

Connections

Autumn Issue 2017

The Newsletter of The Royal Star & Garter Homes

Registered Charity No. 210119



Topping out our Third Home

The Charity's new Home in High Wycombe reached an important construction milestone in July when the 'topping out' ceremony marked the building reaching its full height.

Distinguished guests included The Rt. Hon. The Earl Howe, Minister of State for Defence, and Air Chief Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Stephen Hillier, who led the ceremony. Sir Stephen Hillier was met by the Charity's Chairman, Major General Tim Tyler, and Chairman of Wycombe Council, Cllr Suzanne Brown. Sir Stephen was invited to carry out the traditional Saxon ritual of anointing a yew tree branch attached to the 'last roof beam' with wine, oil, corn and salt symbolising wisdom, liberty, prosperity and hospitality. The beam was then hoisted into its final position.

Sir Stephen Hillier anointing the roof beam

(continued on page 2...)



Attending the ceremony were: (L-R) Major General Martin Rutledge, Chief Executive of The ABF Soldiers' Charity; The Rt. Hon. The Earl Howe, Minister of State for Defence; Lady Hillier; Air Chief Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Stephen Hillier; Chairman of Wycombe Council, Cllr Suzanne Brown; The Royal Star & Garter Homes' Chairman, Major General Tim Tyler, Vice President Vice Admiral Sir John Dunt and Chief Executive Mr Andy Cole; Mr Tom Wakeford, Joint Managing Director of Stepnell

The Charity's governors and directors watched the ceremony alongside guests including: Wing Commander Farid Khan, Officer Commanding Information Systems Wing RAF High Wycombe; Tom Wakeford, Managing Director of construction company, Stepnell, which is undertaking the build of the Home; plus notable figures from leading military charities The Royal British Legion, ABF The Soldiers' Charity and RAF Benevolent Fund.

High Wycombe Update

The Home is on track to welcome its first residents in Summer 2018. It will provide specialist nursing and therapeutic care for 74 residents, which will include specialist dementia care for 30 residents. The state-of-the-art Home will offer large, en-suite bed-sitting rooms, a spacious dining room, café-bar, a piano lounge, library and landscaped sensory gardens and balconies.

"I'm delighted to be able to give my support to the Charity, especially in High Wycombe, which already has so many other important connections with the Royal Air Force. The Charity sets the standard in nursing and dementia care. I'm confident the High Wycombe Home will continue to deliver award-winning care as per the Charity's existing Homes, as well as drawing on new innovations and thinking."

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier

Work With Us

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is an exciting and rewarding place to work. We will be looking to recruit across a wide range of roles for the High Wycombe Home in Winter 2017.

To find out more, please visit www.starandgarter.org email highwycombe.jobs@starandgarter.org or call **020 8481 7673**.



Live With Us

If you or someone you know would like to find out more about living at one of The Royal Star & Garter Homes in Solihull or Surbiton, please contact the Home you are interested in: www.starandgarter.org/home/contact

For High Wycombe, please email general.enquiries@starandgarter.org or call **020 8481 7676** and select option 4.





**The Royal Star
& Garter Homes**
Caring for the nation's military family since 1916

Dear Supporter,

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Connections. This is an exciting time for the Charity: having celebrated the topping out of the new High Wycombe Home, our thoughts turn to bringing it to life with a new family of residents, staff and volunteers. We are recruiting new staff and inviting veterans and their partners to register an interest in being the first of our residents. The knowledge, skills and compassion that inform our very special brand of care will emulate those in our Solihull and Surbiton Homes but the modern building, comfortable interior and landscaped gardens will be brand new.

I'm very proud to announce that the excellence of our care has recently been acknowledged by several organisations. Firstly, the Solihull Home has been rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Delivering outstanding care to our residents is what the Charity aims to do every single day. I am delighted that the CQC has endorsed the high standards we set ourselves. Congratulations to all RS&GH staff and volunteers for this wonderful achievement. Additionally, Dementia Care Matters have awarded the Dementia Care teams in both Homes a Level 1 Kitemark, following recent, unannounced audits. Finally, several teams and staff members are finalists in the National Care Awards and Dementia Care Awards. The results will be announced in the Autumn.

The Solihull Home is getting a makeover as we redesign the dining room and café-bar in time for its tenth birthday in 2018, when Surbiton will be celebrating five years and the High Wycombe Home will open. It promises to be an exciting year!

We are extremely grateful to the many individuals and organisations who offer their generous support throughout the year. Special thanks goes to our friends at the Birmingham International Tattoo. Through the generosity of its audiences, the Birmingham International Tattoo has now raised £93,000 for the Charity and the organisers aim to bring the overall total to a magnificent £100,000. Many thanks also go to the Summer Fete sponsors PSL Solicitors in Solihull and Gerald Culliford Ltd in Surbiton and to the many supporters who offer their time and skills to raise funds for the veterans in our care.

With best wishes from the residents, staff and volunteers.

Andy Cole OBE
Chief Executive, The Royal Star & Garter Homes



Raising a Flag for Armed Forces Day

Residents paid tribute to British Service personnel past and present by raising the Armed Forces Day Flag in June.

Veterans Peter in Solihull and Alec in Surbiton had the honour of raising the Flag in front of fellow residents, staff and volunteers, marking the start of a week of military-themed events to commemorate Armed Forces Day.

Both Homes held a ceremony to present new residents with their Her Majesty's Armed Forces Veterans' Lapel Badges. Residents who are spouses of veterans received The Royal Star & Garter Homes badge as our way of recognising the contribution they made alongside their military partners. In total 39 residents received badges.

The Charity's Director of Human Resources, Siobhan Creighton, presented the badges to Solihull residents. She commented, *"The ceremony was an opportunity to say thank you to our veterans for all they have done. I was truly honoured to be a part of such a wonderful event."*

Activities Manager Raquel commented: *"The military is still a huge part of residents' lives, so it's important to recognise that connection. Armed Forces Day is an occasion to pay respect to our Servicemen and women."*



Resident Peter raising the Flag in Solihull



Surbiton resident Alec, raising the Armed Forces Day Flag



Siobhan Creighton presenting John with his Veterans' Badge

Armed Forces Day Messages

Supporters were invited to send in messages to the residents and here are just a few of the thousands they received:

"I am so glad places like The Royal Star & Garter Homes, which provide for the care, support and companionship that you so rightly need and deserve, exist."

"To a group of special people: you have made an enormous contribution to our way of life and made huge sacrifices to protect it from harm. I am just one of many thousands who daily think of you – Thank you. Not just today, but every day."

"To all the brave men and women whose unstinting courage and loyalty to our country deserves our sincere gratitude. We live in a free world only because of your sacrifices."

"Thank you is too small a word to express my sincere best wishes for all you have given to make our lives better. Best wishes and good luck."

"Thank you all for the sacrifices you made, thereby enabling the rest of us to go and live the rest of our lives in comparative peace and safety. It's nice to know that you are receiving the care and help which you justly deserve."



Solihull's Outstanding Care

We are delighted to announce that the care in our Solihull Home has been rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Only one per cent of care homes achieve this rating.

Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care, who has visited the Charity's Surbiton Home previously, remarked: *"The quality of care which our inspectors found here was exceptional and I am very pleased that we can celebrate the service's achievements. An outstanding service is the result of a tremendous amount of hard work and commitment. I would like to thank and congratulate everyone involved."*

The Charity's Chief Executive, Andy Cole, commented on the result: *"We are extremely proud of the Solihull Home and delighted that our care has been acknowledged. It takes a truly passionate and dedicated team to achieve an 'Outstanding' rating. It is great news that the CQC found the quality of care in our Home to be exceptional. I want to thank and congratulate all the staff and volunteers at The Royal Star & Garter Homes for this wonderful achievement."*

Ken, whose mother is resident at the Home, said: *"The care offered for both nursing and dementia is extremely good. The Home is professionally run with staff of a high quality committed to delivering the best possible service."*

Rachel, whose husband Theo lives with dementia at the Home, commented: *"Theo receives amazing care at the Home. I don't know another place like this! The care team*

are exceptional: they bring life-giving and positive energy all the time, enabling residents to play their own part in this wonderful and vibrant community."

There is a double celebration as both the Solihull and Surbiton Homes have just been awarded Level 1 by Dementia Care Matters (DCM) following a recent, unannounced audit.

Level 1 is the highest accolade achievable through DCM's national 'Butterfly Home Quality of Life National Accreditation Kitemark' awards. It indicates that a home is demonstrating 'exceptional person-centred care of the highest quality of life level'. Only one per cent of homes within the UK achieve a Level 1 distinction.

Minister visits Surbiton

Residents, staff and volunteers were delighted to welcome The Rt. Hon. The Earl Howe, Minister of State for Defence, when he visited the Surbiton Home.

The Earl was given a tour of the Home and the opportunity to see for himself the wide range of therapies and activities available to the residents. He then visited the café where he took the time to meet residents and find out more about their military experiences.

After his visit, Earl Howe commented, *"I was bowled over by my visit and congratulate you and your team on the wonderful care you are providing. I was impressed at the level of thought and detail that goes into not just the care, but also the way in which the environment and facilities are laid out. The Royal Star & Garter Homes truly is an example of how a care home should function."*



The Earl Howe with resident John and Lead Physiotherapist Jo

Keeping Military Families Connected

The Royal Naval Association (RNA) has kindly donated Apple iPads to the Navy veterans and partners who live at The Royal Star & Garter Homes.

The donation was funded by the Aged Veterans Fund and named Project Semaphore: an initiative set up by the RNA to improve communications for aged Naval veterans. The custom built 16GB iPad Airs were presented in bespoke RNA-branded cases and came pre-loaded with relevant apps.

Residents were thrilled to receive their iPads, with many commenting how they were looking forward to using it to keep in touch with family. Veteran Joan couldn't wait to get to grips with her iPad.



Joan with the RNA's Sarah Clewes

A Visit from RAF Halton

Residents were delighted to welcome the Training Staff, Aircraftmen and Women currently stationed at RAF Halton to share an afternoon participating in various activities.

After a tour of the Home, they joined in with Tai Chi, followed by a sing-along. Everyone then enjoyed lunch which gave residents and RAF personnel the opportunity to chat and share anecdotes and military experiences.

After spending her day with the veterans, Aircraftwoman L. Kidd remarked, *"I really felt the military connection on the floor for people living with dementia. It was really interesting seeing all of their military memorabilia. One resident I spoke to had done National Service and it was fascinating to hear his story."*

Residents and RAF Halton personnel taking part in adapted Tai Chi





Summer Fetes

In July, both the Solihull and Surbiton Homes welcomed the local communities to their annual Summer Fetes, raising almost £10,000 in total.

The sun was shining for both events and everyone was in great spirits as the public enjoyed the stalls and attractions. Residents and visitors mingled over tea and delicious homemade cake while enjoying the performances by local musicians and dancers.

Attractions included food stalls, a tombola, a display of Second World War military vehicles, various local crafts, raffles, and of course the ever-popular Pimms stall. Our Solihull Home had Charles Hanson Auctioneers on hand to give antiques valuations.

The Military Wives Choir performing at the Solihull Fete

“The atmosphere is brilliant. Everyone is really enjoying themselves and getting into the spirit of the Fete. Seeing the residents having a good time and mingling with everyone brings home what the Fete is all about – supporting our veterans.”

Solihull local resident, Graham



PC ‘Dancing Dan’ Graham performing some of his signature moves

Dancing Dan

Britain’s Got Talent semi-finalist PC Dan Graham, nicknamed ‘Dancing Dan’ performed his crowd-pleasing moves for residents in our Surbiton Home.

Dancing Dan took to the floor in his full Met uniform much to the amusement of his audience. After his performance Dan spent time chatting to residents. When he asked if anyone had any questions, one female resident asked, “Are you married?!” Dan was quick to reply with a broad grin and a “No”, which delighted the audience. She later commented on Dan’s performance, “I found it very interesting. It was very different from my day, we only had Foxtrot and the like. He was very entertaining!”



Volunteers with Chief Executive Andy Cole outside the Surbiton Home

Annual Volunteer Awards

Volunteers play a large part in the daily life of the Homes. Every year each Home organises an awards ceremony to thank them for their contribution.

Each volunteer is recognised and receive either a certificate or badge, depending on the length of their service. Activities Manager Raquel commented, “The ceremony is an opportunity to say a massive thank you for what they do.”

Jane Durgan commented on why she loves volunteering, “The residents are so lovely and you just go with the flow. What the veterans have done is amazing and it’s a privilege to make a difference to their day.”



Sally Knocker, Elsie's great grand-daughter



Elsie and Mairi at their first aid post



Elsie and Mairi in a bunker

The Angels of Pervyse

During the First World War, nurses Elsie Knocker and Mairi Chisholm saved hundreds of wounded soldiers. Sally Knocker is Elsie's great grand-daughter and, as a consultant for Dementia Care Matters has become a good friend to the Charity. Here, she tells us about the amazing life of her great grandmother.

*"At a time when we recognise the sacrifice of those who fought in the First World War, it is important to remember two women who broke with convention to save lives on the Front Line. My great grandmother, Elsie, met Mairi at a motorcycle club in Bournemouth. When war broke out, "they roared off to London to do their bit."**

"Within a month, they were on Belgium's Western Front, driving ambulances to take wounded soldiers from the battlefield to military hospitals. It wasn't considered fitting for women to be exposed to the dangers of the Front Line but Elsie and Mairi realised that many men were dying of shock on the journey because they were not receiving vital first aid. They set up their own first-aid post at the front in Pervyse, near Ypres. Despite living under constant bombardment, they treated and saved hundreds of men and were awarded 17 medals for bravery. In the Second World War, Elsie was a senior officer in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and was mentioned in Despatches.

With thanks for permission to use the photographs from Paul Knocker, Elsie's grandson

"I met Elsie when she was in her nineties. As a 12-year-old, I remember being nervous about talking about her life and had no idea what an incredible woman she was.

"Recently, I was asked by Buckingham Covers to sign their First Day Covers which recognise the contribution of women in the Forces. They offered to donate money to a charity and it felt fitting to nominate The Royal Star & Garter Homes, with whom I have been closely associated over the last five years through my work with Dementia Care Matters. Elsie herself had dementia in her later years and I have no doubt that life in The Royal Star & Garter Homes would have been a source of great comfort to her, surrounded by others who had served in the wars and with staff who would have valued her contribution. I bear a strong physical resemblance to Elsie but I definitely don't share her immense bravery in dangerous situations! However, I am proud that I share her determination to want to make a difference to others who are vulnerable: in my case 'on the front line of older people's care'. For, as Elsie said to Mairi in a letter in 1914, 'there is work to be done'."

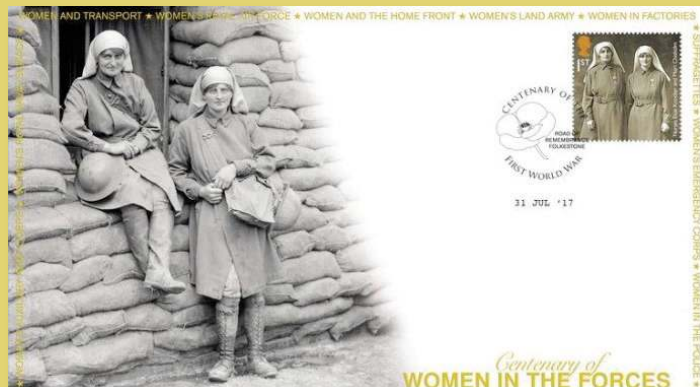
Sally

Sally Knocker

To commemorate the centenary of women serving in the Armed Forces, Buckingham Covers are releasing First Day Covers which include images of the two brave women. Part of the money raised through the purchase of the covers will go to The Royal Star & Garter Homes.

Visit www.buckinghamcovers.com/starandgarter

* Elsie and Mairi Go to War: Two Extraordinary Women on the Western Front, Diane Atkinson, Preface Publishing, 2009



London Marathon

The London Marathon remains one of the biggest charity fundraising events in the UK. This year, three runners were keen to go the extra mile to raise funds for the Charity they feel so passionately for.

The 26.2-mile course was completed by Pauline Shaw, Director of Care & Service Development, Matt Petersen, a member of the Body of Governors for the Charity and Trevor Griffiths, an ex-Serviceman. After a gruelling run through London, Trevor completed the course in 4 hours and 33 minutes, whilst Matt finished in 5 hours and 13 minutes and Pauline in 5 hours and 54 minutes. The trio raised over £9,000 for the Charity!

Reflecting on the day and describing what inspired her, Pauline said, "Taking part in the London Marathon was a truly extraordinary experience and I feel proud to have



Marathon Runners Trevor, Matt and Pauline raised £9,000

represented RS&GH and to have fundraised on behalf of our wonderful residents. There were some tough times as I ran my first marathon, but the thought of all the generous support and love I have received kept me running, despite blisters and cramp...and the distance!"

The Birmingham Tattoo

We are extremely grateful to The Birmingham International Tattoo who have kindly made The Royal Star & Garter Homes its chosen charity for the tenth year running.

This year's event will take place on 25th and 26th November. With three hours of entertainment and over 1,000 performers, The Birmingham International Tattoo is Britain's biggest indoor event of its type.

Through the generosity of its audiences, The Birmingham International Tattoo has now raised £93,000 for The Royal Star & Garter Homes and the organisers aim to bring the overall total to a magnificent £100,000.

For more information and to book tickets visit:
www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk



The Finale of the 2016 Tattoo



John Ingram,
Legacy Manager

Farewell Thoughts of our Legacy Manager

Even after 19 years here, I am still amazed at the generous way our supporters remember The Royal Star & Garter Homes in their Wills.

What struck me is the desire to help the causes that were important to them during their lifetime and to continue making a difference in people's lives after they have gone.

Gifts in Wills have enabled us to fund the high standard of nursing care and special therapies which increase residents' mobility, independence and quality of life. These generous gifts have also played an important part in building our new state-of-the-art Homes.

While it was sad to leave the unique Richmond building, I have been extremely impressed by the great care and consideration that has gone into the design of each new Home, in order to create a homely, modern environment that meets residents' individual needs. Each Home includes a dedicated dementia care wing, together with in-house physiotherapy and speech & language therapy which make such a difference to residents' lives.

The Charity's ethos of providing exceptional care remains at the heart of everything we do. This life-enhancing care is only possible with the help of our supporters and gifts in



Fun and Friendship

Wills remain vital in ensuring that we can be here to meet the needs of disabled ex-Service people in years to come.

Recently, a legacy gift contributed to the Solihull Home's new activities area which accommodates a programme of over 40 activities a week. These have a marked impact on residents' well-being and sense of community. Another legacy will help to provide the ceiling tracking system in the High Wycombe Home which will assist residents' independence. All gifts, large or small, make a difference.

As I head off for retirement, I wanted to say how much I have enjoyed working for such a splendid organisation and I extend a very big thank you to all those supporters who have already included a gift to the Charity in their Will.

If you would like more information about leaving a gift to The Royal Star & Garter Homes, please complete the form below to request a free copy of our Legacy Pack. Alternatively, call 020 8481 7695 and speak to the new Legacy Manager, Anna Wilkinson, who I know will continue to safeguard this vital source of income for the Charity.

Shared Interests



Tailored Care



You can make a lasting difference to the lives of disabled veterans. To receive a free Legacy Pack please complete and return this slip, or call Anna on 020 8481 7695.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Your details will only be used to send you the Legacy pack.





A Message from the Director of Fundraising

Donations from our supporters are vital for everything we do. We could not provide the high level of care our veterans and their partners so richly deserve without the generous and continued support of those who donate money to us or leave a legacy.

We realise that to decide to regularly make a donation to The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a huge commitment. No doubt there are other worthy charities you support as well. We are most grateful that you have decided to support us. I hope that by reading the amazing stories in this newsletter you can see the huge difference you make to the lives of our residents, their families, our staff and volunteers. We just couldn't do it without you.

I am privileged to have been the Director of Fundraising & Marketing at The Royal Star & Garter Homes for over six years now. The team and I are passionate fundraisers and we work hard to ensure our supporters are looked after and appreciated. We feel proud and pleased that they have decided to support the veterans of The Royal Star & Garter Homes. We know that many supporters want to show their appreciation for the Armed Forces and the ultimate sacrifice that people who serve are prepared to make. Giving to us is a way of showing their appreciation.

It's vital, therefore, that you have a great experience with us. Therefore, unless you have requested otherwise, we always say 'thank you' for your donations and we will show you the difference you are making through newsletters like this one. We will send you fundraising appeals throughout the year to keep you updated with news of the veterans in our care and how we are helping to care for them, supporting them in leading stimulating and rewarding lives. These appeals are vital in order to raise funds. Last year appeals like this raised over £300,000 for the Charity.

Of course we never send appeals to those that have asked us not to. If you would like to change how you hear from



us please do contact our Supporter Care team: the details are below. Also we are keen to contact you in the right way. Email and phone are inexpensive ways for us to keep you updated about our work and how you can help, so do let us know how you would like to be contacted. It will probably be Lene or Simon who takes your call, they are based in our Hampton Office. Lene and Simon are happy to chat and deal with any enquiries you might have.

We want to ensure that you are pleased that you decided to support us. Do let me or the Supporter Care team know if there is anything we can do for you.

**Thank you for supporting
The Royal Star & Garter Homes.**

Gordon Craig



Gordon Craig
Director of Fundraising & Marketing
gordon.craig@starandgarter.org

The Supporter Care team can be contacted on **020 8481 7676**, by emailing general.enquiries@starandgarter.org or by visiting our website www.starandgarter.org/intouch

AFD Prize Draw Winner

We are delighted to announce that the winners of the Armed Forces Day Prize Draw were:

- 1st prize £5,000, Mrs Higgins:
"I was very surprised and delighted to win such a lovely prize."
- 2nd prize £1,000, Mrs Ghick
- 3rd prize £500, Mr Cocks
- Superseller £100, Mr Hains



Mr Cocks

3rd prize winner Mr Cocks, commented:

"The luck of the draw! It's not all one way traffic for this great Charity."

Christmas Raffle

Look out for your Christmas Raffle tickets in the post. If you would like to order some tickets, please call the Hotline on **0345 601 6936**.

We're Here to Help

There are several ways to keep in touch. Our small and friendly Supporter Care Team, Sandra, Lene and Simon, are always on hand to help.

- **Call 020 8481 7676**, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm
- **Write to:** The Royal Star & Garter Homes at the address below
- **Email us:** general.enquiries@starandgarter.org
- Sign up for the e-Newsletter on our website: www.starandgarter.org
- **Follow us at:** [@starandgarter](https://twitter.com/starandgarter)
www.facebook.com/starandgarter

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We would appreciate your thoughts on Connections, the Charity or any other issues. Please write to: Gordon Craig, Director of Fundraising & Marketing, at the address below or email:

gordon.craig@starandgarter.org



The Royal Star
& Garter Homes

Caring for the nation's military family since 1916



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