

WINTER 2018/2019 ISSUE

The Link



eldon housing
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Welcome to this edition of The Link.

I hope that you enjoy our new features, **Getting to Know You** and memorable holidays; these have been included following suggestions from the Tenants' Panel.

If you have ideas for future editions please do not hesitate to let me know either via your House Manager, Elaine Beveridge or directly to me on **020 8655 6727** or adickson@eldonhousing.co.uk.

I have just received confirmation that the Association has retained its Customer Service Excellence Accreditation for a further year – we are all delighted as we are extremely proud of this important achievement.



Anne Dickson - Editor



Charity Fund Raising

Our tenants have again been taking time to raise funds for charity.

Bardsley & Claremont Courts raised £173.00 and Garden Court raised £75.00 hosting World's Biggest Coffee Mornings in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support

Tenants at Fellows Court knitted poppies which they sold in aid of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal – they raised £60.00

Claremont Court, Fellows Court, Garden Court, Lindsay Court, Marten House and Westdene all put together shoeboxes of gifts for underprivileged children through the Operation Christmas Child Charity.

Our Tenant Services Team

We are delighted to advise you that Housing Officer, Sharon Johnson, has been promoted to Housing Manager and will now be a more frequent visitor to your schemes.

Elaine Beveridge our Welfare & Support Officer will continue her regular visits to Bardsley, Claremont, Fellows and Garden Courts plus Marten House.

Operations Administrator, Natalie Smith, provides office based support to both Sharon and Elaine.

SHARON JOHNSON - HOUSING MANAGER

☎ **020 8655 6724** 📧 sjohnson@eldonhousing.co.uk

Sharon works Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm

ELAINE BEVERIDGE - WELFARE & SUPPORT OFFICER

☎ **07785 616860** 📧 ebeveridge@eldonhousing.co.uk

Elaine works Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm

NATALIE SMITH - OPERATIONS ADMINISTRATOR

☎ **020 8655 6721** 📧 nsmith@eldonhousing.co.uk

Natalie works Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 10.00am – 4.00pm
& Tuesdays 11.00am – 4.00pm

Getting to Know You



At their September meeting the Tenants' Panel suggested asking questions of our tenants in order to get to know them a little better.

Mrs Marjorie Kinne from Joan Nightingale House was selected to be our first interviewee – we hope she will not mind us sharing with you all that she is 108 years old and has the honour of being Eldon's oldest tenant. Marjorie has been a tenant since December 2012.

Where were you born and where did you live growing up?

I was born and grew up in Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

What were your first and last jobs?

My first job was at aged 14 – a clerical post in an office. I hated it !! After a few years at the office I was offered a job working for my uncle in a pub in Frant, Kent, a 15th Century Coaching Inn called The Abergavenny Arms – I ended up running it.

What are the 3 greatest memories of your life?

- *My wedding in 1934 – a very simple affair.*
- *The end of World War 2 when my husband returned home from the RAF (Bomber Command).*
- *My 100th Birthday and receipt of a birthday card with a lovely picture of the Queen (the first of many !!)*

What is your favourite holiday destination and why?

My favourite is Italy for the sunshine, beautiful cities and its history.

If you were stranded on a desert island what 3 things would you want with you and why?

- *A Bible.*
- *My beauty box containing make up and sun cream.*
- *A radio to keep me in touch with events.*

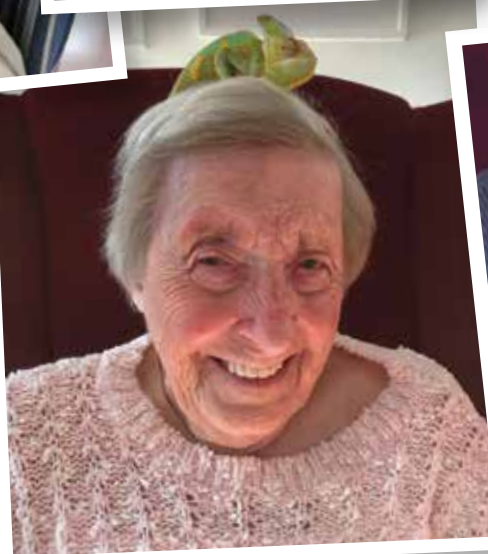
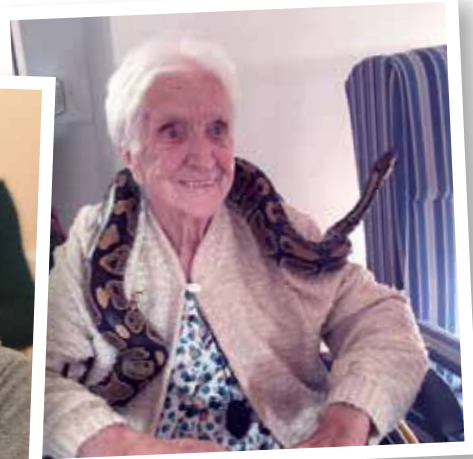
Thank you to Peter Thomas, Tenants' Panel Chairman, for putting the questions to Marjorie.

Our Amazing Animal World

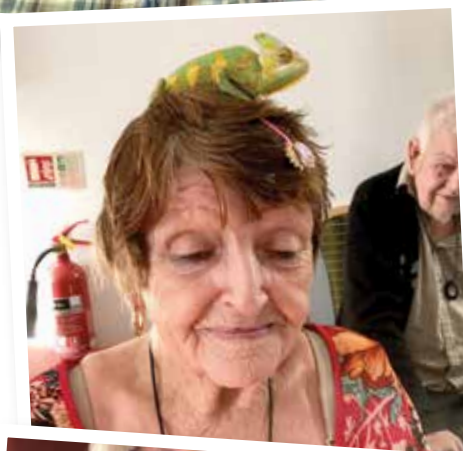
Mark and Jerry are professional animal handlers who bring their rescue animals out in to the community visiting, schools, clubs, care homes and children's parties.

They can now add Eldon Housing Association to their growing list of contacts as they have made very successful recent visits to Fellows Court and Lindsay Court.

THESE PHOTOGRAPHS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.



**OUR
AMAZING
ANIMAL
WORLD**



Annual Tenants' Survey 2018

VOICE

YOUR

MATTERS

Our Annual Tenants' Survey took place in June with 197 questionnaires distributed and 115 returned giving a response percentage of 58% which is slightly down on the 2017 figure of 61% and below the target of 60%.

This was disappointing and your Tenants' Panel have confirmed that they will continue to do all they can to encourage tenants to complete the surveys. We will also continue to look at ways to support tenants to participate in this important survey.

This year our ratings as a Landlord were:

Excellent 33% an increase from 25% in 2017 | **Good 48%** down from 54%.

Overall the results remain positive with the targets, agreed with the Tenants' Panel in 2017, of 30% Very Good/Very Satisfied and 60% Good/Satisfied being achieved in 42% of the questions.

We saw an increase in the positive results in 54% of the questions asked. This is a clear indication that where we are not yet achieving our targets we are moving in the right direction.

The Tenants' Panel have reviewed the overall results at their meeting in September and every tenant has received a copy of the specific results for their scheme and these are scheduled to be discussed at future Tenants Meetings.

One question asked Tenants to select what 3 elements of the Association's service they consider to be the most important from 9 elements provided.

The top 3 continue to be the following:

3 Most important elements	2017%		Target %	2018%	
Keeping Tenants Informed	Very Good	33	30	Very Good	33
	Good	43	60	Good	46
Taking Tenant's Views Into Account	Very Satisfied	23	30	Very Satisfied	19
	Satisfied	58	60	Satisfied	70
Repairs & Maintenance Service as a whole	Very Satisfied	47	30	Very Satisfied	50
	Satisfied	38	60	Satisfied	33

Thank you to the 115 tenants who completed the survey.

Westdene

30th Anniversary

On Thursday 2nd August at the height of the summer heatwave Westdene celebrated its 30th Anniversary.

Food is never is short supply at a Westdene party and this was evidenced by the buffet lunch provided for tenants and their families to start the day off. Afternoon Tea was served for the guests that could not join tenants and staff for lunch with enough cakes to put a bakery to shame plus tea, much needed cold soft drinks and the ever popular Pimms.

We were honoured to welcome the Worshipful the Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Bernadette Khan and her Consort Qaiyum Khan who joined us at 3.00pm for an hour spent talking to tenants and their guests and visiting tenant Greta Bristol's flat. Our Board of Management Chairman, Eileen Nutting, attended and was joined by Vice President David Scott and Board Members Nancy Adamson and Alan Catterick.

After a short speech from tenant Helen Fairweather-Campell, who shared with our guests what life is like at Westdene, our Board Chairman, Eileen Nutting, offered her congratulations and presented a bright flowery canvas print as an anniversary gift from Eldon. The speeches were wrapped up by the Mayor of Croydon thanking tenants and staff for the invitation and their hospitality.

The day ended in the garden, which by now had moved into welcome shade, with a magic show which was enjoyed by everyone, particularly the children. A fun day was had by all.



A Winter Holiday In West Africa



Betty Eldridge lives at Lindsay Court and she recounts a particularly memorable holiday.

Towards the end of November when I was feeling particularly depressed and miserable my daughter phoned and said would you like to come to West Africa for 3 weeks? My first reaction was no but after giving it some thought I decided yes! Not having had a holiday for 5 years and a chance to miss the cold winter and bask in the sun would do me good.

Our departure date was 15th January 1986 and when morning dawned it was snowing quite heavily. Fortunately the roads to Gatwick were comparatively clear of snow, but it really was extremely cold.

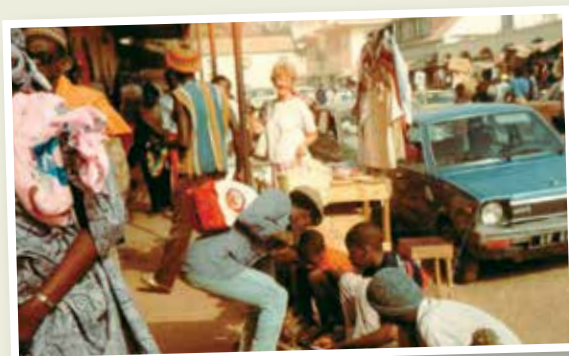
On arriving in The Gambia we were asked to put our luggage on our coach to Banjul, the reason for this was that in the past several people, having trusted the locals with their luggage, found themselves without clothes for the rest of their holiday. It was quite apparent to us all that the poverty was appalling.

As we bumped along the roads to our hotel (no tarmac here) all one could see were small fires outlining straw roofed huts and shadowy figures squatting on the ground. Also, the incessant throb of drums and a most peculiar smell which seemed to remain in my nostrils and clothes even after I arrived home.

Reaching the Atlantic Hotel it was like being transported into another world, very modern and plush with everyone dressed as if going to the theatre. After a good night's sleep we were down to breakfast which was always served barbecue style on the terrace, very enjoyable

The scene as we walked towards the sea, only a matter of yards away was almost indescribable. I can only say the pictures certainly didn't do it justice – white sand, palm trees and blue sea. Although very warm in the early morning the sun seemed very slow in breaking through the mist but despite this it still burnt the skin.

Our plan was to have a few days to unwind and then hopefully go out as much as we could. Our beach was patrolled by armed Police, I became acquainted with one of them and found him quite informative and he found us a guide to take us out. The guide in turn found a friend with a battered taxi (it was a wreck!), I became quite used to springs sticking into my bottom each time we went out.



When we went on foot into the markets the children would crowd around us and ask for anything we had. I had been forewarned about this and went well provided with small things like note pads, pencils, badges, trinkets and lipsticks.

I was amazed to see how the women would walk along with such huge loads on their heads. Everything from clothes, wood, chickens, fish and even baskets of eggs. The men appeared to do no work at all – they just sat and chattered away amongst themselves all day. This probably explains why they kept their age well, even at 50 they looked 30, they were

'pictures didn't do it justice'

tall and beautiful with gorgeous teeth. All the local people had lovely teeth; I imagine this was because they were always chewing on a liquorice stick protruding from their mouths.

'words cannot describe the kaleidoscope of colour'

One day we went on a Bush & Beach adventure starting at 8.00am with about 20 of us climbing aboard an old open army truck. Adventure was the prominent word – we travelled only 30 miles there and back but were 11 hours in the saddle so to speak. I am sure it would have been more comfortable on a horse but it was well worth the sore bums! We passed through dense bush with termite hills reaching about 7ft high, we saw a variety of birds eating the ants, words cannot describe the kaleidoscope of colour of the birds and flowers.

Travelling through small remote villages everyone came out to wave and beg. If we stopped for a break one was surrounded by all the children, girls of perhaps 12 or 13 carrying babies on their backs as all the local women did.

This part of Africa had not had any appreciable rain for 9 years and the red dust flew everywhere – by this time we were almost as red as the ground. Somehow the crops grew – very meagre but enough for them to survive. They dug their own wells, one for each community – again it was the women who did the manual work tilling the ground and watering. After that they prepared the meals - a long procedure of pounding away at some revolting stuff in a large wooden bowl. Fish was a staple part of their diet with many varieties including Barracuda and ladyfish which I thought to be extremely nice.

I felt I had to visit a hospital and thought it would be unfortunate to have a spell in hospital as they were so overcrowded, beds were very close and no food was provided, one had to rely on relations bringing this in. With any medicines given one had to provide the receptacle to put it in, bottles lying around were quickly snapped up and they didn't bother to wash them out.

I think that our trip on the local ferry was the highlight of my holiday. Being 4 English people on board amongst dozens of Gambian people we were treated like royalty, especially my 9 year old grandson – everyone wanted to touch him, much to his annoyance! They were all going across the water with goods to sell at the market so we were amongst goats, chickens fish etc – the smell was unbelievable!

We survived and it was worth it to see the Dolphins following the boat and leaping out of the water for any scraps which were thrown.

Our Hotel's entertainment was first class with plenty going on in the evening, aerobics and volleyball during the day and many other games on the beach. All in all, for a holiday that is different with plenty of sunshine thrown in out of season, I can thoroughly recommend it.

Of course I have purposely not mentioned the lizards crawling up my bedroom wall during the night, the mice who came to nibble my biscuits, the beetles which fell from nowhere onto my head and the mosquitos who almost ate me alive. But no-one with 2 legs invaded my privacy – unfortunately!!

P.S.

I wrote this article shortly after returning from the holiday. Sadly my daughter died shortly after the holiday, this is the reason I cherish this wonderful trip with her.

Thank you to Betty for sharing her memories.



Eldon's Great War Heroes



In our summer 2014 edition of The Link we introduced a feature to give our readers the opportunity to share stories of their family member's Great War experiences.

Mrs Betty Denby from Garden Court recalled listening to her Grandfather John 'Jack' Sherwin recounting his wartime experiences. Betty has since passed away and we know that she was pleased that we were able to record her memories.

Board Member, and now Vice President, Kevin Wheeler shared the story of his Grandparents - George's military service, he was wounded in January & July 1916, and Annie taking over a milk round.

Eldon's President, Gerald Ellis, told us about his twin uncles, Arthur and Frederick, both were killed in action with Arthur being awarded the Military Medal 'for bravery in the field'.

Gerald has since passed away, he spent a lot of hours researching the war records of his uncles and we were honoured to be able to recount the story of these 2 brave men.

Anne Dickson, Editor of The Link, remembered her Grandfather Henry 'Harry' Baker who was wounded at the Battle of the Somme.

Sharon Furbank, daughter of Doreen Lockyer at Garden Court, told us about her Great Uncle - Francis Shrimpton who was killed on 29th November 1917. His name was read out in the Roll of Honour at the Tower of London on 27th September 2014 - this ceremony took place daily from August - November 2014 alongside the incredible display of ceramic poppies.

As the events to mark the centenary of the end of World War 1 come to an end we take this opportunity to remember the men and women who served their country both in the theatre of war and on the home front.





Our Employee Excellence Awards are your opportunity to nominate a member of Eldon staff who has gone that extra mile. These are awarded quarterly and you can complete a nomination form at any time and place in this in the small blue 'ballot' box at your scheme.

The winners in the March - May quarter were:



Joanna Leonard

An "Asset to Eldon" Joanna joined us in 2009 and works as a Domestic Assistant in the very busy Laundry at Heavers Centre. Joanna was awarded the Employee Excellence Award for professionally sorting and clearing the vast amounts of laundry and for solving problems from family members regarding missing items of clothing, whilst all the while being friendly, helpful, kind, approachable and supportive.



Donna Millward

Donna joined the team at Lindsay Court in 2010 as a Carer (prior to this Donna had also worked as a carer for Eldon between 2004 to 2008). Donna was awarded the Employee Excellence Award for always being cheerful, talkative and smiling and for her exceptional kindness and willingness to help everyone.

The Winners in June - August Quarter were



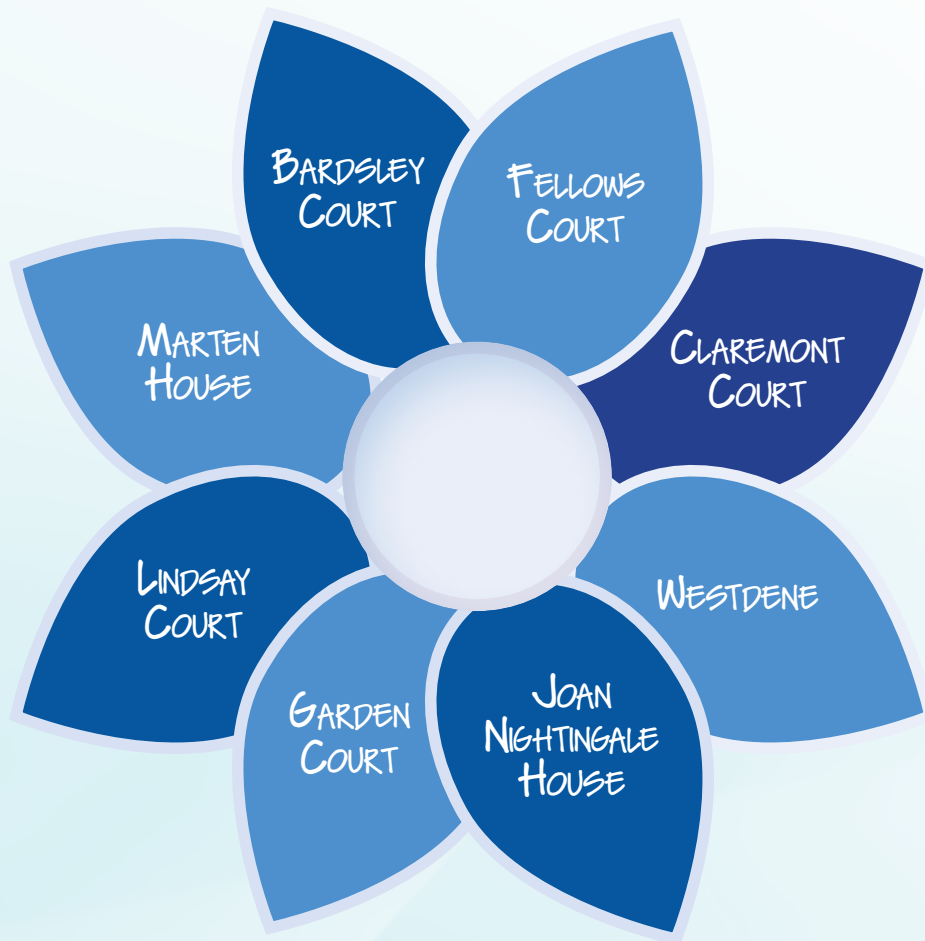
Sharon Johnson

Sharon has worked at Head Office as part of the Housing Team since 2009 and since October 2017 her role has expanded to include more Housing Management. She received the award for always making time to assist in resolving any problems no matter what her own workload is like, always being polite, respectful and professional. (Since receiving the award Sharon has been promoted to Housing Manager).



Alan Day

Alan started working for Eldon in 2010, initially based just at Joan Nightingale House but more recently is providing maintenance support at our Croydon based schemes. Alan received the award for helping a tenant with the small jobs, for example opening bottle tops and changing the hand grips on their cutlery, allowing them to remain mostly independent 'a truly unsung hero'.



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