



Connections

Autumn Issue 2011

The Newsletter of The Royal Star & Garter Homes

www.starandgarter.org

Registered Charity No. 210119

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR SOLIHULL HOME

Congratulations

to the Solihull Home which has been awarded Butterfly Service status by Dementia Care Matters (DCM), the consultants who have been helping us with enhancing the quality of care we provide to residents with dementia.

In previous issues of Connections we have told how the Charity's Director of Care & Service Development, Pauline Shaw, felt that while the Solihull Home was successfully providing good, safe dementia care, she did not consider it was exceptional care and believed that the quality of life for residents in the Roundel dementia care wing could be improved.

As a result, the Butterfly Project started nearly a year ago and involved training programmes for staff at all levels and from a variety of disciplines, including some Richmond-based staff. The overall aims were to adapt existing working practices to being more feelings based, while recognising and supporting the emotional labour and emotions at work which being person-centred creates in staff. They also involved modifying the recruitment and appraisal process to attract and retain people with the qualities and approach that person-centred dementia care needs, and designing or adapting the environment so that it works in enabling person-centred care.



Wing level 2-1 for the quality of interactions between staff and residents, but taking into account other qualifying factors he gave a rating of level 3 status overall (there are 6 levels but only homes achieving level 3 and above are awarded Butterfly Service status). Pauline Shaw said: "I am delighted by the progress we have made so far and, in particular, that we scored so highly in the quality of interactions, although there is a bit more work to do to achieve comprehensive excellence. This is a great achievement by the staff in a little under a year, and we are most appreciative of all their hard work which has already had a discernible positive effect on residents and their quality of life."

Recently DCM Chief Executive and Founder Dr David Sheard went to the Solihull Home's Roundel Wing to carry out an unannounced audit. He awarded the



THE ROYAL STAR & GARTER HOMES THE ROYAL STAR & GARTER HOMES

Surbiton Update

In the last issue of Connections we announced the purchase of a site for the Charity's second new home in Surbiton which will replace the Richmond Home. Since then it might appear that nothing much has happened, but in fact a great deal of preparatory work has been taking place to pave the way for work to start on site early in the New Year. The site already has planning permission for a care home which allows for a three-storey building that encompasses underground parking and landscaped gardens with mature trees. While we are unable to materially change the design plans for the exterior of the building, which coincidentally was designed by the same architects who worked on our Solihull Home, we are entirely free to lay out the internal space to meet our own special requirements.

The Charity's Executive and the project team have been working very hard on the building's internal design and the external landscaping plans which are now nearing completion. During October we will be inviting

contractors to tender for the work, and hopefully we will be able to select a suitable contractor by the end of the year. From the start of construction, we estimate that the building might be completed in less than 18 months.



Computer-generated image of the Surbiton Home

In preparation for our move in 2013 we have already started a programme of engagement with the local community so that we are able to develop mutually beneficial working relationships. We are delighted with the welcome that has already been extended by Kingston & Surbiton Councillors, neighbourhood committees and local residents' associations.

Party at the Palace

For the third year in succession residents, relatives and staff from both homes met up to go to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party, and happily the weather stayed fine.

It was an early start at 8.30 am for the Solihull coach and it got to Richmond shortly after 11.00 am in time for the passengers to relax with a cup of tea on the terrace. Partygoers donned their finery before lunch, and then assembled in front of the Home for a team photo before both coaches set off through Richmond Park for the Palace.



In addition to the three garden parties which usually take place each year, there is an additional one for the Not Forgotten Association to which veterans — including our residents — and Serving personnel are invited. This year's was hosted by The Princess Royal, who is Patron of the organisation, accompanied by her husband Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence. Approximately 8,000 guests attend each garden party and around 27,000 cups of tea, 20,000 sandwiches and 20,000 slices of cake are consumed.

The Band of the Scots Guards played while residents and their escorts roamed the grounds star spotting — Vera Lynn, Cilla Black, Gloria Hunniford, and Rula Lenska were among the celebrities identified.



Tributes on Facebook

[facebook.com/starandgarter](https://www.facebook.com/starandgarter)



It is 18 months since the Charity set up a page on the social networking website Facebook, and we are continually exploring ways in which our supporters can interact with us through this medium.

Armed Forces Day presented one such opportunity when we invited people to send messages of support to our residents and those currently serving in the Armed Forces. Over the course of a week nearly 100 messages were posted on our page, all of which were displayed on boards in the public areas in both homes to ensure that residents, staff, and visitors were able to see the outpouring of goodwill and gratitude. Here is a sample of some of the messages:

Pauline

"Whilst in the army I spent some time working in Richmond Home when I did a placement there during my conversion eng to rgn course; I loved every minute of it and thought you provide a valuable service. I am now out of the services and would like to think there will be somewhere like this available for me should I need it. Keep up the good work."

Steve

"Just a few words of thanks from one proud to be from the same country as the men and women who have fought for mine and my family's freedom. Thank you for everything."

Teresa

"Thank you all, your courage and sacrifices have helped to give us the freedom we sometimes take for granted."

Sue

"I remember visiting the The Royal Star and Garter nearly 30 years ago as a Student Nurse at Kingston Hospital. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything that you have done to enable me and my children to live as we do now. The pride of a grateful nation rests on every one of you and your fellow heroes' shoulders. We will always remember xxx"

Diane

"Heroes young and old, your country loves you x"

Residents were pleased to be remembered, and it was inspiring and motivating for staff and volunteers to read the tributes. Richmond resident Arthur Treveil said: "I know most of the residents have been very moved by the extremely kind words of gratitude to us veterans and we, in turn, send all our best to those currently Serving". Solihull Home Manager Sue Tompkins e-mailed "We thought the messages were very touching, and it's heart-warming to see that people do care", and Sandie Bryant in Care Services wrote "They help to keep our residents in touch with the outside world, and it's encouraging for the staff to know all their hard work is recognised".

We are delighted, also, to have increased the number of our followers on Facebook from 5,200 to 7,600 during the campaign, most of whom have continued to view our page on a regular basis.



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Relatives' & Friends' Teas

A recent initiative at the Richmond Home is the introduction of Relatives' and Friends' Afternoon Tea events where key members of staff are able to get to know residents' families and friends informally, and share experiences and information. It also provides an opportunity for relatives and friends to meet each other.



The inaugural event was held in mid June and proved to be a very happy and enjoyable occasion. Chief Executive Mike Barter gave a brief welcome speech flanked by Cynthia Brace and Katie Laverick, the Nurse Care Managers who are responsible for the care provided on the residential floors. Over tea, homemade scones and cakes, guests and staff mingled and got to know each other better. There

were information boards displaying photographs and details about the excellent work being undertaken in the Roundel Wing (Dementia Care) in the Solihull Home, outings and activities in the Richmond Home, and floor plans and building elevations of the forthcoming Surbiton Home, and they prompted a great deal of interest and discussion.

Guests completed feedback forms which indicated that they would like to continue with similar gatherings, probably on a quarterly basis, and that they would welcome brief presentations on key aspects of life at the Home.

Accordingly, the second event in mid September took as its theme Person-Centred Care & Life Story Work which was identified by relatives as one of the topics which would be of most interest. Practice Development Nurse Ciaran Vaughan made a short presentation about person-centred care, explaining that it focuses on the importance of relationships, on communication, and validation of feelings. It treats



people as individuals, recognising their uniqueness, and views the world from the perspective of the resident.

Life story work puts person-centred care into practice, and creating life story books is an ideal way for care staff to get to know who the resident really is. Improving knowledge of the individual resident promotes relationships and communication, and engages the resident, their family, and care staff in a shared reminiscent activity as well as providing a topic of conversation.



Several of the relatives and friends attending the event had brought with them photographs reflecting residents' earlier lives, from childhood to when they were in the Armed Forces and afterwards, and these nostalgic mementoes are being scanned so that they can be incorporated into life story books for every resident who wishes to participate in creating a record of their life and experiences.



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Artistic Talent on Display

A year ago Activities Manager Heather decided to beat Simon Cowell at his own game and present *Star & Garter's Got Talent*, a showcase of all the musically-talented people in the Richmond Home. It was a huge success and was followed by a second equally entertaining concert this year. Heather then decided to turn the spotlight on those whose skills are in the arts and crafts arena.

Having canvassed residents, families, staff, and volunteers, she was inundated with exhibits of a high standard, some in particular demonstrating considerable initiative and ingenuity. In

addition to paintings, greetings cards, photos, pottery, tapestry and embroidery, there were bags made from recycled plastic bags, signs made from driftwood, knitting for which cast-off T-shirts provided the "wool", an Ark, and a papier maché barnyard.



Mike Barter opens the exhibition



Resident Bill Linwood's paintings

There was an official opening ceremony performed by Chief Executive Mike Barter while residents, staff and guests sipped pink champagne, after which all the items were displayed in the Home's reception hall for a week although the next show will remain for longer by popular demand.

Concert by The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas

This year's concert at the Richmond Home to celebrate Armed Forces Day was something of a change from the norm as it was performed by The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

After an introduction from Chief Executive Mike Barter, around 30 Gurkhas swept into the Queen's Room with their unusual fast-paced march. They paraded back and forth, sometimes slow marching, wheeling and criss-crossing, while playing a

selection of military music, tunes such as *Zorba the Greek*, all with Nepalese overtones, and their own traditional melodies. The band was then joined by four colleagues who performed the famous kukri dance wielding their fierce curved knives.

It was a spectacular performance made even better when the Gurkhas came out at the end to meet and chat with residents, staff and guests.



Joseph Horsfield meets the Gurkhas



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Working with Bounce

Bounce Theatre is a community theatre group formed in 2006 and based in Kingston-upon-Thames. Their aim is to create innovative and exciting opportunities for people to join in, learn, and be creative through drama and theatre.

Back in April the Artistic Director, Louise Pendry, brought a group to perform for the Richmond residents, and then to talk to them about their experiences and memories as part of a project called Poppy Stories. This is a 10-month heritage project funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund involving 25 young people working with our residents, Age Concern Kingston, and a number of individuals in preparing, collecting, and recording oral histories around WWII.

Some of the group made a return visit in July to record and film further conversations with residents, and as a result the 13 to 21-year-olds have written and directed a play called *Things to do in a Blackout* which was performed at Kingston College's Arthur Cotterell Theatre as part of International Peace Day on 21st September. Some of the residents

attended this and the accompanying photographic exhibition.

The performance was in two parts: the first half took the form of a play set in a bunker during an air raid with the sheltering people talking about friends who have been evacuated, the horrors of the bombing, life at the front etc. After the interval a film was shown of people, including our residents, talking about their wartime experiences, and in between the clips the theatre members spoke about what history means to them and how what had previously been



nothing more than a succession of dates and names came alive for them when they spoke to people about their experiences and memories. The audience then had



the opportunity to ask questions of the theatre group.

Reece Lane-Martin, a member of the theatre group, said: "Being in these sessions was one amazing opportunity that a lot of people wish they could do. I would like to say a massive thank you to the Royal Star & Garter residents for allowing myself and other team members to come and talk to such a lovely group of people that have some fantastic stories. I will cherish these stories for the rest of my life."



A Fête Success

It was a rare hot and sunny day as the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Irene Chamberlain, opened the now-traditional Summer Fete at the Solihull Home. As with the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, the Mayor of Solihull is invited to become a Vice President of The Royal Star & Garter Homes for the duration of his/her term of office and this appointment continues with each successive Mayor. Having been welcomed by the Chief Executive, Mike Barter, Cllr Chamberlain's opening speech showed an impressive knowledge of the Charity's history and more recent activities.

Following the opening ceremony, the Mayor met residents and staff and then

toured the stalls offering bric a brac, plants, tombola, face painting, and lots of food and drink while the AD Band played for the visitors. Resident Muriel Williams' son Brian conducted an auction, and Lead Physiotherapist Nicola Eva bravely allowed herself to be confined to the stocks while visitors and staff threw wet sponges at her.

Attendance was higher than last year with some older visitors making use of the Ring and Ride service to get



The Mayor of Solihull and her son Robert meet Arthur Kelly



Lead Physiotherapist Nicola Eva in the stocks



there, and the student military nurses on placement at the Home donned their uniforms and went to the large car parks in Monkspath Hall Road handing out flyers and putting them on windscreens.

As well as being a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon, the Fete raised £2700 for the Charity, and organiser Annette Stockham said a big thank you to all the families, friends, staff and volunteers who generously provided items for sale, raffle or auction, and worked so hard to set up and man the stalls.



Members of The AD Band



Hannah Holloway (7) wearing some purchases

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Growing Their Own

In the middle of February a small bulldozer started digging up an area of grass at the back of the Solihull Home. Then in March a greenhouse large enough for wheelchair access appeared together with a potting shed and three raised beds, one higher than the other two, to be more easily accessible from a wheelchair. The plan was for residents to grow their own fresh vegetables and salads.



Chef Pauline Hazelwood sources some parsnips

The keen gardeners among the residents hadn't waited for the greenhouse, and had planted leeks and peas from seed and grown them in propagators in the Activities Room. A composter was also purchased and with the kitchen putting their peelings in it and the gardener his grass cuttings, everyone is helping out.

Many residents miss their gardens and even those who don't want to get involved in the digging and planting enjoy watching progress, while resident Arthur Kelly has appointed himself 'waterer in chief'. Throughout the summer they have supplied Chef Pauline with an array of vegetables and salad items to serve at meal times which besides the leeks and peas included green beans, courgettes, tomatoes and spring onions.

They are now sowing winter vegetables starting with cabbage and are determined to ensure that the fresh vegetable supply is ongoing. They are also using the greenhouse to raise flower seeds with which they plan to transform the Home's roof terrace into a blaze of colour next year.



Residents admiring the prolific green beans

Mobile Shopping

Although the Solihull Home has its own library area which, of course, includes DVDs and CDs, Activities Co-ordinator Annette decided to take advantage of the Warwickshire Mobile Library service to enlarge the choice for residents.

The library trailers are easy to spot in their Shakespeare-themed liveries - ours is Romeo & Juliet. The library visits every three weeks on a Monday and is staffed by a driver and assistant. Residents sign up for library cards, and can access the trailer via a ramp and browse to their hearts' content. Bed-bound residents are brought a selection of books based on their specific interests. There are also audio books on loan, and the Home has three cordless CD players which residents can borrow on which to play them using their own headphones.



Inside the mobile library

The library visit is another opportunity for a social gathering, and while waiting their turn to go in and choose their books, residents have drinks in the café/bar and discuss their literary preferences.

Although residents have the opportunity of regular shopping trips, Annette is also thinking of ways in which to bring the community into the Home. Another success is the quarterly visit by Pensioners With Style which is a mobile clothes shopping service. They come with rails of clothing – men's as well as women's – which they set up in the foyer area for residents to take their pick. The clothes and shoes are not expensive, but there is an added bonus in that the Home receives a small commission on the money spent which goes back to pay for outings and activities.

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Out & About in the Midlands



As the Solihull Home has filled with residents, the enthusiasm for outings has increased and nowadays they are sometimes over-subscribed.

Most popular are the visits to nature centres such as the stunning countryside haven in the heart of the busy Midlands, Clent Hills. Just eight miles from

Birmingham city centre, it is now a National Trust property, and one of the Trust's founders described the area as "an urban sitting room – a place where a great diversity of people come to for tranquillity and fresh air".

West Midland Safari Park offers a safari drive-through which means residents can stay in the Home's coach as it makes its way through 100 acres populated with a huge variety of animals including giraffes, zebras, cheetahs, Bengal tigers, North American wolves, Asian water buffalo, African elephants, and the world's rarest deer, the Philippine spotted deer. Large natural enclosures prevent the animals from preying on each other and means the residents are free to enjoy a picnic lunch without having witnessed any gruesome scenes of nature in the raw!

A longer journey lasting 2½ hours does not prevent residents from enjoying fish and chips and admiring the sandy beaches of Weston-super-Mare with the Grand Pier which was rebuilt at a cost of £30 million having been destroyed by fire in 2008. Resident Jimmy Hay in particular likes visiting old haunts around the town and reminiscing about past holidays spent there.



John Ferguson at the pier

Technology Triumphs

Solihull Activities Co-ordinator Annette Stockham reports an increasing interest from residents in IT. The e-mail club which allows families to communicate with residents electronically is thriving with lots of photo attachments coming in – for instance resident Lucy Greaves received pictures of the new house her granddaughter has just bought. This is particularly helpful in updating residents' Life Story books which record key aspects of a person's past and present life and experience.

Some residents have computers in their rooms but for those who do not, Annette is introducing to the Activities Room a computer on a trolley, the table of which can be raised or lowered to accommodate any size of wheelchair. If necessary, the Activities team will

help residents to learn computer techniques and, if they are interested, will encourage them to investigate social networks such as Facebook and YouTube to let them experience the ways in which the younger members of their families and the Home's own staff are communicating.



Resident Victor Price on the computer

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Residents' Stories

By Fiona Poynter — Donor Relations Manager

Many of our residents have fascinating stories to tell and we are able to share some of these thought-provoking insights with supporters in our fundraising appeals. It reminds us of the sacrifice those who served and who currently serve in our Armed Forces are prepared to make.

Indeed, you may have read about resident John Whiteley, DFC whom we featured in our appeal earlier this year. John was a RAF Bomber Command pilot in the Second World War and he captained a Lancaster bomber between 1944 and 1945. The crews never knew where they were going until the last minute.

"You would meet for breakfast at 8am. You would be told if there would be an operation that evening. I would ask the ground crew how much fuel they had put in. If it was a full tank, 2,154 gallons, I knew it was going to be a long operation – at least an eight-hour trip."

As a bomber pilot, the knowledge that you might not return was constant. Taking off in an unpressurised aircraft with 14,000lbs of explosives on board. Flying in

formation in pitch darkness for hundreds of miles over hostile territory. Navigating with basic instruments. Having the constant threat of search lights, anti-aircraft fire and night fighters. Knowing seven out of ten personnel will be killed in action before their 30 missions are complete.

"At the end of the runway the ground staff would be waving us off and I would think, 'will I ever see them again?'"

John was one of the lucky ones.

Now aged 92, he moved to our Solihull Home in 2009, after his wife died some years previously and he could no longer care for himself. He kindly allowed us to tell his story of courage and tenacity in a fundraising mailing which has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for The Royal Star & Garter Homes.

A Memorial is under construction in London's Green Park to honour the 55,573 men of Bomber Command who lost their lives in World War II, and is due to be dedicated in May 2012. When the Memorial is completed, The Bomber Command Time Capsule will be sunk into the foundations of the Memorial and will remain safely embedded in it for thousands of years to come, ensuring that the names of these legends endure and they are never forgotten.

The Time Capsule will contain the name, rank and number of all 125,000 aircrew who were a part of RAF Bomber Command. It will also contain the messages and photographs sent in by those who wish to make special mention of particular veterans, and the Charity has added a message expressing our pride in caring for John Whiteley together with a photograph of him and his wartime crew.



Flt Lt John Whiteley, DFC (centre) with his crew

Leave a lasting gift - remember The Royal Star & Garter Homes in your Will.

A legacy to The Royal Star & Garter Homes is one of the most precious gifts you can give to those who have done so much in the Service of their country. Legacies are vital in ensuring that we can continue to provide our very special care and support for disabled ex-Service people, and are an essential part of the Charity's future development programme.

Contact our Legacy Department on 020 8439 8125 or email john.ingram@starandgarter.org to find out how you can include a gift to The Royal Star & Garter Homes in your will, or to request a complimentary copy of our DVD "How You Can Help" featuring military historian and presenter Dan Snow

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Go-Karting Endurance Event

A year ago a team of 14 serving soldiers from the Unified Systems Support Organisation (USSO) undertook a 96-mile walk carrying 55lbs backpacks along the West Highland Way in just five days and raised nearly £5875 for the Charity.

Now they have generously set out to raise more money for us by holding an endurance go-karting event at the Garrison Go-Kart track at Blandford Camp in Dorset which is also home to 11th Signal Regiment.

Four teams with between six and eight racers in each competed against each other to complete

as many laps as possible within the allocated time – racing took place between 12 noon and 6 pm.

As might be expected the arrangements were comprehensive. Participants had pre-event training which included a safety brief, an appreciation of the karts, and a walk around the track to familiarise the drivers before race day. Equipment such as helmets, gloves and racing suits were provided for the contestants, and on the day of the event a barbecue and light refreshments were available for participants and spectators.

The USSO's Commanding Officer, Lt Col Condie, together with our Director of Fundraising & Marketing, Gordon Craig, presented a trophy to the winning team in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess later that evening.

Birmingham Tattoo 2011

We are grateful and delighted that Norman Rogerson, organiser of the Birmingham Tattoo, has again offered to

December at 2 pm at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena. This year's special festive Tattoo will culminate in a spectacular



The Band of the King's Division at the 2010 Tattoo

support the Charity. For the past three years, a collection has been taken at the Tattoo in aid of The Royal Star & Garter Homes, raising over £30,000, and we will again be benefitting this year. We were also given the opportunity to enclose a fundraising leaflet in the mailing sent out to announce details and prices for this year's event.

Normally held in November, the 2011 Tattoo will take place on Saturday 10th December at 6 pm and Sunday 11th

Christmas Grand Finale commemorating the Christmas cease-fire from the Great War, featuring the Massed Bands including The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines, The Norwegian King's Guard Veterans Band & Drill Team and The Scottish Pipers. It promises to be another splendid event full of pomp, pageantry and spectacle.

Tickets are available from the Box Office on 0844-338-8000 or online at www.theticketfactory.com

Run For Us!

Check your diaries – are you doing anything on 11 March, 22 April, 27 May 2012? Those are the dates for next year's adidas Silverstone Half Marathon, London Marathon, and Bupa London 10,000 respectively. We have a limited number of places available in each race so if you would like to run to raise money for The Royal Star & Garter Homes, please call Jenny Davies on 020 8439 8111.

Thank you M&S Kew

We were very grateful when the Marks & Spencer store at Kew Retail Park near the Richmond Home made us their Charity of the Year starting in mid 2010. A terrific £4,443.58 was raised through various activities including a fashion show, and collections over Remembrance Day, Christmas, and Armed Forces Day. They also helped out at last year's Gentlemen's Boxing Evening. Thank you to the staff for voting for us initially and then for all their help over the year, to our volunteers for making the collections — on one occasion in heavy blizzard conditions — and to the customers for their donations and being so friendly to the people rattling the tins.