

The Oldest Person in the World Celebrates Turning 117

After becoming the world's oldest person officially in 2025, Ethel Caterham celebrates her 117th birthday at Hallmark Lakeview Care Home in Lightwater, Surrey.



Winchester, England Aug 21, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Ethel Caterham is the world's oldest living person, and she is celebrating her 117th birthday with family and friends at Hallmark Lakeview Care Home in Lightwater, Surrey. This marks another extraordinary milestone in a life that has spanned more than a century of history. Caterham became the world's oldest living person in April 2025, following the death of Brazilian nun Sister Inah Canabarro Lucas at the age of 116. Born three years before the sinking of the Titanic and eight years before the Russian Revolution, Caterham has witnessed two world wars and some of the most significant changes of the modern era.

According to Guinness World Records, she is also among the oldest people known to have survived Covid-19 after contracting the virus in 2020 at the age of 110.

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Born in Shipton Bellinger, Hampshire, Caterham was the second youngest of eight children and grew up in Tidworth, Wiltshire. She later travelled to India as a teenager in 1927, where she worked as an au pair for a military family. Her life took another significant turn after she met Norman Caterham, a lieutenant colonel in the British Army, at a dinner party in Britain in 1931. The couple eventually lived in Hong Kong, where Caterham established a nursery school. They later raised two daughters, although both died before their mother. Norman died in 1976.

Caterham also comes from a family with remarkable longevity. Her sister Gladys lived to the age of 104, becoming a centenarian herself. Still independent well into later life, Caterham was driving until she reached 97 years. She has also had the opportunity to meet King Charles, who visited her in September 2025 shortly after her 116th birthday. During their meeting, Caterham recalled seeing Charles at his 1969 investiture as the Prince of Wales. With characteristic warmth, she told him, "All the girls were in love with you and wanted to marry you."

While Caterham now holds the title of the world's oldest living person, the record for the longest confirmed human lifespan remains with Frenchwoman Jeanne Calment. She died in 1997 at the age of 122 years and 164 days, according to Guinness World Records.

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