



### The Power of Music in Dementia Care

Dementia Action Week, starting 21<sup>st</sup> May, is an Alzheimer's Society campaign to raise awareness of and offer support to people living with dementia. Among the many therapies that improve the well-being of people living with dementia, music therapy delivers exceptional benefits. For people with later stage dementia who may no longer be able to verbally communicate, music can help them to re-connect with others.

Listening to music and singing increases the production of 'happy hormones' serotonin, oxytocin and endorphins. The Alzheimer's Society recognises the positive effect music can have in dementia care.\* Veterans' charity The Royal Star & Garter Homes recognises music as a beneficial part of resident care. There are concerts and live music events most days for all residents, and another three to four per week specifically for residents living with dementia.



*Diana Greenman*

Diana Greenman was involved with the charity Music in Hospitals & Care for 26 years and Chief Executive for 14 years. Her father, Eric, was a resident at The Royal Star & Garter Homes. In April 2016 she became a volunteer at the charity where she was invited to start up a choir, *The Star & Garter Singers*. Here, Diana shares her experiences of music making a huge difference to people living with dementia.

'I was thrilled to be invited, along with Simon Hancock (Music Director/Choir Master), to start *The Star & Garter Singers*. What a joyful time we all have every Wednesday!

Music is the most emotive of the arts and has great therapeutic properties. Listening to a live performance or participating in singing can help reduce levels of pain, anxiety and depression as one's focus is on making music rather than immediate worries and fears. Some people who are unable to communicate verbally find they can sing familiar tunes, word perfectly, which produces a wonderful sense of achievement. Music provides an effective outlet for expression and interaction, opening closed doors and releasing tension and frustration.



*Diana and Simon leading the Star & Garter Singers choir*



## MEDIA RELEASE



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



*Resident Wyn has a beautiful voice and regularly sings to other residents*

I saw a great example of this whilst visiting a family friend, who was unable to communicate through the spoken word but sang with me word perfectly to, 'If You Were the Only Girl in the World'. This was so emotional I really had to fight back the tears. Perhaps we should start talking in song!

Many people with dementia never lose their sense of rhythm, melody and pitch. On many occasions, I have witnessed people whose dementia is advanced dancing in perfect time to a tune from distant memories. Confusing thoughts are put to one side during these magical moments of singing, dancing, foot tapping – just enjoying being part of something that is familiar and

sharing it with one's friends and loved ones. Music reaches inner depths no other activity ever penetrates.

Participating in a musical activity can improve communication skills between residents and staff and reduce feelings of isolation. *The Star & Garter Singers* is a fine example, where everyone shares in music making. Residents, staff, volunteers, relatives, everyone is one happy choir!

**\* Note to editor:** Dr James Pickett, Head of Research at Alzheimer's Society commenting on University of Utah's research into effect hearing familiar music has on the brain of people with Alzheimer's disease.

### Ends

#### For further information please contact:

Diane Fisher  
Press Officer  
e: [diane.fisher@starandgarter.org](mailto:diane.fisher@starandgarter.org)  
t: 0208 481 7669

Cally Madden  
Marketing & Communications Manager  
e: [cally.madden@starandgarter.org](mailto:cally.madden@starandgarter.org)  
t: 020 8481 7692

Michelle Danks  
Senior Marketing & Communications Manager  
e: [michelle.danks@starandgarter.org](mailto:michelle.danks@starandgarter.org)  
t: 020 8481 7691

#### About The Royal Star & Garter Homes:



*Diana and her father, Eric*



## MEDIA RELEASE



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

### **The Charity provides award-winning care for veterans and their partners who live with disability or dementia.**

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a charity founded in 1916 to care for the severely injured young men returning from the battlegrounds of the First World War. Today we provide specialist care to the whole military family in our friendly, state-of-the-art Homes. Disabled ex-Servicemen and women, and their spouses, can all benefit from our pioneering approach to nursing, dementia and therapeutic care.

We are in the process of building new Homes around the country to provide specialist nursing care for disabled ex-Service people in the best modern surroundings, including dementia care facilities to address this growing need. The Charity has award-winning Homes in Solihull, West Midlands, and Surbiton, Surrey, which also enables the Charity to offer interim care for young disabled Service personnel. Following the successes of the first two Homes, a third Home in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, is being built, with a planned opening in 2018.

We are proud to have enjoyed Royal patronage since our foundation, including that of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II from 1953 to the present day.

The Charity celebrated its centenary in 2016: providing specialist care for disabled veterans since 1916.

**Twitter:** @starandgarter

**Facebook:** facebook.com/starandgarter

**Website:** [www.starandgarter.org](http://www.starandgarter.org)



The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a member of the National Care Forum – the leading voice for not-for-profit care providers. A national perspective may be available from [info@nationalcareforum.org.uk](mailto:info@nationalcareforum.org.uk) or by contacting 02476243619. More details on NCF available at [www.nationalcareforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalcareforum.org.uk).

