

Welcome to your
Almshouse News

News &
Information

Tributes to Staff

Future & Past
Events

Health & Well-
being

Clubs & Groups

News & Info

New Staff &
Trustees

Recipe

Poetry

WELCOME



Welcome to New Residents

We offer a warm welcome, into our community, to the new residents who have recently moved in:

- Rosemary Fraser-Thomson
- Marilyn Edwards
- Ian Heath
- Candy & Glenn Brickwood

Coffee Morning to say farewell to Gail



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

**Date: Tuesday 10 March
Time: 10am - 12pm
Venue: The Chapel**

Everyone is invited to come to the Chapel on Tuesday 10th March from 10am – 12noon where we will be holding a coffee morning (with cake!) to give residents the opportunity to say their farewells to Gail. We will be making a presentation to her. Prepare for laughter and for tears....bring your tissues!

It's not too late to contribute to Gail's collection. If you haven't already done so, and would like to, please hand your contribution to a member of staff.

I look forward to seeing you there.



Contents

- Welcome to New Residents 2
- Letter from Chief Executive 3
- Forthcoming Events 4-9
- Clubs & Groups 10-11
- New Staff & Trustees 12-13
- Tributes to Gail Sullivan 14-15
- Tributes to Gerry Wilson 16-17
- Tributes to Linda Prendergast 18-19
- Past Events 20-29
- Health & Well-being 30-31
- News & Information 32-34
- Recipe Page 35
- Poetry Corner 36

Deadline for the next edition is 13 May 2020

Credits

Editor: Juliet Ames- Lewis
Design & Photography: Chantal Richards



Juliet Ames-Lewis Chief Executive



Letter from Juliet

Welcome to the second edition of our new-look Almshouse News! Chantal and I received excellent feedback from many of you after the first edition, which we hope you enjoyed.

I am delighted that more and more residents are now contributing to the Almshouse News, so please keep your articles coming!

In this Spring edition, you will find information about our new Deputy Scheme Manager, Claire, who starts with us in March, and about our two new Trustees, Emma and Richard. There are also tributes to Gail, who is leaving us to return to New Zealand and to Linda and Gerry who have both reached major milestones in their roles with the charity.

There is exciting news to share with you all about a new almshouse development which we have purchased and will be opening for new residents later in 2020. Further information about this is on page 32.

You will also find inside a host of photos taken by Chantal at our Christmas Lunch at the Richmond Hill Hotel, along with Gordon's article about the lunch.

Everyone who attended seemed to have a great time at the lunch, particularly due to the entertainment – it was wonderful to see so many of you on the dance floor!

But we did also receive some negative feedback about the quality of the food and service, which we agreed was unfortunately not at the high standards of the previous two years.

We gave all the feedback to the Richmond Hill Hotel and they had a big team meeting about it. I am delighted to say that they have taken everything on board and want to put it right for us next time. They have vowed to make our next lunch perfect in every way!

So with this reassurance, we have booked again, and for those of you who like to plan ahead, the Christmas Lunch for this year will be on Thursday 17th December 2020. Put it in your diaries now!



Special Chapel Services for Lent and Easter



by Stuart Lee, Chaplain



Ash Wednesday

Date: 26th February Time: 11am
Eucharist with hymns to mark the beginning of the period of Lent, a time for getting ready for the great mystery of Easter.

Maundy Thursday

Date: 9th April Time: 6pm
A moving service where we remember Jesus last supper with his friends and his subsequent arrest.

Good Friday

Date: 10th April Time: 2pm
We recall Jesus' crucifixion and death in words, music and prayer for the world

Easter Day

Date: 12th April Time: 10.30am
A celebration of new life and hope as we welcome the Easter Light and share the first Eucharist of Easter

The Story Behind the Painting



by Stuart Lee, Chaplain

Event: Lent Course

Date: Sundays in March

Time: 5pm Venue: The Chapel

This year's Lent Course will give us an opportunity to wonder about the distinctive and precious images painted on our chapel walls.

Each Sunday evening throughout March, beginning at 5pm, we will hear the story depicted in one of the chapel wall paintings and reflect on its significance together. We will end our time each week with a brief, meditative act of worship.



Lent Lunches 2020



by **Stuart Lee, Chaplain**

Event: Soup, Cheese & Fruit

Dates: 4th March; 11 March; 18th March; 25th March & 1st April

Time: Midday - 1pm

Venue: Green Room

This year, for the first time at The Richmond Charities, we will be sharing a 'Lent Lunch' each Wednesday as we enter the period of waiting for the celebration of Easter.

A Lent Lunch is a simple meal of vegetarian soup, some bread and cheese.



It is an opportunity to enjoy one another's company and be mindful of the many throughout the world who cannot enjoy such simple pleasures as food and friends.

For five Wednesdays, beginning on 4th March, residents are welcome to drop into the Green Room between Midday and 1pm for some soup, cheese and fruit.

There is no charge for the lunch but, if you wish, there will be an opportunity to make a donation to the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call. This is a charitable fund which supports projects in South London and Zimbabwe ensuring that people have access to the basics of life – water, food, friendship and care.

F&N Fundraiser



by Leslie Cook

Event: Afternoon Cream Tea

Date: Tuesday 3rd March

Time: 3pm

Venue: The Chapel

Our next excuse for a Friends & Neighbours get-together will be our Cream Tea Afternoon on Tuesday 3rd March, 3pm in the Chapel.

Apart from the old favourites of “Make Me an Offer” and Raffle, this will be another opportunity for residents to carry on conversations half-completed at bus stops, greet new neighbours, learn about all our activities (plug: Bridge Club, Film Club, Sketch Club... outings, special talks). And to partake again of Lena’s lemon drizzle cake.

Any profit made on the event will go into Friends & Neighbours funds. Why? Because increasingly payments have to be made in advance for entrance to places visited, for travel to get there, for food and drink for functions... (except for Lena’s

lemon drizzle cake, which she supplies for free).

And talking of places to visit, do keep an eye out for forthcoming trips advertised on notice boards and in monthly events sheets. Our latest outing will have been to Winchester Cathedral, with a welcome by Revd Chris Scott, now retired and living there, long-time Chaplain to us and a special friend to many. Future trips are planned for visits to Kelvedon Hatch Nuclear Bunker (yes!), Chartwell, Waddesdon Manor ... and any place you may wish to suggest, providing it is practicable (in effect just another piece of cake).



VE Day 75th Anniversary



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

VE DAY

75TH ANNIVERSARY

A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION

8 - 10 MAY 2020

Event: #Operation Picnic

Date: Thursday 7 May 2020

Time: 12.30 – 2.30pm

Venue: On the lawn at Hickey's

Richmond Council is encouraging borough residents to hold street parties over the weekend of 8-10 May 2020 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE day. We are also being encouraged to support #Operation Picnic, a campaign from local charity The Poppy Factory aimed at raising money for 100 veterans. The Poppy Factory supports men and women who have typically been out of the Armed Forces for over ten years. Many experience additional barriers to employment alongside their health conditions. The Poppy Factory helps veterans to thrive in the civilian workplace.

We are going to hold our very own #Operation Picnic on the lawn at Hickey's on Thursday 7 May 2020 from 12.30 – 2.30. The Poppy Factory asks our 'troops' (i.e. our residents!) to donate a small amount to The Poppy Factory to attend the picnic.



**THE
POPPY
FACTORY**

getting you back to work

We will provide some food and drink for the picnic and tables and chairs, and please come along bringing a rug (if you are happy sitting on the ground), some food to share with others and a small donation. Why not dress up too? We will have some picnic games and some entertainment as well!

Richmond May Fair



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

The annual Richmond May Fair will take place this year over the weekend of 16th and 17th May 2020 and will be held as usual on Richmond Green.

This year the charity has a stall at the fair. It is good for the charity to have a presence at events such as this, to raise our profile so that we can ensure that people in need of housing in the borough know about the charity and can find out about our eligibility criteria. As some of you will remember, we had a stall last year at the Full of Life Fair at Twickenham Stadium which was very successful.

The May fair is open on 16th May from 10am – 6pm and on 17th May from 11am – 5pm. Staff and trustees will be running the stall and we would welcome help from any residents who would like to be on the stall too. We had a number of residents help on the stall at the Full of Life fair and it gave the opportunity for people visiting the stall to find out first hand what living in our almshouse community is like. If you would like to volunteer to be on the stall for an hour's slot on either 16th or 17th May, please do let me know by the end of March.

Summer Party



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

Save the date!

Thursday 23rd July 2020

is the date for our grand summer party this year for residents from all estates and will be held at Hickey's.

As most of you know, we tend to do a big party for everyone once every 2 years. In 2016 we celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday with a party and a visit from the Band at Kneller Hall and in 2018 we held a 1950s themed party. Watch this space for the theme for 2020!



Summer Outing



by **Juliet Ames-Lewis**

Date: Tuesday 23rd June 2020

Thank you to those residents who put forward suggestions for destinations for the summer outing this year.



We have looked at the ideas and have decided to arrange a trip to Bognor Regis on Tuesday 23rd June 2020.

With a wealth of seaside history, Bognor Regis has become a popular seaside place to visit. The large expanses of sand at low tide and the 2.7 mile long promenade make Bognor Regis well worth a visit.

As well as the beach and funfair, another top attraction is the Bognor Regis Museum where you can learn more about the history of early Bognor, when Sir Richard Hotham set about transforming a small fishing village into a fashionable seaside resort.

Almost every aspect of Bognor's history is represented, from rocks and fossils millions of years old, to before the town was founded through to the present day. Exhibits include displays of vintage cameras, fossils, an Edwardian kitchen and the story of Bathing Machine Proprietor Mary Wheatland.

Put the date in your diary!

Bingo in Garden Room



by Lorraine Bradley

Event: Bingo

Date: First Wednesday of each month

Time: 2pm

Venue: Garden Room, Church Estate

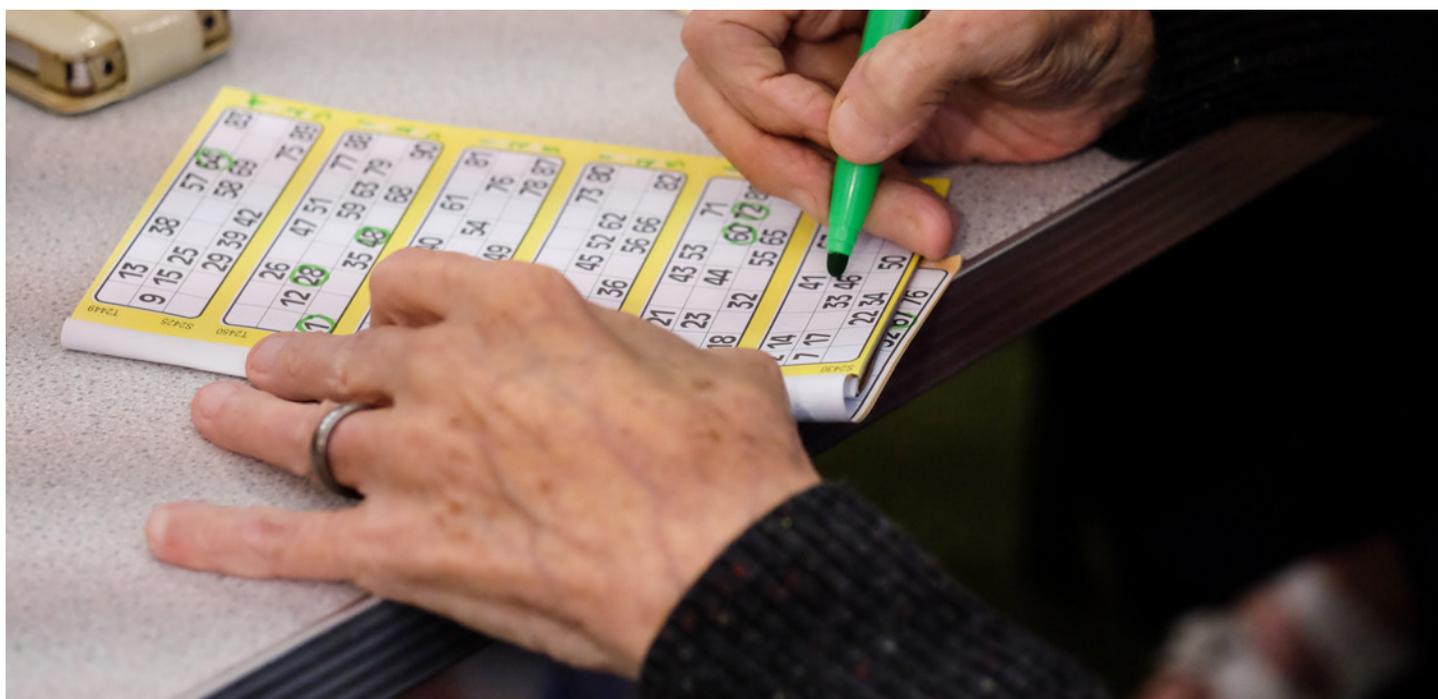
The monthly Bingo sessions commenced this New Year in our lovely garden room situated in the Secret Garden at Church Estate.

The Bingo caller is one of Houblon's residents, Norman, who stepped in voluntarily to run the group. Norman has run Bingo sessions in clubs in the past and is a quiz master too!

They meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 2pm. Tea/coffee and biscuits are provided and prizes for a line and full house are available.

Each book of tickets costs £1 per person and this money is kept by the Bingo group until it is won on the flyer by one lucky player. This can roll over for a number of weeks so mounts up.

So if you are feeling lucky or just want to socialise and get to know other residents pop along where you will be warmly welcome.



Calling all Men



by Debbie Flaherty



Event: Men's Group

Date: Wednesday 18 March

Time: 10am - 12noon

Venue: Garden Room

Some of our male residents are asking if anyone is interested in setting up a Men's Group, and as a result a coffee morning has been organised on Wednesday 18 March from 10am to 12noon just to discuss some ideas. Some have suggested maybe meeting for a breakfast or lunch from time to time. Also we can have a chat at the coffee morning about any other ideas which you all may be interested in doing. Look forward to seeing you there.

Do You Play Whist?



by Norman Bramfitt

We are trying to organise a regular whist drive to be held in the Garden Room. All levels including beginners are welcome.

I will be on hand to give advice to anyone who is not sure.



If you are interested please give your name to your Scheme Manager and if we achieve enough players a regular date and time slot can be arranged. Hope to hear from you!

Introducing Claire Sanecka

It is an absolute pleasure to introduce myself to you; my name is Claire Sanecka and I have recently been appointed as Deputy Scheme Manager for Hickey's, Church Estate, Benn's Walk, Houblon's and Manning Place.

I live locally in Brentford with my husband and our dog, who I adore! I enjoy exploring wildlife during park walks, dining out and reading.

I came into the care industry a couple of years ago after facing redundancy from a corporate organisation. It was then that I recognised my passion for helping others. I have been working at Bluebird Care, initially as a Care Assistant and then as a Supervisor. I am also a qualified counsellor and I volunteer at MIND, the mental health charity.

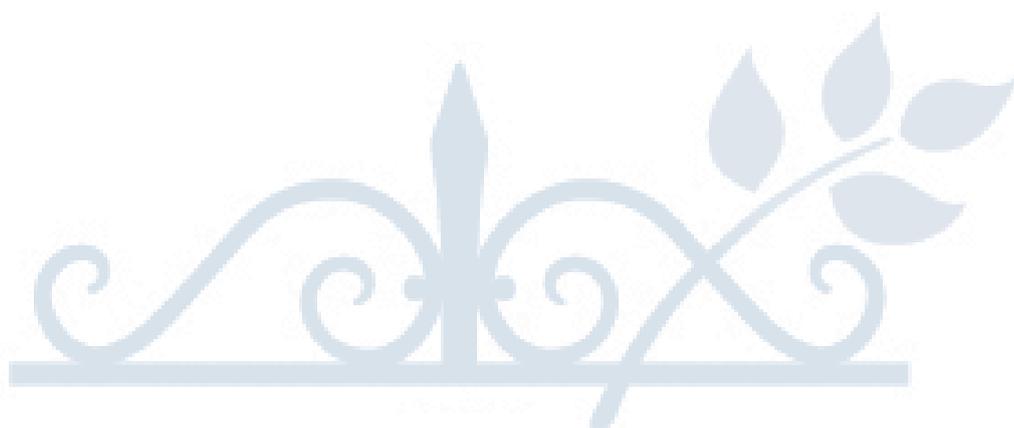
I am thrilled to be joining the staff team and the residents at The Richmond Charities and I look forward to meeting you all.



Introducing Steve Pearce

You may have noticed over the last few weeks a new face around our estates.

Steve Pearce is working with Gerry one day a week to assist with general caretaking duties and so you will get used to see him out and about. He is helping Gerry with jobs that need two people and then doing general estate maintenance work.



New Trustees for The Richmond Charities

We are delighted to have recently welcomed two new Trustees to join our Board to help oversee the governance and running of the charity. Emma Halford and Richard Pyne have both taken up their posts which are for a four-year term initially. Emma is a Co-opted Trustee and Richard is a Trustee nominated by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.



Introducing Emma Halford

Emma Halford has recently joined us as a Trustee and is a member of the Welfare Committee and the Property Committee. Emma says: I'm delighted to become part of the team at The Richmond Charities and am really looking forward to meeting as many members of our community as possible.

I've lived in Richmond for many years and have long admired the gardens in some of the Almshouses. Having recently moved house and acquired my own small garden, I can see I have a lot to learn about plants. I look forward to meeting you all soon, and with the Almshouses having some award-winning gardens, all gardening advice will be gratefully received!

I have lived in Richmond for 15 years. I am an insurance broker working for a property company in the West End and I have also been sitting as a magistrate for over 10 years.



Introducing Cllr Richard Pyne

Richard Pyne was elected to Richmond Council in May 2018 and represents the North Richmond ward. He serves on the Social Service and Housing Committee and is a trustee of the Richmond Parish Lands charity and of the Museum of Richmond.

Now semi-retired, Richard was a Partner in an international management consultancy firm and prior to that worked in Human Resources in industrial companies.

He is a long-standing volunteer at Kew Gardens and also enjoys golf and quizzing and has appeared on several TV quiz programmes. He lives in East Sheen with his

Tribute to Gail



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

As you know, Gail is leaving The Richmond Charities in March to return to New Zealand. Gail's last day will be Thursday 5th March and she will not only be leaving her job but also moving out of the Nurse's Lodge, which has been her home for the last 10 years.

Gail's contribution to the life of The Richmond Charities has been very significant. She has been a wonderful Scheme Manager for Hickey's Almshouses and below are tributes from some Hickey's residents. Gail has also been a very valuable part of the staff team and we will all miss her. Gail has lived in the UK for longer than she lived in New Zealand when she was growing up, so it is a huge move for her.

As some of you may know, last year when Gail returned to New Zealand for a holiday, she met up with her childhood sweetheart, Mark, and she is returning to be with him! Gail also wants to be closer to her parents and her brother. So our loss is Mark, Gail's family and New Zealand's gain and we wish Gail all the best for her future life.



Tribute to Gail
by Maggie Davidson

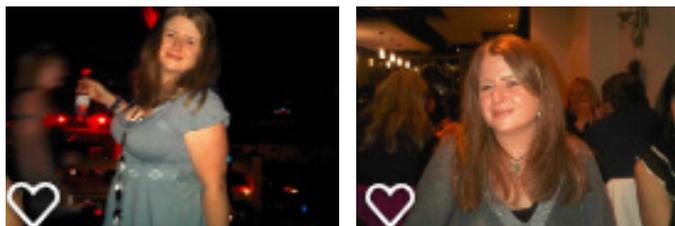
Time will tell but I feel the departure of our Gail will be a huge loss, both to Hickey's in particular but also to many parts of the U.K. that have come to welcome her as well as individual residents like myself. It will prove immeasurable.

Personally, she changed my own dire situation, with a husband going through a distressing breakdown both for him and of course for me. In that efficient and cheerful way that is Gail's style she even managed to find a possible alternative home for him that I was able to pursue. All this while she was in a new job, getting to know the ropes and the many new people and all done in that light-hearted way which nonetheless got things done. I feel very privileged to have got to know her in the ensuing years, always ready to help, to enjoy, to be enthusiastic, to listen.

In other words she set a tone – caring and active. People are amazed at what goes on here. Cinema, bridge, art, parties to name but a few and Gail has always been involved in it all especially if she had a chance of winning a quiz or two! One image stands out in my memory. As I walked back to Hickey's from the shops one Saturday afternoon in the rugby season, the All Blacks were due to play England at Twickenham. Gail being a proper Kiwi wanted to be there. I saw

Tributes to Gail Sullivan - ALMSHOUSE NEWS

a young girl with long hair, dressed in black with a feather painted on her cheek. A schoolgirl, I thought BUT NO it was Gail!!! On her way to the match. Great Fun. It has been a great 10 years with you Gail. We wish you every happiness. Lots of love and a HUGE THANK YOU.



Gail in 2010



Tribute to Gail by Sylvia Ridout

I have known Gail for quite a number of years first as colleague and

friend then as resident and Scheme Manager. Gail has always been very approachable to discuss a range of subjects of which she is very knowledgeable. I have enjoyed knowing Gail and will miss her enormously. She is a conscientious worker and anyone who wishes to employ her will be getting a sparkling diamond. I know she is going home to New Zealand and I am sure that her family and friends can't wait for her to arrive.

I wish her all the luck returning home and should she ever wish to return to the U.K. her circle of friends will welcome her with open arms. I can only speak for myself when I say she will leave a void in my heart as I say Bon Voyage.

Tribute to Gail by Michael Hobbs

It seems like only yesterday that Gail welcomed me, with a smile, to Hickey's. Since then Gail has proven to be a reliable, excellent Scheme Manager. She's a very good listener who empathises with residents. Gail has always maintained a good balance between being friendly yet remaining impartial. All residents are treated equally. Now that takes skill especially when one lives over the shop.

We all know of Gail's great love of sport, especially her beloved New Zealand. Gail enjoys a lively social life outside the walls of Hickey's and enjoys travelling. Although she doesn't have a dog herself she shares her friend's dog Barkley with all of us. It will be no surprise to us if we learn that she gets one of her own in the future.

Last summer Mark, an old friend from back home, was seen in Gail's company. (The residents don't miss a thing!) Not long after that we heard that Gail was thinking of returning to New Zealand. Not too surprising since that is where Mark and Gail's family live. It takes courage to take such a bold step and reinvent yourself. Gail has enjoyed her years in the U.K. and at Hickey's. However in order to create her new life she must say goodbye to this one. Goodbye and good luck Gail. We'll all miss you.

Thank you Gerry

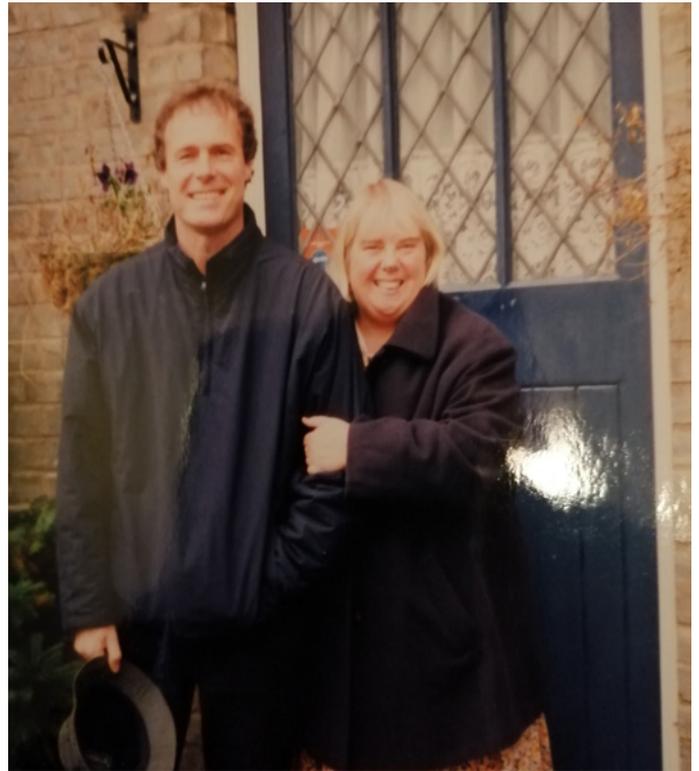


by Juliet Ames-Lewis

Gerry became Caretaker for The Richmond Charities in 1995, 25 years ago! He and Bernie moved into the Porter's Lodge and have been a permanent fixture of the life at Hickey's ever since. We managed to dig out some photos of Gerry and Bernie from 1995 and these are below, along with some tributes to Gerry from residents. Gerry turns his hand to anything; he is a fantastic member of the staff team and nothing is ever too much trouble. Gerry responds to repairs and maintenance issue for residents so quickly that I wouldn't mind betting that we would come top of any list of housing providers for speed of response! Gerry knows all our almshouse estates like the back of his hand and even if he doesn't know your name, he will know you by your door number! Thank you Gerry for everything you do for the charity and for our residents.



Gerry in 1995



Gerry and Bernie in 1995



Poem

by Leslie Cook

Gerry Wilson is a gentleman I've known for many years
If my little house needs help at times, he speedily appears.
The tap that leaks, the door that squeaks
– that leaking radiator
Call for Gerry, necessary, our plumbing gladiator.
Carpenter and glazier, handy electrician
We are more than fortunate with our own household magician.
So give three cheers for the man who appears whenever you're in need
All problems fixed, all boxes ticked
By the legendary - Gerry!



Thank you Gerry

by Lena Warboys

We are not only very lucky to live in our Almshouses but we have help when anything goes wrong. A fuse needs changing, the gas boiler is not working as it should and all the hundred and one other things that can and do happen. Gerry comes along and put things right or if not he refers the job to the gas board or another contractor which he then always follows up on and checks that all is okay. Gerry has been doing his job for twenty-five years and it will take a very competent person to take over when he decides to retire, which I hope will not be in the near future – so thank you Gerry for all you do.



Thank you Gerry

by Lorna South

So what's not to love about Gerry, our friendly, hard-working and kind-

hearted caretaker who has now been working for The Richmond Charities for 25 years. And yes, let's not forget the tall, dark handsome side!

To us oldies, the familiar presence of Gerry in and around the Almshouses is very reassuring and strongly helps to augment the feeling of continuity which is one of the most important and comforting advantages of living here.

Even though when we meet Gerry he is often striding very purposefully between jobs, it gives us a warm feeling to exchange a smile and greeting and to know that we can always rely on him to help us out in emergencies.

Those of us who are involved in Friends & Neighbours events often have extra reasons to be grateful for Gerry's support. For instance, he is always only too willing to help out when heavy items have to be carried to the chapel when

special activities are taking place. Many a time he has transported a large batch of Lena's goodies on his trolley on the day of the Macmillan Coffee morning. I know Pat Platt is especially grateful for his help and support.

There is a further reason why we are so fortunate in having Gerry living and working amongst us, and that is his lovely wife Bernie. At one time a Scheme Manager at Church Estate, Bernie always finds time to have a friendly chat with residents and always shows a kind interest in their welfare. Gladys Seymour who lived at Church Estate for many years (and now lives at Hickey's) remembers fondly the times when Gerry used to drive residents on outings which Bernie had organised when she was a Scheme Manager. So finally Gerry a great big thank you for all you have done and continue to do to make our lives more safe and secure. How fortunate you left your position as a British Telecom Engineer 25 years ago and came to work for The Richmond Charities.

Thank you Linda



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

Linda joined The Richmond Charities in February 2000, 20 years ago! Cast your mind back and think about

what you were doing and where you were living in the year 2000? We had all just experienced the turn of the millennium and survived the supposed catastrophe which was to have been the Millennium Bug – remember that? We currently house 146 residents – of all of you, only 13 current residents were living in our almshouse community before Linda arrived. Linda has seen many, many residents come and go and has been (and continues to be) a hugely important part of our staff team. Here's to the next 20 years!



Linda turns 20!
by Barbara Costanzo

Congratulations to our scheme manager, Linda Prendergast. 2020 marks Linda's 20th year with Richmond Charities. As many residents know from personal experience, Linda's help and advice in times of need has been invaluable – going well-beyond the job description - in my case, a sudden and life-threatening illness averted by Linda's quick action.

Always ready with a smile and busy planning another treat for residents – the garden parties in summer and organising the entertainment at our Christmas lunch, Linda wears her expertise with a light touch and a huge sense of fun, so raise your glass to our wee Scottish lass. Slàinte mhath, (Good Health) and Tapadh leat Linda -Thank You.



Linda in 2000

Tributes to Linda Prendergast - ALMSHOUSE NEWS



Tribute to Linda by Jean Newport

When a knock on the door heralds the arrival of Linda with her greeting “morning my lovely” she brings a feeling of reassurance that all will be well whatever the problem will be. We all value her contribution and positive influence and she is a long serving member of the staff team. Her rapport with all our almshouse residents is particularly noticeable as is her compassion shown to bereaved families by helping with their personal arrangements. In any crisis she is very calm and professional.

Out of the office Linda displays her enthusiastic fun side, she has a gift of telling humorous stories of the fun events she attends, whether camping in the rain or at her favourite dancing competitions, especially in Blackpool! She adds fun at all the charity events and is quite happy to dress up, whether at a quiz evening or a garden party. Any event is meticulously organised and her roving eye will always notice if residents need help, or if they are sitting on their own. She loves music and is always first on the dance floor to start everyone dancing.

We really appreciate having Linda in her position as our Scheme Manager and her constant care looking after us all. May she enjoy being with us for many more years.



Tribute to Linda by Sheila Walker

I really can't believe Linda has been a Scheme Manager for 20 years. After all, she's only 36!

Seriously though, when I first met Linda she was so easy to talk to and so friendly and I knew immediately we would get on.

As well as that she is very professional in all she does. Any problems you have she will discuss with you and help to sort them out. Should you be unwell she will be there for you at once and do whatever she can to help. Linda has a way of making everyone feel at ease and we have lots of laughs, especially when we hear how much fun she has on her salsa dancing weekends and holidays!

She is a lovely mixture of ‘the professional’ and the ‘funsta’ (Don't think that's a word but it seems a good description)! I have been lucky enough to get to know her lovely cat ‘Penny’ who is such a joy. I'm sure Penny knows how lucky she is to have such a good ‘Mum’.

So, ‘Congratulations’ Linda and thank you so much for all that you do for us. Keep having fun, you deserve it.

Friends & Neighbours' Outing to The Royal Air Force Museum in Hendon

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The Royal Air Force Museum London is located on the former Hendon Aerodrome. Hendon was chosen as the most suitable site for the Museum as it had a long aviation history and on 15 November 1972, Her Majesty the Queen officially the Museum. On its opening; Hendon's hangars housed some 36 aircraft. Over the years 130 aircraft have been added.

At first Hendon seemed an unusual choice for a Friends and Neighbours' outing but residents went for a variety of reasons. It would be a good day out and an opportunity to get up close to some iconic historical aircraft. Lena wanted to see the warplanes she last saw when they flew high over Richmond. The names of the most famous aircraft were on the lips of children at the time. Most popular of course was the Spitfire followed by the Hurricane, the Messersmith109, the Mosquito, the Lancaster and the Wellington. And 'yes' one of those was a German one. Lesley Cizek, one of our newer Hickey's residents, had for years, wanted to 'see for herself' the types of aircraft her father Flight Lieutenant George



Haycock had flown. George, an RAF fighter pilot in WWII, flew many missions before and after he was shot down over France. Lesley's delight increased when she saw a Supermarine Spitfire from the 609 squadron (one of the squadrons her father flew with). Dare she imagine that he might have flown it? Her Dad's favourite plane? The Mosquito. Pat had secured the services of a Guide. Unfortunately his choice of location for his talk was not the best. For many of us it was impossible to hear him. (Did anyone speak up? Of course not we were too polite.) but those who did hear him said he was quite knowledgeable. Passing Primary School parties of excited children did not help the situation. However, it was encouraging, to see so many of the children enjoying the museum exhibits and learning about the sacrifices made by so many young pilots.

There was far too much for us to see during our brief visit. For example we didn't get to experience The 4D Theatre, or the opportunity to sit in the cockpit of a Spitfire (It would have been a very tight fit for a few of us) or take a Virtual Reality flight with the Dambusters. Perhaps another time. The Museum is always worth a return visit.

Winter Wonderland, Hyde Park Corner



by The Out &
About Group
December 2019

Christmas Markets have grown in popularity throughout the UK in recent years. They are all over the place. But by far the largest one is Winter Wonderland at Hyde Park Corner.

Seeing it now you'd never guess it had such humble beginnings. In 2006 the Royal Parks tried unsuccessfully to stage a funfair at the edge of the park. Undaunted they engaged the services of several event organisers and so in 2007 the concept of linking a Fun Fair with a Christmas Market came into being. Since then it has expanded. New attractions were added and the visitors came. As many as three and a half million in 2018.

However, some things have changed. In its early years visitors could just stroll up to and pass through the Entrance Archway without any cause for concern. The 2016 lorry attack on Berlin's Christmas Market robbed all of us of our innocence. So when our group arrived at Hyde Park the first thing we noticed was that the location of the Entrance had changed. The second was the queue and thirdly the huge barricades

to block vehicles gaining access to the fair. Finally we were turned away from Wonderland because it was temporarily closed. Not the best start to our visit. Never ones to give up we set off in search of a coffee by the Serpentine.

On our return to Wonderland it had re-opened but first there was a bag search and for some even a body scan. The 'bomb' scare had put a bit of a dampener on the atmosphere. The Bavarian Village was still roped off. Winter Wonderland was not so wonderful. Yes, we saw everything with great ease but something was missing. There was none of the joyful atmosphere that is usually associated with the Winter Wonderland. So mightn't it have been better to visit after dark? Yes, infinitely better but not an easy visit for the young at heart if not in years. Mid-week evenings are very busy and weekends are impossible. For all that we achieved the aim of our group which is to get out for the day.



F&N Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas Party took place on 4th December last. Held in Hickey's Chapel as usual, it was an appropriate setting in which to welcome a choir from our neighbours across the road, Marshgate Primary School. Carols both old and new delighted our ears. It is always touching to see such young faces singing for all they are worth; thoughts stray to what of their future? Hush, no time for reflection but for rejoicing – another slice of Lena's lemon drizzle cake, please. The spirit of Christmas really took hold, with much jollity and laughter, betokened by some residents not yet wishing to bring festivities to an end! Always a sign of success.

Thanks are due to the trusty team behind the scenes who ensure that these events run smoothly. Their efforts are not evident, but we would be lost without them.



Carol Singing in the Secret Garden

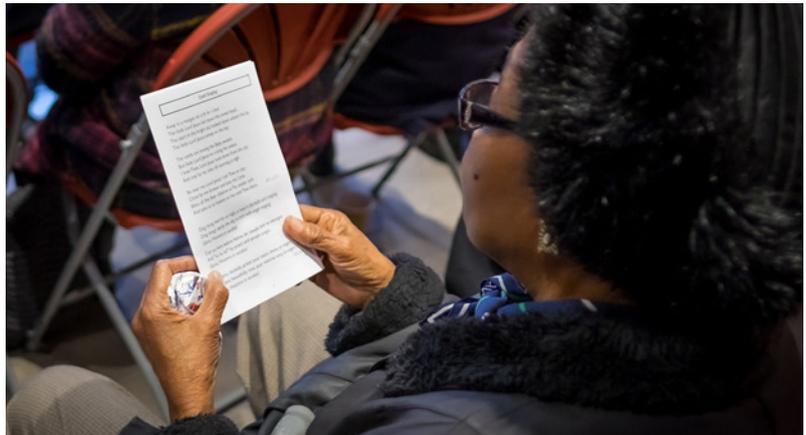


by **Debbie Flaherty**

We were very pleased to welcome Wilma and the Choir of St Mary Magdalene in December for Carols around the Christmas Tree which was held in the Secret Garden at Church Estate. Lots of residents attended. Mince pies and mulled wine were enjoyed and with the carol singing the mood was very festive. A jolly time was had by all.



Past Events - ALMSHOUSE NEWS



Residents' Christmas Lunch



by Gordon Bliss

Over 100 residents of The Richmond Charities were invited to a Christmas lunch on 12 December at the Richmond Hill hotel held in the ballroom, together with the Trustees and staff.

This year for the first time, a professional singer provided an excellent accompaniment to the delicious lunch provided by the hotel and some serious dancing was carried out by the more adventurous of us, to ease the digestion - more "roll-than-rock".

A competition for the most Christmassy outfit was won by your scribe, dressed in a hat which was a turkey with fairy wings on his back. There were mutterings of redraw! All in all, the whole event was a great success and appreciated by everyone and a big thank you to all the staff and Trustees.



Residents' Christmas Lunch



Residents' Christmas Lunch



Residents' Christmas Lunch



41 Military Gun Salutes Green Park



by The Out &
About Group
February 2019

Ever in search of new venues to visit we were delighted when Richard Yardley suggested that we visit Green Park for the 41 gun salutes. And so it was that we ended up in 'The Lodge' at Hyde Park Corner enjoying our usual coffees. A short stroll through the Wellington Arch took us into Green Park. We couldn't have asked for a better day while, although it was cold, it was very sunny and dry underfoot.

What more could you ask for? Soon we reached an excellent vantage point and staked our claim. So what was the occasion you may well ask. It was Accession Day (February 6th).

The 41 military gun salutes marked the Queen's 68 years on the throne. Shouldn't that be 21 gun salutes? A better question might be why a gun salute at all? A little research provided one answer. The firing of a gun salute is a custom dating from the early days of sail. Ships, when on goodwill visits to foreign ports, discharged all their guns to seaward on arrival thus indicating to the authorities ashore that they came in

peace with empty guns. According to one theory British ships, at that time, carried seven guns. So seven shots became the standard to signal that the ship was now unarmed. The guns ashore would welcome the incoming ships by firing three rounds for every shot fired from the ships – putting the total number of shots at 21. Twenty extra are added when the salute is given from a Royal Park.

Now back to the ceremony itself. Shortly before 12.00noon the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery rode into Green Park. Seventy-one horses pulled six First World War- era 13 pounder Field guns. After the guns were uncoupled the magnificent horses and their equally



Past Events - ALMSHOUSE NEWS

resplendent riders left the field. The gunners took up their positions with military precision and prepared to fire. On the stroke of twelve the officer gave the order for number one gun to fire, First the deafening explosion and then the smoke filled the air. Forty more shots separated by ten second intervals completed the Royal Salute.

The horses returned as quickly and quietly as they had departed. Again with precision the guns were re-coupled and all left the field. But all was not yet over. As they departed the Troop turned left into Constitution Hill and halted almost opposite our position and waited for a few minutes. For keen photographers this was an added bonus. Close up all admired the horses, the riders and the guns.

As we ourselves left the Park we took time to visit Bomber Command and New Zealand Memorials. After that we went our separate ways. Some even went for

a long walk in Hyde Park. Isn't it great to have time to make the most of such an unexpected sunny day in February? And the cost? Nothing except the cost of a coffee and even that is optional.

Photos: Sue, Richard and Michael



Meditation and Mindfulness



by **Lissa Good**

Meditation/Mindfulness — what's in it for me, you might ask? Having already

attended two courses, I was thrilled when I saw Stuart was holding another one! I find mindfulness to be a wonderful way of relaxing and giving myself space to breathe — literally — but while you can certainly do it on your own, there's something about attending a class that works better for me.

Each week, Stuart shows you a different form of meditation, so you can discover what appeals to you personally. After each course I have done, I have found new methods that can help me. For example, in the course we have just completed, I realised that the Qi Gong style was brilliant for helping me to release the tension I carry in my neck and shoulders.

Importantly, I now find that I draw on the benefits of mindfulness in my daily life without even really thinking about it. If I notice that I'm worrying about something, for instance, I just pause and take a few deep breaths, slowly and evenly. In under five minutes, I'm

calmer and my thinking is clearer. Being mindful; while doing ordinary, everyday tasks — eating, laundry, cleaning, gardening — concentrates my mind and pushes out the usual crush of thoughts that would otherwise crowd in. The result is a sense of peace and enjoyment — tasting what I'm eating, even taking pleasure in the clean laundry!

I know that in the past I definitely poo-pooed the idea of mindfulness/meditation, but I've had to eat my words. There's a reason it's been practised for centuries! So, next time Stuart offers a course, make sure you're the first in the door. Come with an open mind and just see where it takes you. You won't regret it.



Bluebird Health and Well-being Checks



by Poppy Hillman

I was invited by Gail to attend a health and wellbeing check being offered by Bluebird care agency in the Garden room on Wednesday mornings for 6 weeks. The aim of the check was to monitor one's pulse, blood oxygen levels, blood pressure, temperature and respiration. It also included advice on whom to contact if there were any concerns regarding these readings e.g. your GP practice, community nurses or other specialist teams you have contact with.



The two ladies from Bluebird were delightful, and as well as having the checks I was able to get information on what Bluebird has to offer residents who may need extra care in the future. I found the advice given by the 2 carers very helpful as well as the knowledge that my blood pressure and oxygen levels were OK. The carers work from the Richmond and Twickenham branch of Bluebird and can be contacted on 020 8744 9948 to discuss any of your care needs. They can visit you at home to discuss what services they offer.

Healthwatch Talk



by Debbie Flaherty

A lovely lady called Jessica Beeson from Healthwatch

Richmond came along to the Garden Room to give a talk and ask residents how they felt about NHS services. She wanted to ask residents what they liked about the services they have received and what services could be improved. A few residents attended and it gave them an opportunity to feedback experiences they have had and to give suggestions for improved services. It was very useful for both the residents and Jessica. If any residents are interested in any further information on this local Healthwatch service, please ask your Scheme Manager.



New Almshouse Development



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

As you know, the Trustees and I set ourselves the objective in our 2016-2021 5-year plan to develop more almshouses in the borough, either by acquisition or new build, because of the large number of people wishing to come and live in our community.

Manning Place was our first project, acquired in 2017 and opened in 2018. I am delighted to let you know that we have now purchased a brand-new development, currently being built, in Twickenham. The new almshouse estate will be completed and ready for new residents later in 2020.



Nearby Tesco Metro



Heath Road Development

The block is on Heath Road and is very well situated for shops and buses. It is also not very far from our Candler Almshouse estate. The new development will have 9 level access almshouses (the development has a lift), a communal room and a guest room. We have lots of applicants currently on our Register waiting to be housed, but we also want to give existing residents in need of level access accommodation the chance of a move to the new estate in Twickenham. If you are in need of level access accommodation and you would like to be considered for a move to the new site, please let Alison or me know by the end of March.

This is a very exciting new development for the Charity and, as well as this new build, we are working hard to identify other future opportunities so that we can expand, house more residents and continue our work to build a strong community.

Tesco Saving Stamp Scheme



by Linda
Prendergast

Did you know that Tesco have a saving scheme?



It's an ideal way to save for those special occasions throughout the year including Christmas which we all know can be a very expensive time of year.

£1.00 saving stamps can be purchased from the dispensers found in every Tesco store. You will find the saving card next to the dispensers.

You can redeem the card at any time throughout the year at any Tesco store and the amount you have saved will be deducted from your shopping bill at the checkout.

TV Licences for residents who are over 75



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

As you will know, free TV licences for people over 75 will only be granted from

June 2020 to those who are on Pension Credit.

However, this DOES NOT affect any of our almshouse residents! This is because all our residents are covered by an ARC Concessionary Licence (Accommodation for Residential Care). Those of you under 75 have to pay £7.50 a year and this will remain the same. Those of you over 75 pay nothing, and this too will remain the same. Over 75s who are part of an ARC Concessionary Licence do not have to show whether they are on Pension Credit or not.

So rest assured, over 75s will not have to pay anything. When residents currently under 75 turn 75, Alison simply moves them to the over 75s section of the form, and at that stage residents can stop paying £7.50 a year.

If anyone over 75 does by mistake receive a letter from the TV Licensing Authority asking for proof or otherwise of being on Pension Credit, please let us know straightaway and Alison or I will speak to the Concessionary Team.

Struggling to pay your annual fuel bills?

The Council can help



by Linda Prendergast

A vital lifeline for residents who are struggling to pay their annual fuel bills has once again been launched by Richmond Council. If you are on benefits or have a low income you may be eligible for help from the Council with heating bills. Grants of up to £85 per household are now available from the Council to protect residents who are at risk from living in fuel poverty. Last year over 800 people received the one-off grant - proof that the need exists in the borough. The Fuel Grant scheme is now open. Applications will be accepted until Friday 27 March 2020.

How it works

Richmond residents can apply to get up to £85 towards their annual energy bill through the Council's Fuel Grant Scheme. Applications will be accepted until Friday 27 March 2020.

The Fuel Grant Scheme only has a limited amount of money to pay for these grants, so applications will be assessed depending on individual circumstances. All applications will be processed after the closing date. They are unable to notify successful applicants until after the closing date.

Proof required

To support your application you must provide evidence of the following:

- *Proof of any state benefits or pensions received, such as copies of bank/post office statements or DWP award letters.
- *A copy of your most recent Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction decision notice if you are entitled to either.
- *A copy of a letter, bill or statement from your energy supplier showing your account number.

PLEASE ASK YOUR SCHEME MANAGER FOR AN APPLICATION FORM.

Who is eligible

This scheme is open to anyone on a low-income including pensioners.

You are still eligible if you receive help with your fuel costs from anywhere else.

Recipe Corner - Cider Cake



by Norman Bramfitt

I chose this recipe for the Almshouse News as it is a particular favourite of my neighbours at Houblon's Almshouses!



Ingredients

6oz Dried mixed fruit (marinate in cider overnight)
300ml Cider
8oz Self raising flour
4oz Margarine
4oz caster sugar
2 Eggs
2 Tablespoons milk

Method

Place flour and margarine in a bowl and rub together using fingers.
Add sugar and fruit and stir in.
Beat milk and eggs together and add to mix.
Mix to a soft consistency and place mixture in a prepared cake tin.

For cooking time I prefer to bake 150 degrees centigrade for 40 minutes and then 180 degrees centigrade for 20 minutes.

If you only want a very tasty fruit cake omit the cider.

POETRY CORNER



by Nigel Davis

In Poetry Corner, we have previously had poems by two Welsh poets with the surname Thomas – Edward Thomas and Dylan Thomas. So why not a poem by a third Welsh poet with the surname of Thomas (and some would say the best poet of the three of them)? The more so when I found myself a little while back after Sunday chapel chatting about him with our very own Thomas – our much loved David Thomas of Church Estates.

R.S. Thomas (1913 – 2000) was a bleak and unsparing observer of the life he saw all around him in a coastal and agricultural community in North-west Wales. An ordained minister of the Church in Wales, he viewed the struggles of the local farmers, scratching some kind of barely human existence from their stony fields, with a kind of despairing admiration. Coupled with his sombre outlook on the decline in church attendance and in Welsh culture and on the seemingly inexorable advance of science and modernity, this can make some of his poetry seem rather unsettling.

This poem (it has no title) is much more uplifting. It moves seamlessly from a description of natural life into a reflection on spiritual life. There are some people who persist in thinking that a poem is not “really” a poem unless it rhymes. But just note how the directness and intensity of this poem is enhanced not only by the plain and simple language used but also by the lack of rhyme. A fine poem, well worth reading again and again. And perhaps, too, one to remember if you find yourself wide awake in the early hours.

Untitled

by R.S. Thomas

There are nights that are so still
that I can hear the small owl calling
far off, and a fox barking
miles away. It is then that I lie
in the lean hours awake, listening
to the swell born somewhere in the Atlantic
rising and falling, rising and falling
wave on wave on the long shore
by the village, that is without light
and companionless. And the thought comes
of that other being who is awake, too,
letting our prayers break on him
not like this for a few hours,
but for days, years, for eternity.