

JUNE IS SENIORS' MONTH

Spotlight on local senior Helen Small

*Celebrating
Our Seniors*

By Julie Conroy

This week is Seniors' Month, and this year I would like to introduce you to Helen Small; another wonderful volunteer at Hillsideview. You may have met Helen when she is busy at the reception desk. Helen has been a receptionist at the Centre for five years. She is soft spoken with a wonderful Scottish accent and always greets everyone with a smile, and if you are new to the Centre, takes time to show you around our great facility.

She was born in Perthshire and is the second eldest of nine children. She started Rathillet Primary School when she was four years old, and when she was 11, graduated to Bell Baxter High School in Cupar, Fife.

In 1964, she attended East Fife School of Nursing in Kirkcaldy where she met a lifelong friend Anne Auchterlonie who has recently moved to Acton.

Her cousin moved to Canada, and when on a visit home, showed Helen pictures. Helen felt she

would love to move to Canada, and when in 1966 the Canadian Government had a recruiting drive, she applied. The rest is history.

She first lived in Toronto, nursing at the Toronto General Hospital from 1966 to 1969 in the Neuro Surgery. Then she moved to Vancouver General Hospital from 1969 to 1972. She then assisted with private patients—rehab with seniors and disabled people in Kilworthy, Muskoka for four years.

She returned to Britain

in 1976 and enrolled in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corp (QARANC) from 1976 to 1979. Her first posting was with Louise Margaret Maternity Hospital, Aldershot from 1976 to 1978. Then she was in Northern Ireland at the Royal Military Hospital in Belfast for two years. This was during "the troubles", and Helen saw many things she would prefer to forget. However, she did enjoy driving around the country side in her little yellow Renault 5 GTL taking in the scenery and soaking up the atmosphere of Ireland.

In 1980, she joined the Manchester Royal Infirmary so she could increase her operating room skills by taking her Joint Board in the Operating Room Diploma.

She returned to Toronto in 1982 and worked at the Toronto East General Hospital for four years in the operating room. Then finally the Stratford General Hospital from 1986 to 1989 again in the operating room. She was a VON in London and also worked at Trafalgar Terrace, London in a retirement facility dealing



Helen in her Renault 5 GLT outside her parents' farm—The Riggs Farm.

with post op surgeries and chemotherapy from 1989 to 2012. Now that she has retired, she calls Acton home.

When does this busy lady find time for family? She has a niece and a great niece that live in Brampton and an adopted nephew in Edmonton. She still has two sisters and a brother in Scotland and many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews there, plus three aunts. She has one sister and brother-in-law in Acton and a brother and sister-in-law in Hempstead, Texas.

When does this lady have time for herself? She enjoys walking her dog Gabby and cat Dolly—both rescue animals. Helen enjoys walking, cycling, swimming, skating, cross country skiing, music and reading. Needless to say, she spends a lot of time visiting relatives and friends.

A very dedicated nurse and volunteer, over many years Helen has touched the lives of many people in Britain and Canada offering comfort and support.



Helen Small at Expo '67 in Montreal.

- Submitted photos

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