



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Swimming Pool Day: Resident living with dementia takes the plunge thanks to care home and leisure centre

A woman living with dementia has rekindled her love of swimming, thanks to staff at her Surbiton care home and at a local leisure centre.

Isobel Porter is supported by staff at Royal Star & Garter to visit the Malden Centre, where she enjoys swimming and exercising in the leisure complex's main pool.

The 81-year-old was joined in the water by husband Jeremy, Royal Star & Garter Physiotherapist Annette Millard, and Wellbeing Coordinator Lesley O'Driscoll, for her first session in May. A carer also watched on from the poolside.



Isobel and Jeremy dip into the pool

Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia. The charity also has Homes in Solihull and High Wycombe.

Since her first visit to the pool with Royal Star & Garter, Isobel has returned several times with staff, gaining confidence and stamina in the water, swimming short distances and doing aqua aerobic exercises.

The Home is also hoping to extend the sessions for the benefit of other residents.

Speaking ahead of National Swimming Pool Day on 11 July, husband Jeremy praised the impact the sessions were having on Isobel: "My wife has always been happy in the pool, and recently she had gone to deep-water aqua classes. She was discussing this with Lesley, so the Home contacted the Malden Centre and they arranged it between them. She loves the sessions and keeps asking when she can go back. You can see it is very positive for her demeanour and it lifts her, she's happier afterwards. I could see how much she was enjoying herself. She does exercises in the pool, and she's getting stronger and more confident in the water with every session."



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Jeremy, who served as a Reservist in the Royal Marines in the 1960s, also thanked those who made it happen: "I'm so grateful to the staff at Royal Star & Garter and the Malden Centre, who worked together to do this for Isobel. I hope it will benefit other residents in the Home as well."

Lesley said: "Once we knew about Isobel's love of the water, I spoke to our Physiotherapist Annette and we thought it would be great if we could get her back in a pool." They searched for a suitable venue nearby, complete with a poolside hoist, and found the Malden Centre. They contacted the leisure complex and carried out a thorough risk assessment. Staff at the Malden Centre helped arrange the visit and suggested the best time for Isobel to take the plunge.



Isobel taking part in aqua aerobics exercises with Royal Star & Garter Wellbeing Coordinator Lesley

Lesley continued: "Isobel loves the sessions. Each week she does more and more in the pool. When she comes back to Royal Star & Garter she tells everyone it was amazing and asks if she can go again."

Marie O'Loughlin is the Malden Centre Manager. She said: "The smile on Isobel's face when she comes in and swims is incredible, it's genuinely heart-warming to see. I'm so happy we are able to accommodate her and welcome her to the Malden Centre."



Royal Star & Garter resident Isobel, with husband Jeremy, outside the Malden Centre

According to Age UK, regular physical activity - such as swimming and aqua aerobics - can build stamina, core strength and boost wellbeing¹.

Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, or to work at the Home, go to

www.starandgarter.org/surbiton

[Ends]

¹ [Age UK - www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/exercise/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/exercise/)



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Video link: www.vimeo.com/838228834/12b9f49485

Captions:



RSG swimming 1: Royal Star & Garter resident Isobel, with husband Jeremy, outside the Malden Centre



3: Isobel and Jeremy dip into the pool

RSG swimming 2-



5: Isobel taking part in aqua aerobics exercises with Royal Star & Garter Wellbeing Coordinator Lesley

RSG swimming 4-

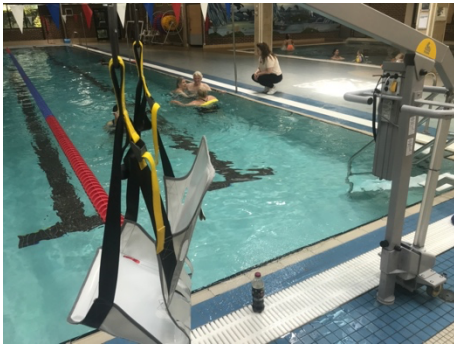


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RSG swimming 6: Isobel swims towards her husband encouraged by Wellbeing Coordinator Lesley



RSG swimming 7: A portable poolside hoist helps Isobel into the water

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About Royal Star & Garter

Our charity provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.



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Royal Star & Garter
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National Care Forum