

# QUEEN ELIZABETH II

APRIL 21, 1926 – SEPTEMBER 8, 2022



A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO OUR LATE PATRON

**I**t seems that the ink has barely dried on the last issue of Haig News, in which we celebrated our Patron's Platinum Jubilee, when I find myself penning words of an altogether different type, as we mourn the passing of our much loved former Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II.

Miles of video tributes and acres of newsprint has been written about her and it is unlikely that I can match them. Perhaps what I can do is put her life into the context of Haig and define what she meant to us drawing on my own personal experience.

As our Patron, Her Majesty had a long association with Haig Housing having inherited the Patronage from her father, King George VI on her Accession. Because of her involvement we were able to connect with many people whom we would otherwise not have reached. That meant we could make our case to those who were in position to help us, as well as those who needed our help. She quite literally opened doors that we could not.

She took a keen interest in us as veterans, our lives and our stories. She absolutely identified with the notions of service and sacrifice, felt most keenly because of her personal experience of WWII and the death of her father, King George VI. She understood implicitly the demands of service life, having lived in a married quarter as a young bride. Whilst she was not one of us – she was a Princess due to become a Queen – she was a generous human being who never forgot those whom she repeatedly reminded us she served, for life: her people.

Those who met her tell of a charming, lively, gracious and engaging individual from whom a real sense of warmth and generosity of spirit radiated. She really cared about people and had that magic touch of making everyone to whom she spoke feel as though they were the only person in the world, they were the one who mattered.

She was incredibly knowledgeable about almost anything under the sun. Mainly because she had met the world's experts in virtually every discipline there is. Woe betide any Chief Executive who was not on top of his brief! At one dinner I mentioned to Her Majesty that I was very interested in bees and thinking of keeping some but wasn't sure whether they would work in my town garden. She immediately upbraided me, pointing out that there were lots of people who did that, I just needed to buck up and get my act together and if I was struggling I should speak to David. Of course Sir David Attenborough was unavailable....

We are still feeling a sense of loss, in some cases very emotionally, and don't really know why. I suggest that's because of the mystery of someone who touched us all but whom we never really got to know.

**Thank you Ma'am. God Save The King**

Tim Stockings, Chief Executive, Haig Housing



# THE FINAL SALUTE

## THE FUNERAL OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Haig Housing Trust was represented at the Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II by Chair of Trustees, David Williams and the Trust's Standard Bearer, Chris Parfitt.





# STATE FUNERAL

ACCOUNT BY MR CHRIS PARFITT WHO LIVES ON  
HAIG HOUSING'S MORDEN ESTATE AND IS THE  
HAIG STANDARD BEARER FOR REMEMBRANCE AND  
ARMED FORCES DAY EVENTS

**T**he Royal British Legion Commemorative Events Team were charged with providing and organising its 60+ regional branch Standard Bearers and 11 national Standard Bearers from the various armed forces associations and charities.

On the Wednesday before the funeral I was accommodated near Marble Arch along with the RBL's best Parade Marshalls and Standard Bearers for 5 days of drill practice, dress rehearsals and kit inspections, with the thought of billions of people around the world watching we were entirely focused over the next few days to put on a parade befitting such a solemn and important occasion to honour the long and exemplary service of our late Queen.

## **MONDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2022**

About the time Her Majesty's funeral service began at Westminster Abbey we were marched out, Standards at the carry to take up our positions at the Cenotaph. The public in their thousands were lined up behind the barriers along Whitehall listening quietly to HM's funeral service being relayed over a PA system.

The Last Post and the National Anthem came over the loud speakers that marked the end of the funeral service, soon the procession and the Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery gun carriage carrying the oak casket being pulled by 200 Royal Navy sailors were on their way to Wellington Arch via our ranks at the Cenotaph. The order to dip Standards as an act of homage was given as the procession passed and we bowed our heads.

The slow measured march of the full procession as it passed by to Beethoven's Funeral March No 1 played by the military bands made it a very emotional few minutes despite having a limited view with my head bowed. I'm extremely grateful to Haig Housing to be given the opportunity to serve and pay my respects to our queen one last time and I was very proud to be representing Haig Housing at such an historic occasion. It was a day I shall never forget.