her news that Des had been in contact to say that his wife had died. She wanted to pass on her condolences so contacted

Des. They started talking and Des asked if he could come and see her as he was also in the area. Irene agreed and they arranged to meet up.

When Des and Irene laid eyes on each other it was obvious that the chemistry that was there so many years ago was still there. They began to see each other and the courtship they were once prevented from having flourished.

They eventually married at Salford registry office and moved into a bigger sheltered housing flat. Having lived there happily for ten years, Des sadly died in 2000.

Irene, now 87 years old, believes her sheltered

housing scheme has kept her going both physically and mentally over the years. She joins in with all the activities on offer, coffee mornings, art and craft classes and especially the Healthy Hips and Hearts exercise classes. She has many friends who help her remember her happy life and the love she lost and found.

Dare devil Patrick takes a bold step for charity



Patrick Casserly, 79, certainly knows how to lead life to the full.

The lively sheltered housing resident from Hillside Close in Chandlers Ford recently

abseiled down the 450ft Guys Hospital Tower in London in aid of the Anthony Nolan Trust.

Climbing five flights of stairs and two ladders before reaching the take off ledge, the adventurous Mr Casserly bravely climbed over the edge and lowered himself down.

Exhilarated by the event and pleased to support the Anthony Nolan Trust, Patrick says he lives to take each day as it comes. He doesn't like to plan too much and prefers to live by the philosophy 'don't think about it, do it!' Courageous Casserly next plans to wing walk!

Sheltered housing is for older people who value their independence, relish a community spirit and live life to the full. For more information call 0800 95 44 207 or visit www.leadashelteredlife.co.uk