

## The Old Downs Residential Care Home wins Nellsar Crafty Creature Competition!



Here at The Old Downs Residential Care Home, we jumped at the chance to show our creativity by entering [Nellsar's Crafty Creature Competition](#), challenging us to use recycled materials to create a creature to reflect our Home. Our project was full of thought, teamwork, and meaning.

*We are so delighted to have been awarded first place in the competition! This is amazing news after all the passion, love and teamwork involved in making our entry. Huge congratulations to all our residents and team members – we love our Crafty Creature which is so full of meaning for us. We are delighted to have **won a solar powered water feature for our garden** for everyone to enjoy!*

### Our entry: Robin Redbreast

Over the last few weeks here at Old Downs Residential Care Home, we have been up to something very interesting! We have all been busy creating a sculpture for this year's Nellsar competition. The goal this year? **Everything must be recyclable and sustainable**, so we got our thinking caps on!

Bringing our recycled craft idea to life took creativity, teamwork, and a good bit of brainstorming. After sketching out designs in pencil and hunting around our Home for reusable materials, we were finally ready to begin on our chosen creature – a robin.

For our robin's body, we **repurposed a beach ball** left over from last year's Hawaiian party. To stabilise it, our residents used torn strips of **newspaper and glue to build up layers of papier-mâché**, creating a strong and sturdy base. Once it dried, they painted it brown. The wings were made from **cardboard, decorated with scrunched brown and orange tissue paper** (leftover from last

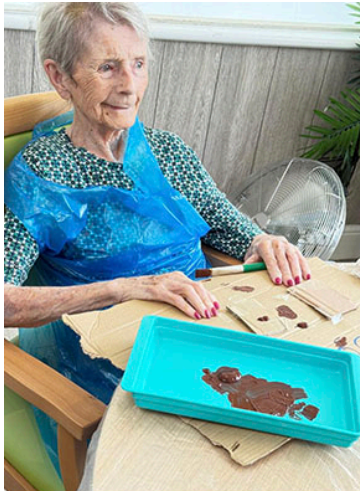


year's firework night) giving the feathers texture and depth. The robin's head was crafted from a smaller beach ball (also recycled from the party), using the same papier-mâché technique.

To bring our bird to life, our residents added intricate details: the eyes were made from **buttons** we'd collected, the beak from orange card, and the bird was perched on a nest created with **packing paper and fabric scraps**. These scraps were then decorated with glued-on feathers, buttons, and more. This allowed our residents' creativity to flow naturally.

*The most special feature was the robin's iconic red chest. To make it truly meaningful for us, **our residents and team members used their handprints painted in red which came together in a heart shape**. This definitely gave our robin its soul.*

To complete our display, our residents made a sign out of recycled paper and coloured the letters by hand, spelling out: 'Nellsar Crafty Creature Competition'. Our finished piece was truly outstanding, and it was clear to see just how much effort was put into our robin by everyone. Our residents put so much effort into our Crafty Creature and had so much fun doing so, whilst remembering the significance behind it.







## Our story

**The story behind our creation was remembrance.** At The Old Downs, we do more than just share our days – we build friendships, create memories, and most importantly, honour those who are no longer with us. When we began thinking about this year's Nellsar competition, Abigail, our thoughtful Care Coordinator, reminded us of a very special visitor who brings comfort to many of us each day – a quiet, gentle reminder of love that still lingers.

Our story for the competition starts in the smallest way. Nestled in the heart of the beautiful Hartley countryside, we are lucky to be surrounded by the calming presence of nature. Birds sing, flowers bloom, and wildlife wanders freely. But among all this natural beauty, there is one tiny creature who has captured our hearts – our friend, robin redbreast. **Rain or shine, our robin visits us every day.** He hops along the garden paths, approaches our residents and team but most importantly, he comes to remind us that robins appear when our lost loved ones are near.

*Inspired by our beloved robin and what he has come to symbolise, we felt it was essential to create a **dedicated space of remembrance within our Home.** With guidance from our Manager Nicoleta, and input from our wonderful residents, we lovingly transformed a part of our outdoor space into a **sensory and memory garden** – a peaceful place for all. The robin may be small, but his presence brings a powerful sense of comfort. He reminds us that love doesn't end at The Old Downs – it changes form and continues to surround us in the most unexpected ways.*

*Every resident brings a lifetime of memories, stories, and love – and when someone passes, it leaves more than an empty chair at the table. It leaves a space in our hearts. The bond we share with our residents continues, even after they're gone – they remain part of our family,*

*always. Here at The Old Downs we laugh, we live, we remember – and we honour the wings that still brush against our hearts.*