



# THE ELDER



Spring/Summer 2023

**King's Coronation**

**New Chair of the Board**

**Memorial Charity History**

**Sangster House Opening**



# The History of Stuart Court Memorial Charity

When the Society first produced its Newsletter almost 10 years ago, we covered the history of each scheme. Many tenants have come and gone in that time, so it seemed appropriate to revisit them and tell our tenants how their schemes started.

Stuart Court Memorial Charity is a member of The Almshouse Association, a support charity representing 1,700 independent almshouse charities throughout the United Kingdom providing homes for over 35,000 people.

Stuart Court was built as almshouses, by Ethel and Helen Colman in memory of their brother-in-law James Stuart (1843-1913). As a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, James Stuart was 'aware of the vast masses who desire education' and arranged extension lectures in Cambridge Oxford and London. He was appointed professor of mechanism and applied mechanics in 1875. He married Laura Elizabeth Colman the following year and on the death of his father-in-law Jeremiah James Colman in 1898, he moved to Norwich and took over the running of Colmans, one of Norwich's biggest companies. The sisters remembered 'how vigorous was his interest in questions of popular welfare', that they perpetuated his name by building Stuart Court.

Stuart Court was officially opened in late 1915 by The Master of the Rolls (Lord Cozens-Hardy). It was designed by Norwich born architects, Edward Boardman & Son. The Eastern Daily

Press at the time said they built the court in a delightful domestic style. It had a Tudor influence, but what with greater politeness might be called Dutch.



The opening ceremony took place in a marquee, where Mr. Russell J. Colman presided over an audience of invited guests, among them were the Lord Mayor of Norwich, the Deputy-Mayor, Mrs Porter and the Dean of Norwich.

The Norwich flood of 1912 drew public attention to the condition of housing in Norwich, with the poor condition of the courts and yards. It was a big problem, but the sisters thought that they ought to try and do something of a permanent kind, in however small a way, to improve existing conditions. Their first idea was to improve the lives of those in the worst areas by providing an open space. But further consideration seemed to show that the building of new homes was a more urgent need.

They gave a good deal of thought to the kind of accommodation which was most needed and concluded that something half-way between ordinary small working-class houses, and endowed almshouses, provided in connection with some of the charitable trusts. They decided to build 22 small flats of different sizes, to be let at low rents. The sisters felt that there must be people who, from a shortage of this class of accommodation, were either occupying unnecessarily large houses which would be better reserved for large families or were driven by poverty into undesirable apartments. It was therefore to meet the needs of some of these people that Stuart Court was built.



The Society took over the management of Stuart Court in the early 1990's. It's a delightful looking building that gets a lot of interest from passers-by. In 2015 to mark Stuart Court's centenary, the charity landscaped the communal gardens, and a celebratory lunch was held at the impressive setting of The Assembly Rooms in Norwich.

## New Chair of the Board

Fourteen months' time has flown by since being invited to join Stuart Court Memorial Charity and Norwich Housing Society's Board back in June 2022. It is also 4 months since I was elected to the post of Chair for the Society, and I remain in awe and admiration for my illustrious forebears who have helped steer the Society over the decades. As many of you may know, Board members are time limited. So in that time, we have seen many new faces join the existing team and said fond farewells to some who have reached the end of their permitted service. It was wonderful to see the opening of Sangster House, our latest development of new homes adjacent to Leander Court earlier this year, which provided some new bungalows and some lovely flats in an existing large house. I hope the new tenants have settled in well and are enjoying their new surroundings.

It has been an education to hear about the life experiences of residents, people from all sorts of backgrounds and so many still very active in their local communities. During the last year, it has always been so good to hear the positive comments from tenants of the Society's schemes and the great relationship they have with its staff. Long may this continue. We may not get everything right all the time, but the team work hard to find solutions when there are problems or concerns, and we are always ready to listen. With any group of people, it is not always possible to please everyone and sometimes we are constrained by regulations and of course, budgets, but it is clear that the team are keen to do what they can to help.

I am looking forward to what the next few years will bring and hope I can follow the example of my predecessors and help the Society thrive in the coming years.

**David Driscoll, Chair of the Board**

## Communication Boxes

Communication boxes are located at most of the schemes for tenants to post any correspondence for their Scheme Manager or the office. These are emptied regularly. Please see below their locations:

St Barnabas Court - Laundry Room  
Leander Court - Lobby  
Sangster House - Social Room

Fiddys Yard - Laundry Room  
Stuart Court - Laundry Room  
Eleanor Road - Social Room  
Lanchester Court - Beside Social Room door

Rotary Court and Westwood House do not have boxes. However, tenants are welcome to use the letter box at the office on site. Old School Court does not have a box. However, tenants are welcome to use the letter box at the Bracondale office.



## Repairs and Recharges

If you need to report an electrical fault, please ensure you check your fuse board first and advise of any appliances that you were using when the fault occurred. Please ensure you give as much information as possible when reporting a repair. If incorrect information is given and the fault could have been resolved before the contractor attends, then you may be recharged for the contractor's time.

Similarly, if a reported repair has been fixed by you, a friend or family member and you have not informed the office of this and a contractor still attends, then you may be recharged for the contractor's time.

Please may we ask that tenants do not contact contractors directly especially out of office hours. We may incur a call out charge. If this happens then you may be recharged. Please report repairs either to the office or your Scheme Manager or activate your pull cord for out of hours emergencies.



Mrs Spooner of Old School Court recently celebrated her 90th Birthday. On the day she went out with her family to her late husband's resting place at Toft Monks Church. From there they all went for a lovely pub lunch. She was flooded with cards and flowers.

When asked what her secret was to youthful looking skin, Stella replied that "it's down to good genes and Nivea face cream!"



## Susan's Stories

On March 22nd, I walked from Nelson Street to Ketts Heights to help do some weeding and cleaning on a practical task as Volunteers do a task there every Wednesday from 10:00am until 12 noon.

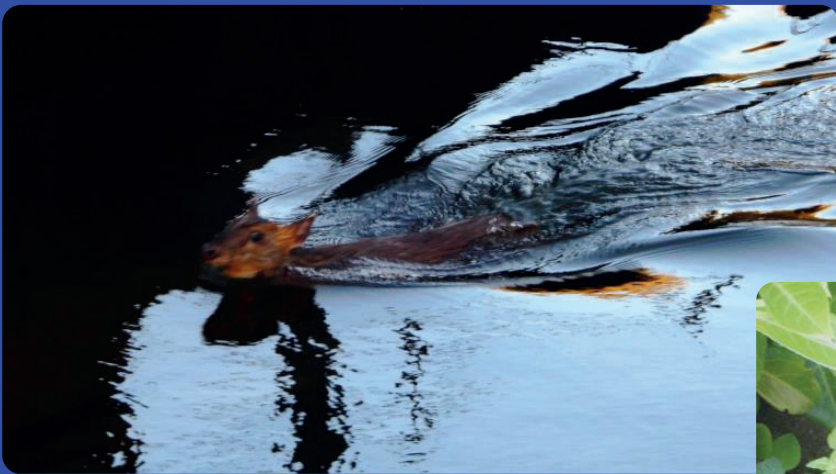
As I was weeding a beautiful butterfly landed down on the soil right in front of me. It was the first butterfly I'd seen this year. As I walked back along the river I saw a clump of Hyacinths and a clump of Daffodils growing by the river's edge. A sure sign of spring having sprung. Nothing unusual in this you may say.

What was an unusual sighting for me was what happened on the Thursday evening of March 30th, just four days before I left Nelson Street.

For having sat indoors for most of the day, I felt like going out for a walk in the city in the afternoon. In the early evening I had a walk along the river from the Ribs of Beef pub on Fye Bridge Street, and at first I thought it was an otter, but no! It was a Muntjac! It may have fallen into the river somehow, who knows but, fortunately it got out as there are some steps beside a concrete ramp on the other side of the river, the side I was on, which provided an escape route allowing the animal to get out. In doing so, it dashed up the steps, and away it went, through the flats not far from Colegate. I am so glad I took this photo.

I saw this Nuthatch (right photo) whilst on holiday in Derbyshire back in June.

**Susan Wright, Old School Court**



## Tenant Representatives / Tenants' Advisory Group

The Society is strengthening its approach to Tenant Involvement which will give tenants the opportunity to help shape our policies and services.

We are pleased to advise that 11 tenants have been recruited as Tenant Representatives and will act as advocates for the views of tenants as a whole at their schemes.

They will also be members of our new Tenant Advisory Group which held its first meeting on 20 July 2023 at the Society's office.

The Tenant Advisory Group will influence how services are delivered, and will have input into policy and procedure development.

The Group has agreed that members will serve for 3 years and will meet quarterly at the social rooms across our schemes.

### Your Tenant Representatives are as follows:

Julie Benson	Old School Court
John Browne	Eleanor Road
Bill Chapman	Sangster House
Paul Dixon	Lanchester Court
Rita Douglas	Leander Court
Gordon Keable	St Barnabas Court
Jon Perks	Lanchester Court
Leo Richens Limerick	Westwood House
Kathy Scarfe	Westwood House
Geoff Setchell	Lanchester Court
Jayne Setchell	Lanchester Court

**We would be interested to hear from tenants living at Fiddys Yard, Rotary Court and Stuart Court who would like to act as a Tenant Representative for their schemes and join the Tenant Advisory Group.**



## Tenants celebrate the King's Coronation

Tenants and their friends and family joined together to celebrate the King's Coronation back in May. Despite the weather, they still enjoyed various activities including a quiz, a raffle and a BBQ. St Barnabas Court were lucky enough to be entertained by the fabulous Invidia Voices Choir. Many thanks to all who contributed food, time and prizes for their schemes.



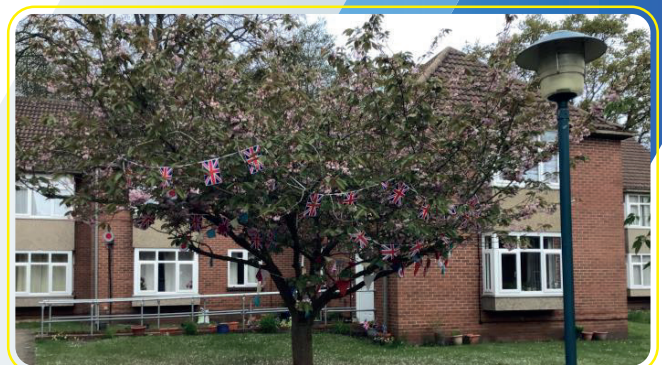
Photo supplied by Annette Stanton, St Barnabas Court



Photos supplied  
by Gordon Keable  
St Barnabas Court



Rotary Court Tenants  
enjoyed a BBQ whilst  
celebrating the  
King's Coronation



Lanchester Court tenants met for various festivities including Easter Parade, maypole dancing and the King's Coronation.



## Showers

A blocked shower drain or water running away slowly is generally down to a build-up of hair debris, which routinely needs to be removed to ensure a free-flowing drain/waste. In most cases the only practical way to remove the blockage is to remove the top cover (some tops unscrew "lefty loosey", some need to be unscrewed by taking out the opposing screws). If you're unsure, ask. Then carefully take out the central trap (cup) to expose the bottom and sides of the shower trap, where the debris and hair gets lodged.

Remove the blockage and flush with clean water, then re-assemble ready for your next shower. Please be careful that you don't mistakenly unscrew the outer locking ring to the shower trap below, as that will cause the shower to leak and potentially damage your flat and any flat below! Again, if you're unsure, please ask or get a competent person to check before you use the shower again. Once re-assembled, pour a jug of water or run the shower for a couple of minutes, to ensure the water air trap is reinstated, which will prevent any drain smell.



2 Screws



Removable cup

- 1) Unscrew the 2 screws to remove the cover (remember to leave the screws in a safe place).
  - 2) Remove cup to clean.
  - 3) Replace cup and cover and screw back down.
- We recommend you carry this out every 6 months.



## Pull cords, what are they for?

This is just a reminder as some tenants are still unsure what their pull cords are for and how and when to use them. Located in your home are red or orange pull cords hanging from the ceiling. If you have an emergency repair to report out of office hours, e.g. loss of heating (October to May), flooding, blocked drains, total loss of electricity (check your trip switch first), you can activate your pull cord/pendant. Out of hours is when the Bracondale office is closed (5pm-9am, Mon-Fri), at the weekend and bank holidays.

Your call will go straight through to the out of office hours service, Careium, who will assist you. If you are prone to falls or would like to feel safer in your home, you can request a wrist or necklace pendant which can also be activated for assistance. You can also activate your pull cord/pendant if you require medical assistance. If you have an emergency, and you are able to, it maybe necessary to call 999 directly, rather than activate your pull cord/pendant. Careium hold your next of kin details so please ensure you keep us updated of any changes. If you have a pendant, please ensure you wear it at all times.

Please may we ask that you do not telephone contractors directly, especially out of hours, but instead you activate your pull cord/pendant during out of hours and telephone the office during normal working hours.



We are pleased to announce that the Society has registered with LanguageLine Solutions. Our world is becoming ever-more diverse.

LanguageLine Solutions imagine a world in which language and cultural barriers no longer exist. If you require help with translating anything, please get in touch.



**Please may we remind you to use your extractor fans whilst showering and cooking.**

## Summer Quiz

Summer has certainly arrived! Have you headed to the beach? Perhaps you have just relaxed in the garden. Or perhaps it's just been too hot to do anything! Have some chill out time and have a go at the quiz below. Fill in the puzzle using the pictures as clues. The grey shaded letters spell out another beach related word. Can you work out what it is? If so, please let us know and you could be in with a chance of winning a Marks and Spencer voucher. Closing date is Sunday 24th September 2023. Good luck!





## Sangster House Opening

After months of keeping the name of our new development the best kept secret in the history of the Society, we were finally able to unveil it at the official opening in April. Former Chair of the Board, Carol Sangster, was taken by complete surprise when we uncovered the sign.

Staff and Board members past and present, joined Sangster House tenants, Shareholders, Contractors and Local Councilors for the opening where tea, coffee and cake were on offer to celebrate the occasion. David Driscoll, the current Chair of the Society's Board said: "Housing developments such as Sangster House are more than just about bricks and mortar, they are about providing sustainable communities and excellent quality homes, allowing people to enjoy peace, comfort and security.

"We are delighted to have worked alongside Norwich City Council to deliver much needed, high-quality housing. We would like to thank the council for helping us deliver this scheme and we hope that the tenants enjoy their new homes."

John Newstead, Chief Executive Officer at the Society said: "We are thrilled to be involved in this project which enhances the local area. The design approach considered the character of the existing surrounding properties whilst bringing a distinct addition to this area of Bluebell Road." he added "We hope that this new development will support the local community and make a real and lasting difference to the lives of the new tenants."



## Winter Quiz Answers

The missing word was: Bluebell.

You must have thoroughly enjoyed the last quiz as we had the best response ever, but it was Mrs Keable from St Barnabas Court that had her name pulled from the hat. Well done, we hope you enjoy spending your voucher.

Good luck to everyone entering the quiz this time and don't forget to wear sunscreen.....



One of our longest serving tenants, Josephine, celebrated her birthday back in March. She was overwhelmed with all the cards, presents, and flowers from her family and lovely, kind neighbours at Stuart Court. We hope you had a lovely day, Josephine.

The Society will now be posting out your rent account statements every 3 months. You will be advised if you are required to action anything e.g. amend your standing order. If you have any queries, please contact the office. Thank you.

If you are thinking about installing Sky TV in your home, please write to us requesting permission so we can respond accordingly. Thank you.

What would you like to see in the next newsletter? If you have any stories, poems, jokes, interesting hobbies, recipes, or if you would like to see anything else in the newsletter; we would love to hear from you, please get in touch on: 01603 625078 or email: [info@norwichhousingsociety.co.uk](mailto:info@norwichhousingsociety.co.uk)