

Connections



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

Supporter newsletter
Summer 2022



About us



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

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

Our Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe offer outstanding residential care. We help those who have had the courage to serve our country to live happy, fulfilled lives.



In 2021, your support helped us to:

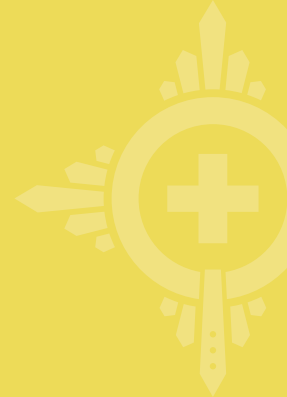
- progress our plans to create a bespoke Home and community for younger veterans;
- develop staff expertise by training six Nursing Associates, whose work assists Nurses with some of their responsibilities;
- deliver a new Wellbeing Programme to provide tailored activities and exercise that meet residents' needs.

Looking forward we will:

- restart our day care service, when it is safe to do so;
- trial a project to reach veterans in their own homes;
- develop our care and support for younger veterans.



Welcome to Connections...



...our Summer newsletter, inviting you to find out more about life in our Homes.

As both a supporter and friend, we hope that you are feeling more optimistic this year as we begin to better understand how to tackle the challenges of the pandemic. After months of uncertainty and necessary restrictions to visiting, residents are now enjoying more face-to-face visits from loved ones.

Our new Wellbeing Programme supports staff across our Homes in creating meaningful moments with our residents. The Wellbeing Teams have swung into action to bring fun, joy and variety to every day. They have already taken residents out on day trips in our minibuses, to enjoy the scenery, museums, pubs and ice cream! Read on to find out how the Housekeeping Teams create wellbeing in their daily work, from sharing a chat or a song to performing magic tricks. Hey presto, a special moment to brighten someone's day! We will also be providing lots of tips, ideas and stories throughout this year to encourage our supporters to look after their wellbeing too.



We'll be sharing news of our Jubilee celebrations in the next edition of Connections. Wishing you a happy summer.

Cally Madden, Editor

The Platinum Jubilee



On behalf of our residents, staff and volunteers, we would like to wish our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen, our warmest congratulations on her Platinum Jubilee. Her Majesty is seen here visiting our Richmond Home in 1958.

The Homes are preparing for a weekend of celebrations. Residents and staff will be making a special card for Her Majesty and the Union Jack will be flying high outside. In Solihull, residents have planted lily of the valley, The Queen's favourite flower, in her honour.



Residents will celebrate in style with colourful street parties, buffets, a delicious afternoon tea with live music, and military visits and talks. When The Queen attends the Epsom Derby, residents will be following the race with great excitement.

We wish you a wonderful weekend of celebration.

Celebrating our residents

Grenadier Guard John recalls The Queen's Coronation.

Resident John attended the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, on 2 June 1953.



“When Princess Elizabeth arrived at Westminster Abbey, the courtiers had to close in as the aisle was narrow. She walked so close to me that I could have touched her. When she came out as Queen with her crown on, it was such a fantastic sight.

“As Her Majesty left, my regiment presented arms. Once she was in the royal carriage, the guard of honour formed up and marched back to Wellington



“

This is my home now. I was a wreck when I came here, I couldn't move. Now I've put on weight and I can walk with a frame. I think it's very good here.

John, resident

Barracks with the regimental band. Afterwards a good time was had by all in the sergeants' mess!"

John is glad to live with us now. "I feel comfortable and I get 100 per cent care night and day." John is sociable and loves joining in with all the activities and outings.

Star Moves with Ken

A former fitness instructor leads the popular 'Star Moves with Ken' class.

Resident Ken, 87, served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps before qualifying as a YMCA weight trainer.

The exercises he teaches other residents are adapted from his training, and approved by our Physiotherapist. The sessions have inspired him to walk for the first time



since December 2020. Ken explained, "The classes keep me going and give me the hope I will achieve my goal to walk again. I also do a lot of work with the in-house Physiotherapist. The classes bring people together as a group. We motivate each other."



“

As well as being a great source of shared pleasure and companionship, eating and drinking healthily plays a key role in maintaining wellbeing. It's a vital part of the care we provide every day.

Pauline, Director of Care

Solihull Star Bake-off

Our residents put their baking skills to the test and loved tasting the results.

The event was organised as part of Nutrition and Hydration Week in March. Residents also enjoyed making smoothies, cookery classes and quizzes.

Resident Tom and Housekeeper Abi stirred up some magic. Tom went on to win the competition with his cake in support of Ukraine.

Hydration tip

Drink six to eight glasses or cups of fluid each day. Luckily tea, coffee, low-fat milk and sugar-free drinks all count.



Wellbeing Programme



Our new service supports residents in feeling engaged, valued and loved.

We've always provided great activities but now we are challenging ourselves to really create magical moments for residents every day.

We offer a wider choice of activities, outings and therapies, building to seven days a week. Staff are trained to ensure that each interaction is positive, happy and focusses on what residents tell us they would like to do or achieve.

Through this new, bespoke programme, we are able to increase mobility, build confidence and nurture both independence and companionship. Our vision is for every resident to live life to the full.

“

Every member of staff is part of the activities and exercise we offer because wellbeing is everybody's concern. The new service focusses on living positively and with love, part of our core values. It's fun and has a positive impact. It is delivered by people who understand our work, what we stand for and ultimately the residents and their specific needs.

Pauline, Director of Care

Lily and Suzie have a chat over a manicure.



Margaret revives her amazing artistic skills.





“

Our Wellbeing Programme is really popular, it allows friendships to be built and to blossom.

Emma, Wellbeing Coordinator



What does it involve?

A dedicated team of Wellbeing Coordinators, an in-house Physiotherapist and a Driver work closely with all staff to ensure the very best for our residents.

The programme has something for everyone, including music, dance, crafts, quizzes, mindfulness, military visits, cookery and more.

It provides one-to-one and group activities and specialist Physiotherapy across a huge range of interest areas and abilities.

There are day trips and outings in our specially adapted minibuses.

It offers increased opportunities to enjoy our garden spaces, with outdoor clubs, al fresco dining and musical and social events.

Our dementia-friendly activities ensure all of our residents can feel engaged and involved.

It includes a digital service, providing on-demand wellbeing opportunities, such as learning new skills and virtual tours.

We also offer external support from Speech & Language Therapists, Podiatrists, Dentists and Dieticians to ensure all aspects of a person's health are taken care of.



Bob enjoys a spot of weeding in the fresh air and sunshine.



Joyce, on a trip to a motor museum, reminiscing about her first Austin.

Music in dementia care



Our dementia care houses are full of colour, warmth and life.

Music plays an important part in creating this vibrant mood, and each Home makes use of it daily to bring people together, to share memories or just to relax and listen.

When the pandemic began, the many musical performances by external entertainers were temporarily limited, so staff stepped in to ensure that music activities were still on offer. We bought new equipment, musical resources and subscriptions. The sessions were adapted to appeal to residents living with dementia. We also introduced extra sensory elements and involved more staff so they could encourage residents to join in.

As part of the support we received from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, we undertook a two-year project to observe our musical activities and capture the impact on residents living with dementia. The aim was to help us understand more of the benefits of music for those residents and to ensure we were delivering it in the right way.

The team introduced a variety of different activities, including group and one-to-one sessions. They found that residents were interested in a wide range of music and using instruments such as hapi drums (a harmonious metal drum) and bell ringing, which they had not tried before.

“

Music is Dad's life. At home, he would sit in his room with his albums listening to music, usually classical. So he really enjoys it when there's concerts and music is played in the Home. I think that even with his dementia, it's sparking memories and taking him back somewhere.

Peter's daughter, Julie

The physical effect of music on residents living with dementia was striking: as they warmed to the music, staff could see them becoming engaged, alert and making good eye contact. Their movements revealed their enjoyment, as they found ways to express themselves through dancing, nodding, tapping their feet, wiggling their fingers, and joining in with instruments.

Residents also became more sociable, initiating conversations or joining in with group meal times afterwards. This is important because communication and appetite can be badly affected by dementia, and residents may feel isolated.

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“I feel wonderful when I sing,
it makes me happy. It’s good for
the soul, it cheers me up.

Alf, RAF resident



A favourite with our residents is a sing-along. Singing is included in many activities we offer because, apart from the sheer joy it brings, it helps with relaxation and has physical benefits associated with deep, controlled breathing. It supports residents’ memories to remember lyrics and many find it comforting to recall songs from their younger years.

In all of these observations, residents improved or maintained a good mood, showing what a positive impact music has. This was demonstrated by their laughter, enthusiasm, and being attentive and responsive to the activity. This positivity continued into other activities later on.

Music man

RAF veteran Alf was bought a piano by his mother at the age of three. Music has played an important part in his life ever since.

Now that Alf lives with dementia, staff ensure he still enjoys his music and support him in playing the piano for other residents. 'Over the Rainbow' is always a popular request.

His favourite activities are dancing to live music in the Home and sing-alongs.



Celebrating our women

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If a pilot was flying out, we'd have a map with the weather pattern, and we'd tell them what to expect.

Hilda, WRNS

We have a proud history of caring for some remarkable female veterans. Here we share some of their stories, past and present.



Hilda's story

Hilda studied mathematics at university. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) in 1950 to work in meteorology, based at Royal Naval air stations. Hilda used teleprinted weather readings to make a forecast. After leaving the WRNS in 1955, Hilda worked as a mathematician at the British Gas Research Station, solving complex equations, long before computers were widely available.



Florence's story

Florence was in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) during WWII. She trained as a driver and in mechanics. She had hoped to see the world but explained: "They didn't send women drivers abroad. So I never had the opportunity, which I was quite sorry about." Florence drove airmen to their planes before they went on missions. She left the WAAF in 1946, married and became a social worker.



Margaret's story

Margaret was not yet 18 when she joined the WRNS in 1944. She was stationed at RAF Flowerdown where she helped Allied troops target enemy submarines by listening to German messages in Morse code. She said: "We were catching U-boats and we were often quite successful. It was a very happy life and I think we did a bit of good." After leaving in 1946, she trained as a nurse, married and had six children.



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There was no way I was going to work in a factory. I went up to the Air Force and said, "I want to join up."

Florence, WAAF (left)



Former residents whose stories live on...



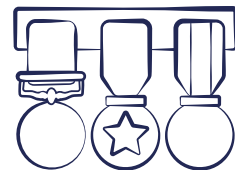
Nancy's story

When she was helping troops escape occupied France in WWII, Nancy Wake was nicknamed the 'The White Mouse' by an increasingly frustrated Gestapo because of her elusiveness. Back in England, she joined the Special Operations Executive, a British secret army, and parachuted back into France in 1944 to fight with the Resistance against the Nazis. She would become one of the most decorated women of WWII. Nancy lived at our Richmond Home for many years before her death in 2011, aged 98.



Bevis' story

Bevis was a member of the Army Intelligence Corps during WWII, and one of the first women posted overseas to work as a translator in Interrogation Centres across Egypt, Algeria and Italy. She achieved the rank of Junior Commander and married an MI6 Officer, Harold Shergold. A brilliant athlete, she competed in the 1948 London Olympics, throwing the discus and shotput. Bevis lived at our Richmond Home until her death in 1997, aged 78.



Good housekeeping



Housekeeping teams play an important role in our residents' wellbeing as well as keeping our Homes clean and safe.

Housekeepers form friendships with our residents, which helps boost their wellbeing and cheer their day.



“My job involves cleaning residents' rooms but there's so much more to it than that,” said Tina (left), a Housekeeper since 1987, now based at Surbiton. “To do the job well, you have to know the residents and their habits.

For instance, if I know a resident likes to rest in the afternoon, I make sure their room is cleaned in the morning.”

Carmel is the Lead Housekeeper in Solihull. Her team learns new skills not required in their housekeeping roles to help residents. “Jane learned to sew just so that she could fix buttons on residents' clothes. Now she does alterations as well!”

Nick has been a Housekeeper at High Wycombe for three years. He said spending time with residents was one of the highlights of the job: “We sit down and chat with them, and get to know them. If I see a resident who seems a bit down, I'll make them a drink, have a chat with them, maybe do something like a puzzle together, and when you leave the room they're happy. I find that incredibly satisfying. I can see the impact that I've had on their wellbeing and I feel good about myself, I feel like I've accomplished something important.”

Tina agreed: “I do this job to make the residents happy. Sometimes I fold towels into swans and elephants – I do that if it's a resident's birthday and it brings a smile to their face.”

Carmel said the team are always looking at ways to help residents: “We make sure we return their things to the same place when we are cleaning. The small things we do definitely make a big difference.”

Tina said she felt privileged to have this friendship with the residents: “If they're in the room while I'm cleaning, I chat away to them. I get to know so much about them and it's an honour that they trust me and see me as a friend. Sometimes I stay after cleaning to have a chat or do a puzzle. I absolutely love it. I do everything with my heart. One day, I hope someone will do this for me.”



“

We're always thinking of what's important for the resident.

Nick, Housekeeper



Nick (above) explained that, while cleaning rooms, he will often stop to spend time with residents: “A lot of residents like looking through photo albums. They tell us who's who and they reminisce. Sometimes we'll read a newspaper together, and making them cups of tea or drinks means the world to them. I enjoy building that bond and friendship.”

Looking at the work of the Housekeepers, Carmel (below), commented: “I'm very proud of what we do. We have to manage our time and tasks, and control infection, but we also show we have time for the residents. Whether it's a two-second chat, helping fold clothes, sorting out make-up or listening to concerns, we're always there for residents.”



“

Nel (above) does card tricks, or sings and dances for residents. Whenever residents see him, they smile. It's about brightening their day, and making life a little happier for them.

Carmel, Lead Housekeeper



Ways you can help

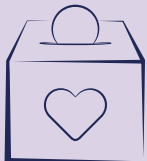


Join us for a new challenge this year!

After two years of restrictions, we are so excited to get back to fundraising events around the country. We are currently recruiting participants for the following:

- **Surbiton Dragon Boat Challenge:**
17 July 2022
- **Royal Parks Half Marathon (London):**
9 October 2022
- **Ultra Challenge: events across the country and dates through the year**

All details at starandgarter.org/challenge



When you join us on an event, you'll receive fundraising support from our dedicated team and we'll be there to cheer you on.

Funding activities

Freemasonry for Women raised over £1,000 for High Wycombe.

The money was used to purchase a projector, an ice-cream maker and a pottery wheel for residents.

Pictured is resident Michael with his daughter Sarah who ran pottery workshops for our residents in March. They also enjoyed watching 'Les Misérables' using the projector and making their own ice-cream.



If you or your organisation would like to fundraise for us, do get in touch:
community@starandgarter.org



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Starlight allows us to remember residents who have lived with us, and celebrate those who continue to do so.

Caley, Director of Supporter Engagement

Play our Star Lottery

Do you want to be in with a chance to win £20,000?



Enter our Lottery now! Sign up via Direct Debit to play our weekly game, only £1 a play.

There are also 10 runner-up prizes of a £10 John Lewis voucher up for grabs every week.

Don't delay, enter today!
starandgarter.weeklylottery.org.uk

See the website for all T&Cs

Starlight 2021

Once again, our Homes gathered for the Starlight services, remembering and celebrating residents, past and present.

Stars were hung on our Christmas trees with the names of loved ones written on them, while friends and families joined us online to hear a message from Director of Care Pauline, and readings from our residents.

Thank you to everyone who generously supported Starlight, please do look out for the 2022 date for your diary on our website: www.starandgarter.org

Prize winner

Congratulations to Mr Allen for winning £4,000 in our Christmas Raffle.

Mr Allen has supported us for many years. He sent us a lovely thank-you note on hearing the news of his win: "What a result! So thank you and be assured that my support for your wonderful charity does not end here."

Maybe his win was written in the stars? Mr Allen also sent us his horoscope. It read: "...you've always shown consideration for others. As Mercury links to mysterious Pluto, a surprising source of gratitude makes its way into your world."

Here to help



We are pleased to say that we have been able to return to our Administrative Office. Now your donations are being processed more quickly again.

We would like to thank you for your patience during the pandemic and for your ongoing support.

There are several ways to keep in touch.
Our friendly Supporter Care Team are always
on hand to help.

020 8481 7676

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

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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