



Wedding dress expo a real winner

Always looking for ways to make life for our residents as enjoyable and interesting as possible, the innovative team at our Masonic Court, Palmerston North, care facility came up with the bright idea of hosting a wedding dress expo.

The idea was to show off the many and varied wedding dresses that facility residents and staff had worn on their 'special day', no matter how long ago it was.

Staff and family members modelled 41 dresses over the three hour event, the oldest being a wedding dress worn during WW2 from 1942.

The dresses also came in all sorts of conditions and many needed tidying up and spot cleaning. But that was all part of the fun. Some of the fabric was very old and brittle, so care had to be taken.

The original wearers of two of the gowns on display were also in attendance - Queenie White's gown was modelled by Daina Cherry, while Margaret Silcock's dress was worn by Anne Phillips.

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Diana Cherry, Queenie White, Margaret Silcocks and Anne Phillips.

“The event was of particular interest for the ladies, but the men enjoyed it as well.”

Karen Adrian
Masonic Court Manager

“Absolutely beautiful dresses,” says Masonic Court Facility Manager, Karen Adrian, “just gorgeous.” The early ones have often been hand sewn and their creators’ attention to detail was truly inspiring.

Karen says the event was obviously of particular interest for the ladies, but the men enjoyed it as well. “They loved watching it and cheering on the girls. It was wonderful to see their enthusiasm.”

The preparation for this event took many, many hours with a lot of background work, including sourcing and staging all the decorations and arranging the music. “It was an absolute extravaganza,” Karen says. “Fabulous.” Much thanks must go to the Diversional Therapists and in particular Arlanah who spearheaded the event.”

Karen was struck by how the fabric from which the dresses were made had changed over time. Looking back at some of the older dresses, including the 1940s ones, the fabric is quite different and very durable. Those old silks and laces are divine, she says. “These vintage dresses are real heritage pieces.”

So successful was the event, that Karen is hoping to make this an annual event. “Because of its success, we’ll keep going. Not only for the residents but for the staff and the many families that became involved. It turned out to be a great morale booster for all.”

Nothing particular is planned for the men, however. “Where would we get their old suits from? Their wives would have chucked them out years ago!” Karen jokes.



Monique Logie modelling a 1942 wedding wartime dress. MC is George.

**“Because of its success,
we’ll keep it going.”**

Karen Adrian
Masonic Court Manager



Katrina Hopkins and Millar (friend of Masonic) modelling a 1970s dress.



Alex Short modelling 1950s wedding dress with Monique Logie wearing the bridesmaids dress.



Amanda Claasen (staff) modelling Pam Booth's (Residents' Hairdresser) 1968 dress.

Early riser excited for special day

A belated happy birthday to Molly Tootell, who turned 103 in late March. She is a resident at our Masonic Court, Palmerston North, care facility.

Molly was excited to see her children and enjoy a lunch out at the Manawatu Golf Club, though an early start was par for the course for her.

"I get up every day at 5 o'clock. I'm almost blind. I can't see to do things properly, but I do my best."

A hairdresser visited her on Thursday to do her hair for the special occasion.

Molly, who has lived at the care facility since 2011, was born in Palmerston North but spent much of life in Feilding with her late husband Jack, raising seven daughters and a son. Born to a single mother, she was placed in the foster care of an older couple at two weeks old. Both foster parents died when she was still a child, but their daughter then took Molly in.

"How can you not feel a sense of belonging, when people take you in and love you?" she says.

Later, when raising a family in Feilding, "things were pretty thin." Molly didn't have a washing machine so she boiled the laundry.

"Washing day was a terror. I remember when we got a beautiful new coal range."

"I knitted, and sewed all the children's clothes on a treadle sewing machine."

She "felt the cornerstone of my life was floating away" after her Jack died in 1990, aged 73, but becoming a soldier in the Salvation Army brought a new sense of belonging.

"How can you not feel a sense of belonging, when people take you in and love you?"

Molly Tootell
Masonic Court Resident



Early start for Orchard Park extension blessing

Some 30 people braved a dark and cold early start in May for the blessing of the new villas at the Orchard Park extension to the Trust's Horowhenua retirement village in Levin.

Led by Dean Wilson, the lead Taiao of the local Muaupoko Tribal Authority, the ceremony began at 5.30am with guests being 'called on' and a prayer being said.

Some 10 members of the Iwi attended, along with residents of the existing village and members of the construction workforce.

They were joined by current village staff and former staff, including the former village manager Sue Maney who played a key role in getting the new extension project underway almost a decade ago.

Also joining the blessing were the Chief Executive of The Masonic Villages Trust, Warwick Dunn, and the Operations Manager, Nick Merrett, and the Mayor of Levin, Bernie Wanden.

Following the blessing, guests availed themselves of a warming breakfast and a karakia in the village's onsite café.

Village Manager, Mary Burnett, says 17 villas are now complete out of the 100 that will eventually occupy the site.

She was also pleased to note the new village extension welcomed its first new resident in early June.



GJ Gardener Franchise owner, Trevor Low, MVT Chief Executive, Warwick Dunn, and Levin Mayor, Bernie Wanden.



Horowhenua Masonic Village staff - Rozz (Nurse Lead) , Jenny (Reception and Admin) , Sharon (Cafe Manager) , Mary, Rachel De Burgh (Facility Manager) and Julie (Admin Manager).



Mary Burnett (Village Manager) and residents Les Jury, Enid Fish, Anne Seed, Maragaret Mordecai.



Dean Wilson, the lead Taiao of the local Muaupoko Tribal Authority, Village Manager, Mary Burnett and the Chief Executive of The Masonic Villages Trust, Warwick Dunn.