

# ALMSHOUSE NEWS

## SPRING 2019

The quarterly newsletter for the Richmond Charities Almshouses



Mrs Carmel Regan (2 Michel's) and  
Mrs Cathy Widger (7 Hickey's).

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### Chapel Diary (Special Services and Events) by Stuart

**Wednesday 6th March at 11am:**  
Eucharist with hymns for Ash  
Wednesday.

**Wednesday 13th, 20th, & 27th  
March and 3rd, 10th April at 10am:**  
Stories for the Soul (in the Green  
Room).

**Thursday 18th April at 6pm:**  
Eucharist of the Last Supper with  
hymns for Maundy Thursday.

**Friday 19th April at 2pm:** Liturgy of  
the Cross with hymns for Good Friday.

**Sunday 21st April at 10.30am:**  
Celebration of the Resurrection and  
First Eucharist of Easter with hymns.

### Stories for the Soul by Stuart



During the period of Lent this year we will be preparing for the celebrations of Easter with some 'Stories for the Soul'. Stuart will be sharing these stories in the Green Room on Wednesday mornings with plenty of opportunity for reflective wondering together, a chance for a little craft activity and some delicious treats over coffee.

The stories are drawn from the parables of Jesus, spiritually and politically challenging stories which invite us to imagine a different sort of world and a very different way of living. Dates and times appear in the diary.

## Nordic Walking by Stuart



Nordic Walking ... not just for Norwegians!

Over the last few months you may have seen groups of residents marching around with walking poles. This has been as part of a course of lessons by Nordic walking training instructor Rosie Cooke.

Nordic walking is a full-body exercise that is easy on the joints and suitable for all ages and fitness levels. It originated as a summer training regime for cross-country skiers. The use of poles harnesses the power of the upper body to propel you forwards. Nordic walking is a great way to increase fitness, lose weight and tone the whole body.

Residents who participated in recent classes noticed how it helped everyday walking, improved balance and reduced falling and tripping. Classes began in the courtyard at Hickey's Almshouses and graduated to some beautiful - but not too challenging - walks in Richmond Park.

The next course of Nordic Walking starts on **Thursday 14 March; 1.45pm at Hickey's** and **continues for 5 further weeks** (in Richmond Park by mutual agreement).

## William Shakespeare by Richard Howard



William Shakespeare comes to the **Chapel of St. Francis** on **Wednesday 27 March at 6pm**. We present:

### **SHAKESPEARE'S POSTBAG.**

An hour of entertainment followed by drinks.

**SHAKESPEARE'S POSTBAG**, a selection of momentous letters sent and received by Shakespeare's immortal characters, was first performed at the Henley Literary Festival in 2016, the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. It was seen again last year at the Garrick Club in London. The cast includes Jeremy Child (Judge John Deed, *The Madness of George III*), Richard Howard (Shakespeare in *Love, Jane Eyre*), Sally Nesbitt (RSC, *The Avengers*), Emily Raymond (RSC, *Pop-up Shakespeare 2018*), Tam Williams (RSC, *The Lottery of Love* at the Orange Tree, Richmond).

## Writing for Your Life by Stuart

Beginning on **Wednesday 1st May at 10am in the Green Room**, Stuart will be leading a **Guided Autobiography Group** which will last for up to 12 weeks. Using a tried and tested method, developed over 25 years of experiment, Stuart will guide us through a series of exercises (and set homework!) that can help anyone organise and write their own experiences and share them in a group with others on the same journey. The method is particularly helpful for those who like the idea of writing their own story for family or friends (or simply for yourself) but don't know where to begin. By the end you will have a 'collage' of your life experiences which, if you wanted to, you could further work on to turn into a more polished autobiography. However, experience shows that going through this process together is almost more important than worrying about any finished product.

Last year's participants described the experiencing as 'incredibly interesting' and 'absolutely wonderful,' with one person sharing that they had not done something they had 'so looked forward to every week for 60 years'.

Numbers will be limited for this course (and there will need to be a minimum of 6 people for the course to run), so please book with your scheme manager if you would like to attend.

Contact Stuart if you would like further details or would like to reserve a place.

## Memoirs or Autobiography by Stuart

If you plan to write your memoirs or autobiography **DO IT NOW!** Margaret Goddard shares her experience of being part of the Guided Autobiography Group in 2018: It's beginning to happen more and more frequently – my brain says to my body, "Do this," and my body says, "No." Frustrating isn't it? But in compensation we've been given a great gift – a box, full to the brim and running over – memories. There are big ones, small ones, (some as big as your head?), sparkling ones, perhaps dull ones. But all ours!

I thought my life had been fairly mundane and ordinary – especially in comparison with other members of the Guided Autobiography Group – no great achievements, no glamour, no bling! But it opened the box and pulled out admittedly small memories, but, examined with hindsight, polished by sharing and further enhanced by the others' interest and comments, they acquired a lustre entirely their own.

It may be a small life; we may not have done anything particularly great or inspiring, but our memories make us what we are and those who love us are interested in that.

Realistically I know that never again am I going to climb a mountain in the Lake District or dance the night away, but I did it once and have the memories – and I can do it in my head whenever I want to!

So, with Stuart's help and guidance, and the encouragement and interest of others, open the box!

## The Craft Club – Yarn Bombing by Debbie



The Craft Club have worked hard for the last three months having such fun creating the wonderful yarn bomb that is now on display at Hickey's. It will hang for one month and will brighten the trees before they bloom again. It hopefully will be a talking point and bring joy to the wintery month ahead.

A huge thank you to all those in the Craft Club for all their hard work, creativity and love that they have put into this lovely piece of art.

The Craft Club would love to welcome new members so if you are free on a **Wednesday morning at 10am** please pop along.



## Seaside Outing 2019 by Juliet



In the last edition of the Almshouse News, we asked for suggestions of where residents would like to go for the seaside trip in 2019. Thank you to those of you who made suggestions via your Scheme Manager or via the suggestion boxes.

The seaside locations which were requested by residents were Clacton, Bognor Regis, Portsmouth, Eastbourne, Southend and Bournemouth. Scheme Managers and I have discussed this and we have decided that for 2019 the outing will be to Southend-on-Sea. We can of course think about outings to the other seaside towns suggested in future years.

The outing will take place on **Wednesday 12 June 2019**, so do put the date in your diaries. Seats are limited so residents wishing to go on the trip should let their Scheme Manager know by Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May. If you need to bring a carer for support, please inform your Scheme Manager at the same time. As in previous years, there will be pick up points at Hickey's Almshouses, Wakefield Road (bus station) and Lebanon Court, Twickenham. Details of pick up times will be circulated nearer the date.

## Summer Parties by Juliet



Every other year the charity hosts a summer party for residents from all estates. Memorably, we had the Queen's 90th with the Kneller Hall marching band in 2016 and our 1940s party in 2018. We will plan to hold another party for all residents in 2020 but this year, therefore, we will be holding three different parties for residents from groups of estates. Below are the dates for these parties – so please put the relevant date into your diary now so that you don't miss it!

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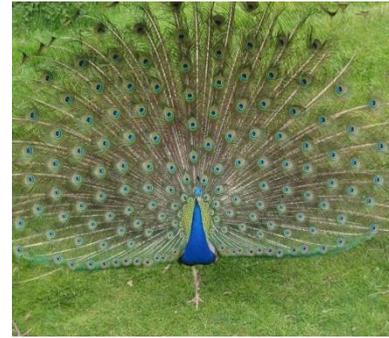
### A bubbly afternoon tea party by Jo & Linda



An afternoon tea party with prosecco for the Vineyard and Candler residents will be held on the lawn at Michel's on **Wednesday 10th July between 1pm and 4pm.**

RSVP to Linda or Jo before Friday 28th June. Transport will be arranged for Candler residents.

## 16 July – 1pm to 4pm Party by Lorraine



For the residents of **Benn's Walk, Church Estate, Houblon's and Manning Place** you are invited to a party on **Tuesday 16 July at 1pm to 4pm** on the front lawn at Church Estate.

We will journey back to the "Days of the Raj" – invites to follow but keep **16 July at 1pm** date in your diary!

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### Hickey's & Adelaide Road Summer Party by Gail



We will be hosting a garden party for Hickey's and Adelaide Road residents on **Tuesday 20 August at 2pm** on the Hickey's Green. More information will follow but save the date for now!

## Christmas Lunch 2019 by Juliet



Thank you so much to all those of you who have given us feedback about the Christmas lunch which we held at the Richmond Hill Hotel in December, for the second time. Overwhelmingly, the feedback has been extremely positive with so many of you telling us how much you enjoyed the lunch and letting us know that you would like to keep the venue the same for next time. Therefore, due to popular demand, I am delighted to confirm that we will hold our **Christmas Lunch for 2019** at the **Richmond Hill Hotel** and, if you like, you can put the date in your diaries now! The lunch will be on **Thursday 12th December 2019**.

Looking forward to it already!

## Friends & Neighbours Christmas Party by Poppy Hillman



2018, my first Christmas at Hickey's, what a lovely friendly atmosphere! There were many social events. The Friends & Neighbours Christmas Party held in St. Francis Chapel for the residents of Richmond Charities for one, Teas and Christmas goodies for all, beautifully laid out by volunteers from Friends & Neighbours.

Carol singing by the children from Marshgate School decked out and wearing tinsel crowns for Christmas really uplifted our spirits, and put smiles on all our faces, they were wonderful and beautifully conducted.

Many thanks to the wonderful Pat Platt and her team. We are all looking forward to next Christmas.

## Christmas Carols and Mulled Wine at Michel's by Jill Davidson



I found the Christmas Carol singing at Michel's on Sunday 9 December quite a magical experience.

The afternoon was cold but dry. Approximately 60 people gathered in the beautiful garden at Michel's Almshouses for the most enjoyable festival of carols sung by the choir of St. Mary Magdalene Church. The choir were in fine voice and the alternative tune to "Away in a Manger" was beautiful, as were all the carols.

Jo and Linda were gracious hosts and provided generous supplies of mulled wine (good for warming our hands) and mince pies (delicious) and of course the decorated Christmas tree added to the holiday ambience. Despite the cold, as the afternoon progressed, we had a really festive and jolly time.

As a newcomer to the Richmond Charities Almshouses, I felt quite at home in the convivial atmosphere and hope that the tradition of Christmas Carols, Mince pies and mulled wine at Michel's garden continue in the years to come.

## Joy Sayles 90th Birthday by Joan Skeats



Christmas, as ever came with the usual hustle and bustle and in some cases panic. However among all the glitter for the festivities was a very bright star. The occasion of Joy Sayles 90th Birthday, and it really was a truly lovely event; a luncheon party organised and attended by all her family and close friends. Approximately 26 of us enjoyed a superb 4 course meal in an appropriate private room at The Crown Hotel in Twickenham, who gave excellent service.

Joy is one of life's very "Human" beings who has always maintained her calm composure in whatever befalls her. She is very petite in frame but a giant in strength of character. Many Happy Returns!

## Marshgate School Project by Pat Platt



8 Marshgate children and 2 or 3 teachers visited us for over a year. We had some really fun times with

them during which one of the boys had to move away. When it finished the residents wanted to continue with the 7 remaining children.

After the parents and residents involved signed an agreement we met and agreed to hold our first event on 23rd January, a party which was enjoyed by all participants. During the party they gave suggestions for a name to call our group. At a meeting in February with the parents we agreed on MAPS (Marshgate, Almshouses, Parents & Siblings).

You may remember that one of the Marshgate Choirs sang at the Summer Party and another at the Friends & Neighbours Christmas party.

We all get together for an event once a month on a Saturday and residents meet with parents every 2 months on a Tuesday afternoon to discuss the next event.

When we met on Tuesday 12th February the parents told us that when the children came to our party in January some of them had received invites to their friends parties but had chosen to come to the Almshouses instead!

## The Almshouses for Six Year Olds



Our names our Tom, Zach, Charlie, Isla, Alize, Ciara and Viola and we are all in Year 2 at Marshgate Primary School. Some of us are 6 and some of us are 7 years old. For one whole year we were really lucky because we were allowed to come to the Hickey's Almshouses to play games, draw pictures and listen to stories with our new friends Pat, Lena, Mary, Sue, Suszie and Stuart. We also got to have a biscuit and juice which was so yummy. The first time we came we felt a little bit nervous but when we got to know everyone we absolutely loved it. We enjoyed listening to stories that our new friends told us and we even found out that during WW2 some people were evacuated and had to leave their mummies and daddies. That must have been quite scary for them but we know it was a long time ago. We have all enjoyed our project with the Almshouses and we are going to miss everything about it especially seeing our new friends each week but we know we are going to keep in touch. We had an amazing time. We hope that some other children from school can come over and meet new people just like we did. **(See our drawing at the end of this edition!).**

## Photo & Sketch Competition by Gail



A reminder that we will be producing a Richmond Charities' calendar at the end of 2019 and want your contributions. So if you have photos, sketches, drawings or paintings of any of our Almshouses or estates please submit them to your Scheme Manager. Selected images will win you a prize and get your name immortalised on the calendar!

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## New Trustees by Juliet



At the Christmas lunch, we said farewell to Susan John, who had been a Trustee for eight years and was retiring from the Board, and to Dr Nick Ramscar, who has taken up an exciting new job opportunity in Switzerland and so had to step down from the Board.

I am delighted to report that we have two new Trustees joining the Board; Kate O'Brien and Dr Alex Hall.

Kate O'Brien works part-time as an administrator and bookkeeper at a school in Chiswick. Previously she worked for a software company. Her family moved to Richmond in 1981 and all four of her children attended local schools. Kate served as a Governor at The Vineyard School during this time. She has been a Samaritan and a Cruse Bereavement Volunteer in the past. In her spare time, as well as enjoying spending time with her grandchildren, she is a keen reader (she was the founder member of a book group which has been running continuously since 1984!), enjoys the cinema and walks in the many green spaces in the borough.

Dr Alex Hall was born in North Kent and qualified in medicine and surgery from Leeds University in 1968. Having held post-graduate posts in general medicine, thoracic surgery, accident & emergency, obstetrics, paediatrics and anaesthetics, he decided to devote the remainder of his career to general practice. He joined Dr Shearman's practice at Cross Deep in Twickenham in 1973 and retired in 2011 having been senior partner for many years. Since retirement he has undertaken voluntary work as a classroom assistant and as a support work for 'Look and Plan' which is an activity group for people with mental health issues. Alex's hobbies are playing the piano and cooking.

Both Kate and Alex have also joined the Welfare Committee and, as members of that committee, they will undertake interviews with applicants for almshouse accommodation and follow-up visits to residents.

## New website for The Richmond Charities by Juliet



During 2018 I spent a lot of time working with a website design company on designing a new website for The Richmond Charities and the new website was launched in November. If you have internet access, do go online and have a look. The website address is [www.richmondcharities.org.uk](http://www.richmondcharities.org.uk)

The website is primarily aimed at people who may be thinking of applying for accommodation with us, and on the website they can find a lot of information about our accommodation and our community. However, the website is also designed for residents, staff and Trustees as well and as part of the website, we have a new 'Community News' section where we can post information about events and activities which have been taking place within our community and advertise forthcoming events. There are recent posts from various members of staff about the Christmas lunch, the Book Club, the Strength & Balance classes and about upcoming films shown by the Film Club. If residents would like to post articles on the website, complete with photos if possible, please do email articles and photos through to me at [info@richmondcharities.org.uk](mailto:info@richmondcharities.org.uk)

## Contacting residents by email by Juliet



Some residents have let us know that they would prefer us, where possible, to contact them by email. Of our circa 150 residents, we have 55 residents for whom we have email addresses but there may be more residents who have an email address.

If you are on email but don't think we have your email address, and if you would like us to contact you by email where possible, please can you let your Scheme Manager know.

Given that only about one third of our residents currently have an email address, it is likely that we will need to continue to send out letters by hard copy when we are writing to everyone, but we may be able to use email more frequently when we need to contact individual residents.

## Who's That Knocking At The Door by Gerry



On occasions recently there have been unwelcome visitors trying to sell assorted items door to door. They are usually quite young, in their twenties and travel down from the north east of the country claiming they are sponsored by a probation service scheme or similar. As I am from the same region and speak fluent “stotty cake” I have been able to dissuade them from their dubious commerce and they have moved on with my accented imprecations guiding their exit.

They are sure to return at some point and I won't always be onsite or at home. They can be quite intimidating and forcefully persuasive, so it is worthwhile to remind you that if you are not expecting a visitor or caller, sensible precautions can save you from dealing with someone who won't take no for an answer.

Always use your door chain especially if it is late in the evening. Before you open your door challenge the caller to reveal his identity and purpose and if you find yourself doubting his or her answer advise them to call another time or contact the on-call Scheme Manager. Your front door is your protection so stay safe and if you want any yellow dusters at £5 a cloth I have hundreds of them.

## Mouldy clothes in our wardrobes by Linda



The majority of us tend not to have the bedroom heating on because we get hot in bed and this can often lead to problems with mould in our wardrobes. The first we notice there's a problem is when we go to get items of clothing out that we might not have used for a while only to discover they are ruined because of mould.

There is a product on the market that I actually use myself and it's called a **“Hanging Dehumidifier”** As you can see from the picture it's really cheap, only 69 pence and worth every penny. You literally just open the packet and hang it in your wardrobe. You will be surprised at how much water it collects in the bag. When the bag's full you just dispose of it and put up another one.

I buy mine from a shop in Hounslow called B&M which is situated in The Blenheim Centre next to Asda. The H37 bus takes you right to the door, but I'm sure there are other shops that sell the same or similar product. It really works!!

## Poetry Corner by Nigel Davis



I imagine that most people leave school glad to say goodbye to poetry for good. After having the odd Shakespeare sonnet or “Tyger! Tyger!” or “Daffodils” shoved down their throats they want no more of it. Fair enough. For those of us who have continued to like and value poetry, we will have to work out for ourselves why we have. But why do poets write the stuff in the first place?

Dylan Thomas (1914 – 1953) was born and brought up in Swansea. Like many from Wales, he had a love of words and language: and that, coupled with the then pervasive influence of James Joyce and the “sprung rhythms” of Gerard Manley Hopkins, perhaps makes much of his poetry seem, by contemporary standards, somewhat over written and over elaborate. But he wrote some great poems (personally, I would not like to find myself on a desert island without a copy of *Fern Hill* close to hand); and notwithstanding his dissolute and boozy lifestyle he was a true craftsman, spending hours each day in the Boathouse in Laugharne in West Wales working and reworking his poems (before heading off to the pub for a pint or four in the evening).

This one is in a rather simpler style, which suits its subject matter. Dylan Thomas, who was in many ways trying to adapt, or even subvert, the “traditions” of poetry, in fact had a profound knowledge and

understanding of those traditions. Note, in this poem, the careful internal rhyming structure not only within each verse but as between the two verses. This contributes to its tightness and tautness. Why do poets, true poets, write poetry? Because they must.

### **In my Craft or Sullen Art By Dylan Thomas**

**In my craft or sullen art  
Exercised in the still night  
When only the moon rages  
And the lovers lie abed  
With all their griefs in their arms,  
I labour by singing light  
Not for ambition or bread  
Or the strut and trade of charms  
On the ivory stages  
But for the common wages  
Of their most secret heart.**

**Not for the proud man apart  
From the raging moon I write  
On these spindrift pages  
Nor for the towering dead  
With their nightingales and psalms  
But for the lovers, their arms  
Round the griefs of the ages,  
Who pay no praise or wages  
Nor heed my craft or art.**

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