

# Connections



**Royal Star  
& Garter**

Care with courage

Supporter newsletter  
Winter 2021



# 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 has helped us to:

- progress our commitment to creating a bespoke Home and community for younger veterans
- encourage staff expertise by training six Nursing Associates, whose work supports Nurses with some of their responsibilities
- develop a new Wellbeing Programme to provide tailored activities and exercise to meet each resident's 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 Winter newsletter, sharing insight into life in our Homes.

It has been another difficult year for us all – but not one without hope and some good news. Almost all of our residents and staff have been vaccinated to protect both themselves and their colleagues. We have procedures which can be implemented quickly, should restrictions become necessary, such as the use of Covid-secure visiting rooms. Our residents have become dab hands at video calls and good old-fashioned letter-writing to keep in touch with loved ones when face-to-face visits are not possible.

We're also proud to have won several awards this year (see page 12) but we never forget that the most important judges of our work are our residents and their families.

Despite the challenges, your support has enabled us to keep life fun and fulfilling for our residents. As the facts opposite and the stories inside show, thanks to your generosity we have continued our fantastic work for veterans and their partners. We live and

work as one family and you are an important part of that.

Wishing you a happy festive season.

Cally Madden, Editor



PS: Our photos reflect the government's guidance on safety at the time they were taken.

## Happy 100th!



Several of our amazing residents turned 100 this year. Amongst them are Mrs Windsor (left) and Joyce (below). We held birthday parties for them and their families, there were cards from HM The Queen and, of course, lots of cake, balloons and special dinners.

Joyce is a big fan of Hollywood actor Jason Statham, who kindly recorded a special video message to wish her a happy birthday. Our best wishes go to a very special group.



# Stories from our Homes



Despite pandemic restrictions, life in our Homes has been as vibrant as ever.

## Staff wellbeing week

Our Homes held wellbeing weeks, to thank staff for their hard work.

They enjoyed a week of treats and pampering with massages, meditation and healthy snacks, as well as talks on mental health and pandemic fatigue. They also enjoyed fun with the residents, including barbecues and ice cream in the gardens.

High Wycombe Health Care Assistant Jade said, "I always feel appreciated, but it was nice to have a week dedicated to staff."



“

We were quite emotional when residents read out the poem, which we weren't expecting. It's a beautiful gesture and means the world to our staff.

Helena, Home Manager

## Thank-you poem

Residents paid a touching tribute to staff at the Surbiton Home when they wrote a thank-you poem.

Residents contributed a sentence or phrase to describe the loving, compassionate care they receive, which was then made into a poem, How Many Miles, for #GladtoCare Awareness Week which celebrates care workers. Resident Phyllis, said: "We know how hard they work for us and we're grateful we were able to thank them with this poem."

You can read [How Many Miles here](https://starandgarter.org/press-release/thank-you-poem)





## Veterans reminisce

Veterans from different generations came together to discuss their time in the military during a reminiscence session at our Solihull Home.

Four staff members who have served in the Armed Forces chatted to residents and shared photos and stories of their time in service, to mark Armed Forces Day. Army wife and resident Joyce said, "The group was smashing, very interesting and a lovely way to get to know people and hear about what they used to do."

## Brian, Army veteran

Brian took part in the military reminiscing workshops. He joined the Army at 17 and served for 36 years, in Germany and during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, his most difficult active service.



After spending so long in the military, he's enjoying living amongst fellow veterans. He loves the Services connection and the common experience they share.

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I'm over the moon that we were able to help such an amazing charity and having the residents support us was definitely the highlight of the day.

Flt Lt Sophie Dowers, RAF

## RAF fundraising carwash

Personnel from RAF High Wycombe held a sponsored carwash to raise funds for us.

Residents from our High Wycombe Home visited the base to cheer them on and got their minibus cleaned at the same time! They also helped scrub some cars. In just four hours, the RAF High Wycombe crew cleaned 32 vehicles and raised over £260.



# Remembrance 2021



Remembrance is an important time of year for us and for our veteran residents.

This year, our Remembrance campaign focussed on the unwavering dedication of the Armed Forces through the decades.

Six residents, ranging from World War II veterans to an Iraq War soldier, featured in the campaign.

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We were on a hurricane guard ship so we spent some time on the seas chasing storms, and then unloading storage to help people build homes again.

Jim, Navy



**Peter was a low-level reconnaissance pilot** serving over hostile territory in Yemen, where he

flew at a perilously low altitude to avoid detection. Marking a career spanning 22 years, Peter received the Air Force Cross.

**Lily joined the WRAF** because she wanted to see the world. She served as a telephonist, attaining the rank of Senior Aircraftwoman and spent two years in active service in Singapore. She loved her time in the military, particularly because of the people she met and the places she got to visit.



**Jim served in the Navy** for 12 years, where he ‘chased hurricanes’ on HMS Defender in the West Indies.

After leaving the Navy, Jim fitted alarm systems at the old Richmond Home and recalls thinking it was such a great place. Now, half a century later, he is happy to be living with us.





## Residents reminisced about their loved ones and colleagues during services to mark Remembrance.

Services were held in each of our three Homes on Armistice Day and included the two-minute silence at 11am, which recognises the precise time hostilities ceased in 1918.

At our High Wycombe Home, Padre Flight Lieutenant Chrissie Lacey from RAF High Wycombe delivered the service on Armistice Day. The event featured readings, music and laying a wreath.

In Solihull, residents painted poppies, which were used to decorate the Home. Its service also featured music, readings and wreath-laying. A standard bearer was present, and a bugler played *The Last Post* and *Reveille*. Some residents

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I think if we don't remember it, we are more likely to have another war.

Flo, WAAF veteran

attended the local Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade at St Alphege's Parish Church, and laid a wreath at the war memorial on behalf of the Home.

At Surbiton, veterans painted poppies to decorate the Home and garden in the run-up to Remembrance, before paying their tributes at their own Armistice Day service.

Residents from all three Homes came together again on Remembrance Sunday to watch live coverage of the National Service on TV, and again paid their respects with a two-minute silence.

With their first-hand experience of World War II or subsequent conflicts, Remembrance serves as an important time for our residents to reflect.





# The benefits of activities

We challenge ourselves to ensure our activities benefit every aspect of our residents' wellbeing.

Engagement, meaningful occupation and fun are key to the activities we provide, supporting residents to live their best lives.

Through a vibrant programme of events, entertainment, outings and therapies, we increase mobility and exercise levels, and build confidence and a sense of community, as well as nurturing independence and companionship.

We aim to find stimulating activities that appeal to each individual, tap into old skills and hobbies and create a sense of purpose and engagement. Nothing is off the cards if it helps our residents.

**A simple manicure** stimulates Rosemary's sense of wellbeing through physical and social interaction and the boost to self-esteem that beautiful nails bring!



**These wonderful activities are a taste of the fabulous (and delicious) treats we offer.**

**Joy and Barbara** (above) enjoyed a sunny day trip to Henley, benefitting from stimulating new scenery as they socialised in the sun. They loved the drive out too.

**Both Margarets** (below) have a cuddle with Ike the kitten. Pets are popular visitors at our Homes, helping to reduce stress, lower blood pressure and increase social interaction.



**RAF veteran Hugh** (right) enjoyed chatting and making chocolate brownies. The whole Home enjoyed the lovely smell coming from the activities room – and sharing them afterwards!





# Inspirational Stephen



It's been a memorable year for resident Stephen Vause.



Stephen, a Rifleman in the 4th Battalion The Rifles, suffered traumatic head injuries from a mortar blast while serving in Basra in 2007. He was just 19.

He is now 34 and receives 24-hour specialist care at our Surbiton Home. He decided to raise money for charity through a sponsored 60-mile virtual London-Brighton cycle ride, from his room.

Using a specially adapted bike, the 34-year-old used his arms and legs alternately to pedal every day for six weeks, raising more than £5,000 for Help for Heroes. He said: "I wanted to do something to keep busy and help others." He received support from Lord Sugar, Jeremy Vine, the Loose Women team, and Lorraine Kelly on her ITV breakfast show.

Nominated by us for his amazing attitude and dedication, Stephen was named one of four finalists in the Inspiration category of the Soldiering On Awards, which recognises the work of the Armed Forces community. The nomination also acknowledged his broader impact on the Home. He supported his sister's Tough Mudder fundraiser for us by carrying out his



own challenges and introduced boccia (a type of bowls) to the Home, which is now popular with the residents. His efforts were reported by BBC London News who interviewed Stephen following his Soldering On Awards nomination.

The public was asked to vote, and Stephen was amazed to win. He said: "I'm stunned. I want to thank everyone who voted for me, but I also want to share this award with the other finalists. They all deserved to win."

Congratulations to Stephen, who continues to inspire us all with his courage and enthusiasm for life.

“

**It was tough, there were some days that were harder than others. It needed a lot of commitment, but I wasn't going to give up. The public support pushed me on.**

Stephen, after his Help for Heroes challenge

# Saying goodbye

Our residents are surrounded with the same friendship and love when they die as they were during their time with us, as two relatives explain.

## Jackie's story

Jackie's father Mike lived at the Surbiton Home for just under a year, while Jackie worked as a receptionist there.



## A gift in memory

If you would like to give a gift in memory of your loved one, please call 020 8481 7676.

“ We had Dad's funeral collection for Star & Garter and it was a lovely way to round off our relationship with the charity. Jackie

Near the end of Dad's life, we all went to see him. We were made to feel welcome and given practical things to do to make Dad more comfortable. Mum wanted to stay so they brought a folding bed in. We didn't feel we were a burden at all. The staff were so kind to us. When they knew it was the end, they checked on us and left us alone, which was much appreciated.

We had been asked to choose a piece of music and it was playing as everyone gathered in reception to say farewell. It was such a lovely thing to do. There was no 'going out by the back door'. There was a Book of Condolences out for everyone to sign, which was comforting for Mum. We were welcome in the Home and were given time to clear his room. The Home felt like our home. The support and feeling of continuity were amazing.

It gave us all great comfort to have been treated like family by the Home at such a sad time.

“

**We were impressed by the dignity with which Dad was treated.**

Jackie, Mike's daughter

“

We put a lot of trust into the Home taking Dad in during a lockdown, and I'm so glad we did.

Kay, Bill's daughter



## Kay's story

Bill lived with dementia and came to the Home in the first lockdown. When he died there were still visiting restrictions in place. Kay reflects on the care her father received.

One Sunday we got a phone call asking us to come in to the Home. When Mum went into Dad's room she saw a nurse sitting with him holding his hand. That really pleased her. It was so reassuring for her to know that someone was with him all the time. When I spoke to the Home that night, they told me Dad was cosy, peaceful, calm and tucked up in bed. I'll always remember those words – I found them so reassuring.

On Monday, we got another call but we didn't get there in time, Dad had died. The staff were very compassionate. One of the nurses said it was a peaceful death, one that she'd like. It was so important to us to spend that time with Dad in his room. What struck me was staff had moved all his belongings closer to him. Everything that was familiar and dear to him was nearby.

Staff advised us to come back when the undertaker came. We stood outside the Home, not knowing why. Then Dad's coffin came out with a Union Jack draped over it and a wreath of poppies. Everyone clapped as he was taken away. I didn't know this was a tradition in the Home. It was a beautiful tribute which we were not expecting. I think Dad's death was handled brilliantly. I don't think it could have been dealt with better.



## Where to find practical advice

**Financial and legal advice:** [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

**Planning end of life:** [www.dyingmatters.org](http://www.dyingmatters.org)

**Funeral directors:** [www.nafd.org.uk](http://www.nafd.org.uk)

**Who to notify / Planning a funeral:** [www.gov.uk/after-a-death](http://www.gov.uk/after-a-death)

**Coping with bereavement:** [www.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk)



# Care awards



The best judges of the care we provide are our residents and their families.

However, we are also delighted to have received recognition from awards organisations across the care sector, allowing us to share our work and learning with others.

## Relatives' feedback

Residents' families trust us to do our very best for their loved ones. We were thrilled when glowing feedback from relatives on carehome.co.uk's independent review platform led to the Surbiton home being named one



of the best care homes in the capital. One relative said: "I simply cannot fault the care, devotion and understanding... They are so dedicated."

In the same Top 20 Awards we were included on a list of the best Care Home Groups in the country.

## Dementia heroes

We challenge ourselves to provide the best dementia care. This was recognised by the Alzheimer's Society when we won the Professional Excellence category in the Dementia Hero Award.

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**I have total peace of mind knowing that he's getting exceptional care in a lovely environment. The award is well deserved!**

Trudi, Alf's daughter

## Gold standard

Kate's late father David was cared for at the High Wycombe Home for two years. She said: "I couldn't have wished for better care especially in his final few days, it was exemplary."

The Home was a finalist in the Best New Care Home category in the Care Home Awards, and was also awarded a national Gold Standards Framework Quality Hallmark Award for its end-of-life care.

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It means so much to us to have positive feedback from relatives because they are trusting us to care for their loved ones.

Pauline, Director of Care



## Award-winning people

Our hard-working staff and inspirational residents win awards too. Solihull Home Manager Cheryl Harbourne was made an MBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours list in recognition of her Service to Veterans during Covid-19. Surbiton chef Rida Diab was named Catering Manager of the Year at the National Association of Care Catering Awards.



Resident and Army veteran Stephen won the Soldiering On Awards' Inspiration category (see page 9).



## A remarkable year

Such welcome recognition is a great morale-booster for pandemic-weary staff. It is also reassuring to residents and relatives, as well as our supporters, that we are doing a good job.

The final word goes to a relative, Peter's daughter, Christine: "Perhaps the best testament to the exceptional level of care he has received is that he is extremely happy and regards Royal Star & Garter as his home."



# Ways you can help



However you choose to support us, your generosity helps people who had the courage to serve.

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## A gift in your Will

For over 100 years, our supporters' generous bequests have helped us adapt to meet the changing needs of veterans.

Making a Will allows you to look after your family, loved ones and friends. It's also a chance to remember a good cause close to your heart.

Leslie, who served in the Royal Signals Regiment in World War II and who lived independently to the age of 97, supported us for many years and generously chose to remember us in his Will to help those who had been less fortunate.

Today, we are pleased to offer our supporters the opportunity to write or update a simple Will with our free Will-writing service. You can choose to write your Will online with Farewill, or face to face with a local qualified solicitor through the National Free Wills Network.

Would you consider making a gift in your Will to Royal Star & Garter, so that we can be here for the veterans who will need our support in the future?

If you have any questions about making a gift in your Will please contact our Legacy team on 020 8481 7676 or email [legacies@starandgarter.org](mailto:legacies@starandgarter.org)

## Celebrate loved ones at Christmas

Join us for Starlight online this year.

Our Starlight service video is available to view on [starandgarter.org/starlight](http://starandgarter.org/starlight), where you can also download a template to create a star decoration and dedicate a message for a loved one. You do not need to make a donation to watch the film but if you are able to do so, please go to [starandgarter.org/donate](http://starandgarter.org/donate) or call 020 8481 7676.







“

It was reassuring to know how well Dad was being cared for, and it's made us determined to raise as much money as possible.

Kay & Nigel

## Fundraise for us

Let us inspire you to run, walk, bake or dance to support our residents.

Supporters Kay and Nigel completed the 100-mile Millennium Way walk in 10 days to thank us for the care we provided to Kay's late father, Bill. They raised over £2,000! See page 11 for her story.

From family events to sponsored walks and cycles, now is a great time to prepare for a new challenge in the new year. Please get in touch to discuss how we can help you, your family, school, or workplace to plan something special to support the wellbeing of our residents. Email [community@starandgarter.org](mailto:community@starandgarter.org) or call Lauren Baker, our Senior Community Fundraiser on 07443 112317.

## Other ways to support

From responding to our mailing appeals to buying Christmas cards, you can show your support in many different ways.

Our Christmas and Spring Raffles are a favourite with supporters and over the years have raised a significant amount of money for our Homes. It is a great way of raising funds whilst having the chance to win up to £4,000!

If you'd like to take part and don't currently receive a pack, just call us on 020 8481 7674.

## 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](http://starandgarter.weeklylottery.org.uk)

See the website for all T&Cs



**Mrs RM won £250 in our Spring Raffle.**

She said, "This was so exciting. Thank you... for all the help you provide."

# Here to help



We are pleased to say that we have been able to return to our Administrative Office, following all government guidelines in order to keep staff safe. 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.

## Karen, Individual Giving Manager

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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](http://www.starandgarter.org/contact-us)

[supportercare@starandgarter.org](mailto: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](mailto:supportercare@starandgarter.org)

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