

Connections

Supporter newsletter
Autumn 2023



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage



About us



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

We provide compassionate, loving care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

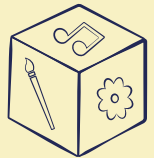
Our Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe offer outstanding care. We also support the ex-Service community through Day Care, Home Care, Lunch Clubs and our Telephone Friendship Service.

We help those who have had the courage to serve our country to live happy, fulfilled lives.



In 2022, your generosity helped us to:

- Provide over 27,000 days of specialist dementia care;
- Support 39 short-break visits, helping the carers at home too;
- Offer over 8,000 group and one-to-one activities.



Looking forward we will:

- Launch our Veteran Friendly Framework to support veterans in non-military care homes;
- Create a community and Home for younger veterans;
- Provide support in veterans' own homes;
- Relaunch our Day Care service.



Welcome to Connections...



...our Autumn newsletter and a chance to see our work in action.

After a busy summer of coronation celebrations and outdoor fun, the Homes have started to bring activities inside again as our thoughts turn to autumn leaves and winter festivities. Inside there are details of some wonderful Christmas cards for you to choose from, which will help support our work while making your friends and loved ones smile!

We have launched two new services for our nation's military family: Lunch Clubs and our Telephone Friendship Service. You can find out all about them on page 5.

We are also delighted to introduce our Non-medical Prescribers. You can find out how they help our residents and local GPs on page 4.

Our residents, staff and volunteers send their very best wishes for a warm, joyful autumn and winter.



Best wishes,

Cally Madden, Editor

Ena and the Prince



As we celebrated the coronation of King Charles III, our resident Ena, 104, recalled her friendship with the former Prince of Wales.

Ena's husband Bill was killed while serving in Belgium in 1944. She became a member of the War Widows' Association following Bill's death and formed a friendship with the Prince of Wales when he became its Patron. She said: "I met him lots of times, he's been wonderful to the War Widows' Association."

Ena met the Prince on several occasions, including at official functions at Highgrove House and Clarence House, and remained in touch with him after moving into our Home. They would exchange letters and Ena added: "I also sent him a couple of architecture books I thought might interest him and got nice letters back. He is so friendly."

Stories from our Homes



The King's coronation

In May, our residents celebrated the coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Residents gathered to watch the coronation service together, before enjoying a celebratory lunch and indoor street parties, live music, quizzes, treats and goody bags. Celebrations on the Bank Holiday Monday coincided with VE Day and more entertainment and revelry.



Andy Cole, our Chief Executive, said: "I'm delighted that we were able to celebrate this historic occasion with our residents. It was important to be part of the national festivities. The fact that VE Day fell during the long weekend made everything that little bit more special for us."

Non-medical Prescribers

Two Lead Nurses have trained as Non-medical or Nurse Prescribers.

Meet Heni and Yuriy (above), from our Solihull Home. Following intensive training, these highly qualified Nurses can now prescribe specific medication for our residents without the need to call out a GP. This saves time waiting for an appointment, lessens the impact of their illness and potentially avoids hospital admission. We are one of the first residential care providers to offer the service and to share the benefits this has for both residents and the NHS.

Heni said: "We know our residents well and quickly spot if they are deteriorating. Now we will be able to assess them at an early stage to ensure that they are provided with timely treatment. Royal Star & Garter is always looking at innovative ways to improve its care. This is one of them."

Yuriy added: I'm proud to be a Non-medical Prescriber and I'm grateful to have been supported in achieving the necessary training."

We plan to train more staff to be able to prescribe medications, which will improve residents' prompt access to treatment.



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Regular calls from a trained volunteer, or face-to-face contact and interaction with Lunch Clubs, can make all the difference to someone feeling lonely or isolated.

Pauline Shaw, Director of Care



New services

Our Telephone Friendship Service and Lunch Clubs are new initiatives aiming to reach more veterans beyond our Homes.



The free Telephone Friendship Service provides support and a friendly voice to veterans and their partners who live in their

own home but may be feeling lonely or isolated. Our trained and committed volunteers provide much needed regular contact with weekly calls lasting up to an hour.

The service has already drawn praise from users. Women's Royal Army Corp veteran Pat (above left) said: "My world has shrunk so I think this is an important new service, and I'm glad other people will benefit from it."

Doreen, 84, is a full-time carer for her Army veteran husband Mac. She now receives regular calls and said: "I look after my husband 24-7 and don't go out unless it's for a hospital appointment. So these calls

mean everything to me. We used to be so busy and active, but after Mac's stroke all that changed and I stopped seeing my friends too. These calls are a lifeline."



Our first Lunch Clubs launched in July and are now happening monthly in all of our Homes. Veterans and their partners living locally can enjoy a two-hour visit, have a delicious meal, conversation and support from staff, paying just £10 to cover the cost of the food.

Lunch Clubs have also received praise from family members delighted that their loved ones have somewhere wonderful to spend time and interact with other veterans. Norma's son, Kevin, said: "She absolutely loved it. The staff made it a special day for her and the rest of the group."

For more information on our new services, to register or volunteer, visit: www.starandgarter.org

Stories from our Homes

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I enjoy it so much when the children come in to see us. I think it's wonderful that the Home arranges this – it brings a little bit of magic, that's a very special thing to do.

Vera, RAF veteran

Comrades reunited

Two soldiers who first served together nearly 70 years ago have met up, with the help of our staff.

Paul, 86, lives at our Surbiton Home, while Les, 93, is a resident in High Wycombe. They were both in The Queen's Royal Regiment and met in 1957. During this time, they served in Bahrain, Hong Kong, Germany and Aden. When they were reunited, they enjoyed lunch together and reminisced about their Army days.

Paul, who is deaf and a lip-reader, served for 30 years and rose to the rank of Major. He said: "It's been great to meet up after a very long time."



Les, who served for 36 years and reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, added: "I can't believe it's been 66 years since we first met. The Army was a large portion of our lives. It was good to talk about the old days."

Intergenerational Week

Our residents love welcoming young visitors to the Homes.



In Surbiton, children from a nearby nursery group regularly drop in to sing and spend time with residents.

Speaking during Intergenerational Week, Wellbeing Coordinator Suzie said: "Residents get so much joy out of these visits, and you can see the boost it has on their mental health and wellbeing. It's such a pleasure to welcome youngsters here, and it's beautiful to watch them interact with older people."





101 not out

Peter and Phyllis have recently celebrated their 101st birthdays.

Cricket fan Peter marked reaching 101 (and not out) with a family gathering in the Surbiton Home's garden room. Peter joined the Army in 1940, aged 18, and served in Burma during WWII.

Phyllis was visited by family and friends, and enjoyed a tea party with other residents. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) aged 19, and was stationed in Belgium and Germany until 1946. She said: "I enjoyed the tea party that the Home arranged for me."



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The first place I went to in Germany was an airfield in Uetersen. When you drove into Hamburg, you saw it was flattened and full of rubble. It was terrible.

Stan, Army

National Service anniversary

This year marked the 60th anniversary of the end of National Service in Britain.



We have National Servicemen in all our Homes, among them is Stan, from Solihull. He was 18 when he joined the Army in 1949, serving in the Royal Signals. He initially signed up for 18 months, but ended up staying two years.

During this time, he served in Germany, where he helped Western Allies overcome the Soviets' Berlin Blockade. Stan clearly remembers the damage WWII Allied bombings caused the country.



Stan kept all of his National Service documents and still has his National Service Enlistment Notice (above) and Discharge Form.

Movement is medicine



Exercise is crucial to our residents' wellbeing – so we make it fun!

Our teams understand how important exercise is to our residents. It promotes cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, flexibility, and balance, which can decline in older age. It also has wellbeing benefits, helping to tackle anxiety and depression as well as enhancing cognitive function.

Our in-house Physiotherapists, dedicated Wellbeing Teams, care staff and Housekeeping Teams ensure residents can enjoy the benefits of exercise every day.

Our Physiotherapists use a specialist app called Physiotech, which allows them to create tailor-made exercises for residents to do in their own space and time. Solihull Physiotherapist Gursh commented: "It empowers residents. Their progress is in their own hands."



In Surbiton, staff have helped a resident rekindle her love of swimming. Isobel, who is living with dementia, now swims regularly, accompanied by her husband Jeremy and

Wellbeing Coordinator Lesley. She explained: "Isobel loves the sessions. When she comes back to the Home, she tells everyone it was amazing."

Cardio-drumming is another fun, innovative activity used in High Wycombe. Residents drum along to music on large exercise balls. Solihull's Movement to Music and Ken's Star Moves in Surbiton are also popular low-impact classes.

Residents love pitting their skills against one another too. Curling, skittles, playing catch and the shuffleboard bring out our residents' competitive side and challenge them physically, in a fun way.

While group and one-to-one physiotherapy sessions are well attended, not all residents want to participate. When this happens, Surbiton Physiotherapist Annette said: "I make it fun. I find out their likes and hobbies and see if I can incorporate them into the sessions. We'll do different things like skiing on the Nintendo Wii."

We incorporate exercises into everyday activities too. Music plays an important part in our Homes and where you find music, you'll find dancing! Our carers love to have a little bop with the residents, helping to improve balance and coordination and lowering the likelihood of them having a fall. HCAs encourage stretching when supporting residents getting dressed or helping with tasks like cooking.

These exercises are part of residents' daily routines and contribute to their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, promoting a healthier and more fulfilling life in our Homes.



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It feels good doing the Physiotec exercises. It's really helped me.

Resident Monica, Solihull



Five-minute fitness

Our Surbiton Physiotherapist, Annette, has put together some exercises. She explained: “Doing these low impact, seated exercises regularly, as our residents do, may help prevent falls and improve mobility. However, you should never do anything that hurts and stop if you feel uncomfortable. Check with your GP before starting any new exercise.”

Chest stretch (good for posture)

Sitting upright, pull your shoulders back and down, and extend your arms out to the side. Gently push your chest forward and up until you can feel a stretch. Hold for five to ten seconds. Repeat five times.



Arm raises (shoulder strength)

Sit upright with arms by your side. Spread your arms as wide as possible, then lift both up to the sky. Return to your starting position. Exhale as you raise your arms and inhale as you lower them. Repeat five times.



Ankle stretch (ankle flexibility)

While seated, stretch one leg out. Then, point your toes away from your body, and then back towards you. Do the same with your other leg. Do two sets of five stretches for each foot.

Neck rotation (neck mobility and flexibility)

Sit upright with shoulders down and look forward. Turn your head slowly towards your left shoulder and hold for five seconds. Do the same on your right side, and repeat three times.

Upper body twist (upper back flexibility)

Hold opposite shoulders with your hands. Without moving your hips, turn your upper body gently to the left, and hold for five seconds. Repeat on the right side. Repeat both turns five times.

Hip marching (strengthens hips and thighs)

Sit upright and hold on to the sides of the chair. Lift your leg with your knee bent as far as is comfortable, and then put your foot back down on the floor. Repeat five times for each leg.



The art of fun

Offering amazing activities every day involves a lot of work behind the scenes.

Residents enjoy wonderful activities, outings and events, seven days a week but delivering that takes hard work and dedication by our Wellbeing Coordinators.

They devise, plan and action many lovely events, often inspired by residents' wishes. "They may see something on TV or read something and ask if we can do that here. We'll try everything once and if it works, brilliant, and if it doesn't, at least we've given it a go," explained Lorraine, Wellbeing Coordinator in Solihull.



One resident there, Stan, loves gardening. The team helped him to restore two old tyres to make planters. Lorraine explained: "The garden has given Stan a new lease of life and his wellbeing is so much better. His family can see that too."

Arranging regular activities takes lots of planning: "The monthly programme takes time to put together, and a lot of thought goes into it," Lorraine explained. Alysia in High Wycombe added: "We make sure we don't have too many similar activities in one week, because residents get bored."



The Wellbeing Coordinators keep in touch with one another to share ideas. "We'll be in contact to plan things," said Lorraine. "That's how we stay as efficient as we can. We're constantly thinking of new activities, or better ways of doing things."

Central to everything the Wellbeing Team does is really getting to know each resident. That means reviewing care plans and talking to them and their relatives. Lorraine said: "When you have one-to-one chats, you find out key information and what residents like or dislike." In Surbiton, Suzie agreed: "From taking someone for a walk in the garden, or popping in to do their manicure, you can get to really know the residents." By doing this, she found



out that resident Lily always wanted to be a Police Officer so she contacted the local Police who presented Lily with a pair of epaulettes.

Alysia said, "It makes me feel great when we smash it." Lorraine agreed, "The little things keep residents happy, and they can have a big impact."

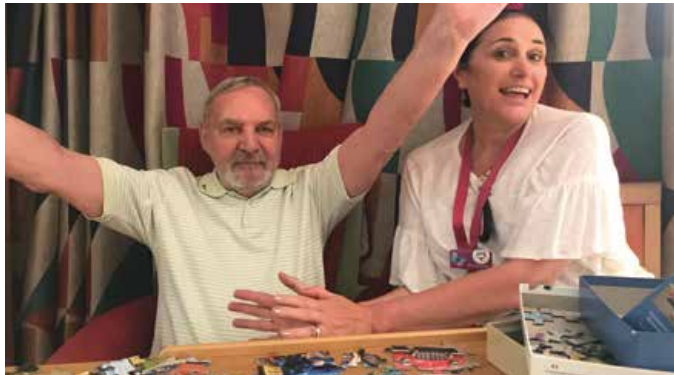
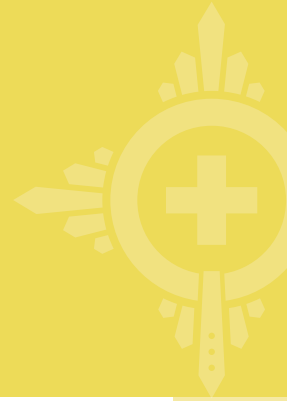
All the Wellbeing Coordinators love their work. Lorraine said: "This job brings me great joy. I get emotional when we see the impact we have on residents' lives. I love my job, no two days are the same and it's like having sixty nans and grandads. We have some wonderful times."



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**I love my job, but
there's more to it
than bingo!**

Alysia, High Wycombe



Top tips for happy trips

If you are supporting an older person or someone living with dementia on an outing, here are some tips from our Homes.



- Plan ahead. Always check the venue is open and book tickets in advance, to avoid a queue.
- Check for wheelchair access and disabled facilities, if needed.
- Take drinks and snacks to stay properly hydrated and energised.
- Check the weather forecast and make sure your companion is dressed appropriately. Remember rain wear, sun cream and hats.
- Go earlier or later in the day to avoid the hottest or busiest times.
- Don't worry if it doesn't work out, just try again another day.

In memory tributes

Find out about making a lasting tribute with Legacy Manager Jackie.



Making a gift in memory of someone you loved is a wonderful way to celebrate their life.

Many charities, including ours, offer you the opportunity to honour someone by supporting a cause that was close to their heart.

When Surbiton resident Mike died, his family asked for donations in lieu of flowers at the funeral and raised more than £400 for us. Mike's daughter, Gill said, "We were very pleased with the collection in Dad's memory."

We record the name of everyone for whom we receive in-memory donations on our online Memorial Wall as a lasting tribute. Friends and family can add special photos and words about their loved one's life to create a personal page.

Many of our supporters donate regularly in memory of a loved one, on a birthday or anniversary, and take comfort in visiting their page on the Memorial Wall.

To find out more, please contact us at inmemory@starandgarter.org

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The care Dad received at the Home was second to none and we really wanted to show our thanks and our support.

Resident Mike's daughter Gill

Will-writing Guide

Writing a Will is the only way you can ensure that the people and causes you care about most will benefit when you die.

If our feature in the last edition of Connections got you thinking about writing or updating your Will, our complimentary guide may be just what you need.



Our Guide contains the following:

- A useful Will-writing planner
- A glossary of legal terms used in Will writing
- Our complimentary Will card to record where all your documents are kept
- Details of our **FREE** Will offer

To request your pack, please contact the **Legacy team on 020 8481 7676**



Write your Will for free

This autumn, we're delighted to offer our supporters and friends the opportunity to write or update a simple Will for free.

You can choose a face-to-face option with a local qualified solicitor using the National Free Wills Network or more remotely either online or over the telephone with Farewill. If you choose to use our Free Wills offer, there is no obligation to leave us a gift but by supporting Royal Star & Garter in this way, you are ensuring that veterans and their partners can access the very best care.



Write your Will online or by telephone with Farewill's professional support. The process is quick and easy, and your Will is checked by one of their in-house legal experts within five days to ensure your wishes are clear.



Request a Free Wills pack from the National Free Wills Network and you'll be sent a list of local participating solicitors by post. You then have 90 days to make an appointment to write your Will.

To find out more:



Scan the QR code

Go online: starandgarter.org/freewills

Email: legacies@starandgarter.org

Telephone us on 020 8481 7676

Legacies with love

This support is vital to our work.

Legacies ensure that we can provide exceptional care to our residents and meaningful activities to match each individual's interests and abilities.

Last year gifts in Wills accounted for 30% of all our income. In recent years, legacy income has played a major part in upgrading and enhancing our Homes, helping to keep the environment fresh, engaging, accessible and more cost-effective to run. This income helps us to invest in our staff, developing their skills and supporting them with training and new qualifications such as Non-medical Prescribing.

The legacy gifts we receive today were generously pledged to us often many years ago by loyal supporters. Knowing we have these pledges helps us to plan for the future, helping us to reach even more veterans with our award-winning care and developing the range of services so we can support more people than ever.

Your gift will also be worth more in the future. A percentage of your residue (a proportion of your estate) is likely to be worth so much more by the time we receive your legacy thereby having a greater impact on the veterans and partners we will care for in the future.

Every gift, large or small, really does make a difference.

How you can help

There are so many ways you can support us and have some fun yourself!

Brew for Two

This September, why not celebrate national Friendship Month with a moment of joy over a cup of tea? Support networks are so important for our wellbeing. Recent data shows that post pandemic, people feel more isolated than ever. To help address this, we have developed Brew for Two, a fundraising product that promotes the joy of connecting over a cuppa!

Our Homes are filled with love and lots of chats over tea, helping to build lasting friendships. Creating a warm, loving environment where everyone is included is important to us.

It's easy to take part in Brew for Two and for a £5 donation, you will receive everything you need. Your little box includes two teabags, an invitation and envelope to send it to that special someone. Once your pack arrives, prepare for an enjoyable natter and some fun. Love and care have gone into the packs. In fact, all items are even recyclable with the exception of the address label.

To order your Brew for Two pack, or for more information, go to starandgarter.org/brewfortwo



Christmas cards

Get organised for Christmas

We're delighted to bring you a selection of great Christmas card designs and other festive products in the brochure enclosed.

It's a great way to help raise money for the people we support, while planning ahead for Christmas.

This year, we are also running a fantastic three-for-two offer on packs of cards in our Potluck Pack (whilst stocks last). This exclusive offer is available online at: www.charitycardshop.com/starandgarter

Just £9



**POTLUCK
PACK
3 for 2**

039543





Regular giving

Our loyal supporters, like you, are always so incredibly generous with your donations.

It's something that we never take for granted, especially in these hard financial times. Some of our supporters have a regular gift set up in the form of a direct debit, and this really helps us plan for the future. If you would like to donate regularly, please speak to our friendly Supporter Care Team on 020 8481 7674 or go online at www.starandgarter.org/connections.



We love your letters!

We enjoy hearing from you and have received many wonderful messages over the past year.

One supporter wrote to let us know about her life in the Salvation Army and her relationship with our historic Richmond Home in the 1960s. Another supporter, whose wife is living with dementia, wrote to say that our piece on 'Talking tips for dementia' in the last edition was the most helpful he had seen.

If there are any topics you'd like to see covered, please write to Cally Madden at the address on the back cover or email cally.madden@starandgarter.org



All the images above represent just some of the cards you might get in the Potluck Pack. Each order will receive a random selection of three packs of 10 cards.

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The newsletter comes across with a wonderful, caring feel and is full of interesting ways to help and comfort the residents. Thank you for putting together such a positive, cheerful newsletter.

A letter from a supporter

Here to help



Connections

We use this newsletter to show how your generosity supports our residents and we produce it as economically as possible.

We hope you enjoyed reading it. Please let us know what you think by emailing cally.madden@starandgarter.org or write to her at the address below.

Our friendly Supporter Care Team is always on hand to help.

020 8481 7674

Monday to Friday 8.30am-4pm

www.starandgarter.org/contact-us
supportercare@starandgarter.org



To help our planet and reduce costs, we'd love to be in touch by email. If you would like to receive our Connections newsletters in this way, please email us at supportercare@starandgarter.org

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