

# Haig News

SPRING 2014

THE NEWSLETTER OF HAIG HOUSING



## Haig Conference 2014 – Bristol

**This year, the Haig Conference was held at the Mercure Holland House Hotel in Bristol in February.**

The annual conference is held in different areas of the country each year in order to include as many tenants as possible. We had hoped that holding it in Bristol would mean that tenants from Cornwall and Wales, areas usually under-represented, would be able to attend. However, bad weather conditions in the weeks before the conference had made some roads and train lines impassable so people from Penzance and Swansea were unable to come. The conferences are held on a rotational basis in London, the North and the Midlands. Next year's conference will be held at the Coin Street Conference centre near to Waterloo Station – watch out for the date in the next newsletter and the attendance application form.

In spite of not having a contingent from the South West, we were delighted to welcome some familiar faces and some new faces at what turned out to be, judging by the feedback statistics, one of Haig's most successful conferences. Attendees praised the relaxed and informative atmosphere even though, with an unavoidable rearrangement of timings, the lunch was likened to 'feeding time at Whipsnade'.

There were presentations on housing and property services Haig provides and it was an ideal opportunity for tenants to meet the new Chief Executive, Brigadier James Richardson, at his first conference (above, right with John Lau, left, and Pat Horgan, centre).

There was plenty of opportunity, through structured discussions and open forums, for people to get their points across and to ask questions for the Senior Management Team to answer. Some of the issues raised which are of interest to all tenants are covered on pages 8, 9 and 10. Issues of a more individual nature will be answered direct to the person raising the question. Continued on pages 8-11.

### CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS

Across the UK, plans are developing to commemorate the centenary of the start of World War One.

See in side on pages 3, 4 and 5 for news of some events planned.

## Staff Changes



**Robert Wooldridge** retired from the Trust in November. Robert has been a loyal supporter of the Coming Home campaign and will continue to raise money for Haig to provide specially adapted housing. He is pictured here raising funds for Coming Home at Cranleigh Show last summer.



**Mark Horton**, who has been with the Trust on a temporary basis since August last year, has joined the Trust on a permanent basis as the Contracts and Compliance Manager.

**Lisa Cantwell-Hope**, Income Manager has left the Trust for employment nearer to her home.



**Janet Turrell** who has been with the trust for 9 years and with Haig's Income Team for 6 years, is now Income Team Leader for the next 6 months pending the impact of the welfare reforms.



## Armed Forces Day 2014

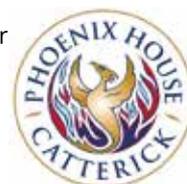
The City of Stirling in Scotland will host next year's Armed Forces Day and plans are underway to create a spectacular national event on June 28. The Armed Forces day in Nottingham last year attracted over 100,000 people. [www.armedforcesday.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk)

## Northern Recovery Centre Opens

A new Help for Heroes Recovery Centre has opened in Europe's largest Garrison, Catterick. Phoenix House is a £10.7m purpose built centre providing a support base for wounded, injured and sick Service personnel, veterans and their families from Scotland, the North West and East of England and the North Midlands.

Guided by military and civilian specialists, residents develop their own individual recovery plan through activities, including educational programmes, work placements and sport in an environment where they can enjoy the camaraderie of fellow Servicemen and veterans to help rebuild their lives. The aim is for these individuals to return to duty or make a smooth transition into an appropriately skilled and supported civilian life.

[Catterick.enquiries@helpforheroes.org.uk](mailto:Catterick.enquiries@helpforheroes.org.uk)



## The Memorial Arch in Folkestone

There will be only one physical monument in Britain to commemorate the outbreak of the Great War. It will be a memorial arch over the route taken by 10 million British, Canadian, American, Australian and Asian troops between 1914 and 1918 at Folkestone; the coastal town in Kent which was the main port of embarkation to and from the trenches of the Western Front. The contractor, Lend Lease, is building it free of charge.

Wireless technology will project black and white holograms of men marching through the arch at night. The aim is to bring events to life for today's younger generation by mirroring the emotional atmosphere of the war years.

The arch will be opened on August 4 2014 – the hundredth anniversary of the exact day the war broke out.



## New and Improved Services from Veterans-UK Helpline

SPVA's Veterans UK Helpline has a new Freephone Number and extended opening hours (now available Monday to Friday 0730 to 1830 (1700 close on Fridays)). There is also an Out-of-Hours arrangement with Combat Stress and the Samaritans picking up re-routed calls. The new number is: **0808 1914 2 18**

The new number represents the start and end dates of the Great War – 1914 to 1918. This link to such historic events creates a more memorable number in the 100th anniversary year of WWI.

**The 'Veterans Welfare Service' Scottish centre number will remain unchanged: 0141-224-2709**



## The Royal Star & Garter changes location

Residents at the Royal Star & Garter Home said a farewell to the historic building on the top of Richmond hill and have moved into a brand new, purpose built, state-of-the-art home just five miles away in Surbiton Surrey. This new home is one of several planned around the country; the first one to open was in Solihull in the West Midlands.



## Four year centenary Programme begins this year

From August 2014, there will be major commemorations of the centenary of the First World War. It will be a large undertaking in partnership with all the nations which took part in or were affected by this seminal event in modern history. There will be national Acts of Remembrance, a £10m education legacy to send children from grant maintained schools to see the First World War Battlefields and to undertake research on people who fought in the battles. There will also be £15m from the heritage Lottery Fund to enable communities to conserve, explore and share their heritage (to apply for funding for this please see [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)) and an example of the sort of work being funded includes commemorative paving stones to be laid in the towns of all those in the UK who received the Victoria cross for 'valour in the face of the enemy' during the War.

# News and Notes



## Dedicated Bereavement Helpline

Veterans UK Helpline has a dedicated Bereavement Line (0800 169 3458) to provide an improved service for the families of loved ones reporting a loss.

## Rewards for Forces

*"When we heard that a member of the Armed Forces, who had recently returned from military operations, was denied a discount in a major high street store, but a student in front of him was given one, we knew we had to act".*

This established Rewards for Forces – it is free to sign up and you can then enjoy discounts on many High Street brands and hundreds of on-line purchases. Serving personnel and their partners of the Navy, Army, Air Force and Veterans, Service Widows/Widowers, Reservists, Cadets, MOD Civil Servants and the Royal British Legion are all welcome.



[www.rewardsforforces.co.uk](http://www.rewardsforforces.co.uk)

## Haig's commemoration – Poppies on the estates

The 'Flanders' poppy is an internationally recognised symbol of Remembrance. There are UK-wide plans for poppy tributes and this includes some Haig estates. Housing Managers and the Fundraising Team are planning poppy planting events on some estates in the early summer so that the poppies are in bloom to coincide with the

August centenary of the outbreak of the Great War. Poppies will have to be planted in areas which will not affect the grounds maintenance programme. Please contact your Housing Manager for further information or phone 020 8685 5781 if you would like to plant your own poppies.



## The First World War and the Beginning of Haig Housing Trust

**This year, the UK will commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.**

On 4th August 1914, in a private letter, Prime Minister Asquith wrote *'we are on the eve of horrible things'* – how right he was. Britain entered the war after the ultimatum given to Germany to withdraw from Belgium was not met. Prior to this shocking news, the nation having been lulled into a false sense of security with relations between Britain and Germany being reported as improving. In fact, in contrast, there was increasing industrial and political unrest in Britain with public feeling turning against the increasingly militant suffragettes; the introduction of a new Home Rule Bill pushing Ireland to the brink of Civil War; high industrial unrest with 1,000 strikes up to the end of July including 10,000 coal workers and Carmen striking leaving Londoners struggling to keep warm. Even 66 schoolchildren refused to go to school in a strike which later epitomised the strength of grass-roots democracy. Following the dismissal of popular teachers, Kitty

and Tom Higdon, they were instated as head teachers of a strike school set up by villagers.

A sex war, class war and a civil war were on the horizon. Lloyd George said that, despite some *'clouds in the international sky'*; problems on the domestic front were *'the gravest with which any government in this country has had to deal with for centuries'*.

However, the events in Europe overtook national turmoil and united the nation behind a single patriotic purpose; union leaders tried to outdo each other with patriotic gestures and suffragettes turned their patriotism to hand out white feathers to men who had *'failed to answer the call of King and Country'*.

On 5th August war was declared. The palpable shock was reflected in the number of women going into premature labour the day after. For ever more, politically, socially and economically, the country would never be the same again.

## Haig: A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes

It was with the outbreak of the First World War that Haig Housing's long history of commitment to housing ex-Service personnel and their families began. In 1914, Mrs Willie James, the Founder of The Housing Association for Officers' Families (HAOF) started her quest to help disabled Officers' and their widows with their housing. By 1929 Douglas Haig Memorial Homes (Haig Homes) had been established following the death of the Field Marshal Earl Haig, one of the most dominant figures of the British Army during the Great War. HAOF merged into Haig Homes in 1995 and, in 2013, became Haig Housing Trust.

As part of the Trust's centenary commemorations, a book exploring the history of Haig will be published in September. Packed full of pictures, the book will celebrate the people and stories which have contributed to the Haig Housing Trust of today. Sales from this book will raise funds for Coming Home. If you are interested in having a copy of this limited run book, which has direct relevance to any Haig resident, you can pre-order a signed copy of the book with a personal dedication using the form below.

Name

Address

Post Code

Please reserve for me  Copy (copies) of A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes @ £20 each  
(please put number required in box)

£ .

+ P&P £3.95

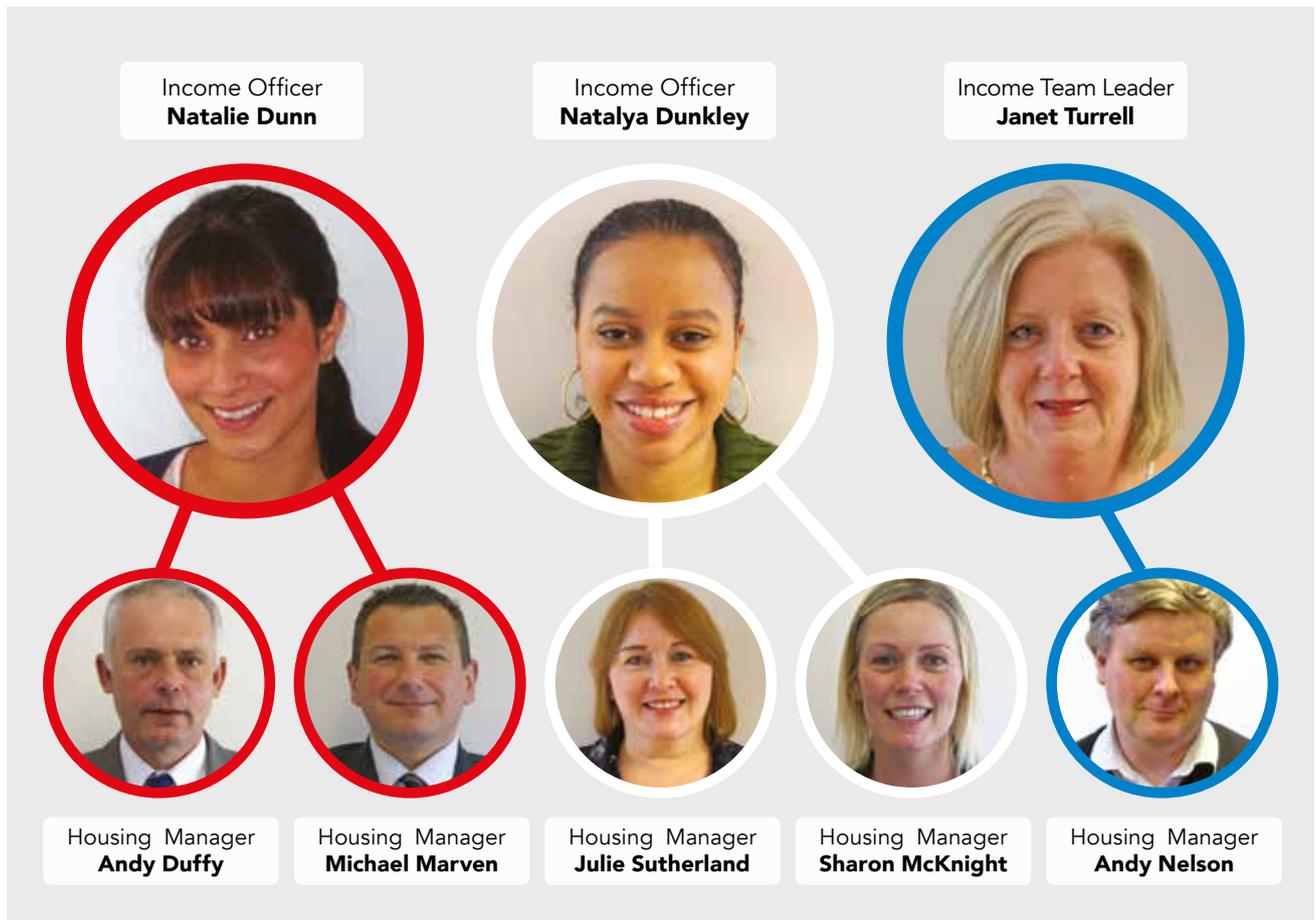
If you would like a personal dedication, please write what you would like in this box:

£ .

# Housing Services

## Income Team News

On 1st April, The Income Officers' patches changed to be more closely aligned with the areas covered by the Housing Managers. The teams will now operate as follows:



**If you need to speak to your Income Officer, please call 020 8685 5777 and choose Option 4**

Please remember, the Income Officers and Housing Managers are there to help you. If you have a problem with your rent, speak to your Income Officer or Housing Manager and they will try and do what they can to help.

*The Income Team would like to remind you of the following:*

### **Housing Benefit**

It is the tenant's responsibility to inform housing benefit of any increase in rent; failing to do so may result in refusal to back date the claim.

### **Decorating Allowance**

This charitable gift from the Trust will only be given if the rent account has been in credit for at least 6 months.

### **Standing Order Amendments**

Haig Housing can not make amendments to a Standing Order on your behalf. The arrangements are between you and your bank.

## Two new additions to Haig's estates

### HACKNEY



### Hackney

The Trustees of the Disabled Soldiers & Sailors (Hackney) Foundation (DSSHF) have transferred their 10 properties at Wattisfield Road, Hackney to Haig as from 1st April 2014. Haig will be taking over responsibility for day to day management including collection of rent, repairs and general housing management. Andy Nelson will be the tenants' Housing Manager. From 1st April, the estate will be known as The Grainger Wilson Estate named after the tenant/caretaker who looked after

### READING



the estate for many years. He died a few months ago and the Trustees asked that he should be remembered this way. (You can read his story in Haig's commemorative book – see pages 5)

### Reading

In an area of high demand, we are delighted to have been able to purchase 5 flats in Reading. These will make perfect homes for single people and couples; a type of accommodation which is in short supply.

## Charitable grants through Haig

In addition to grants available through Social Services, Haig administers two small Charitable Trusts to which tenants can apply.

### The Charles Wray In Memoriam Pension Fund

Small annual pensions can be paid from this fund to former members of the Armed Forces who are suffering incapacity or disablement attributable to active service, with a priority given to people born to parents resident in Yorkshire or Croydon or who were themselves resident in those areas at the commencement or during their service in the course of, or as a result of which, they acquired an incapacity. Beneficiaries do not have to be a Haig tenant so if you know someone who you think may be eligible, please let them know.

### The Mrs Willie James Charity

This small charity aims to award grants to alleviate hardship for any Haig tenants.

Grants are given for such items as white goods, furnishings or exceptional expenses.



Mrs Willie James

In addition, the Trust has access to apply for grants for those who are born or living in Scotland for similar items as provided by the Mrs Willie James Trust

*If you think you might be, or know of someone who might be, eligible, please contact the Trust on 020 8685 5777 or use the contact form on the website.*

# Conference

**Some of the issues raised at the conference and answered on the day by the Senior Management Team are presented here.**

## How does Haig 'vet' its contractors?

We subscribe to Construction Line ([www.constructionline.co.uk](http://www.constructionline.co.uk)) which is a database of contractors already pre-vetted to work to Government standards. It is the UK's largest register for pre-qualified contractors and consultants with over 22,000 suppliers on its books. All contractors have to show three years' worth of accounts. This service saves us a great deal of time and resource as we do not have to repeatedly fill in standard pre-qualification forms for every construction tender.



Once using a contractor, we also take careful note of our tenants' feedback forms on completion of a job. If the tenant reports back that they are unhappy with the contractor – their standard of work or attitude of their operatives, we will investigate. Any 'very poor' satisfaction rating on the feedback form will now result in it being treated as an official complaint and will be thoroughly investigated.

## Does Haig have an Energy Efficiency strategy?

We do not have a specific energy efficiency strategy. However, much of our work (both planned and responsive programmes) is planned to have a significant effect on improving energy efficiency e.g. the installation of new and high efficiency "A" rated condensing boilers which improve energy efficiency by reducing emissions and gas consumption; refurbishment of double glazed windows to reduce draughts; the installation of thermostatic radiator valves to provide a greater level of heat control in properties.

We also encourage people to apply for government grants for top up insulation. These grants may be available through utility companies - Gas or Electric or Water companies. Tenants should apply in the first instance to the utility

company and ask for a free survey (dependent on the age of the property) to identify what work might need to be done to improve efficiency such as loft insulation and weather strips for windows. One tenant also helpfully pointed out that only heating the rooms that you use, or putting heating on just for a short while before you are about to use them (like a bedroom) cuts heating costs significantly.

## What is the purpose of the Annual Visit?



There are many purposes for the Annual Visit by Housing Managers such as to:

- Confirm the tenant is still in residence
- Identify tenants' needs
- To see whether help from Statutory Authorities (eg Local Housing Allowance / Disabled Facilities Grants) or grants from other charities would be appropriate
- Enlist personal support from Social Services if necessary
- Confirm continuing eligibility for charitable assistance
- Identify housing fraud – this is defined by the Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 which states that it is a criminal offence to commit housing fraud which could be by making a fraudulent application, taking over or giving a tenancy to someone else or sub letting

One of the conditions of any tenancy is that the Trust should have access to your home once a year. Any continued resistance to this might result in us having to take action.

## Why don't we have lower rents if we are a charity?

The Trust charges a Charitable Rent which, on average, is around 40% of a Market Rent in London and the South East and about 50% nationally. In addition to the charitable rent, the Trust also includes other charitable allowances or gifts including:

- Annual Decorations Allowance
- Condolence Payment on bereavement (see page 11)
- Less Abled Assistance
- And access to other grants and small pensions as outlined on page 7

## Why isn't the budget divided up equally each year between the various areas covered by the Housing Managers?

*This would not be practical. We have a five year plan for the property repairs and improvements and some of the larger projects may use proportionally more of a budget one year but will then not need funds spending on it for several years. Dividing the budget equally between areas would be a very short sighted exercise.*



## Can we change our letterbox as it isn't suitable for the size of today's post/ Can we put in spyholes?

Subject to permission and the suitability of the door, the Trust would be happy for people to put in a spyhole or change the size of their letterbox at their expense. Please speak to your Housing Manager before doing anything though.

## We live in Scotland and don't have the Work Order Feedback form – can we have it?

*We will definitely look into this with a view to including our tenants in Scotland on the feedback form.*

## Is there a policy on whether people can fly flags?

*There isn't a specific policy. We try to be fair on things and hope that people will behave in a neighbourly way. If, for example, someone is an avid football team supporter and puts a flag up outside their home on a specific big match day, most people would think that was acceptable; if however, the flag is there throughout the year, then that is a different matter. Flags such as Armed Forces Day, National Day and the Union flag being flown on the appropriate day would not be objected to by the Trust. Please speak to your Housing Manager if you have a specific example you wish to draw to our attention. Please also note that, although Haig doesn't have a policy on this, many Local Authorities do. You may be contravening a byelaw by flying a flag so please check first.*

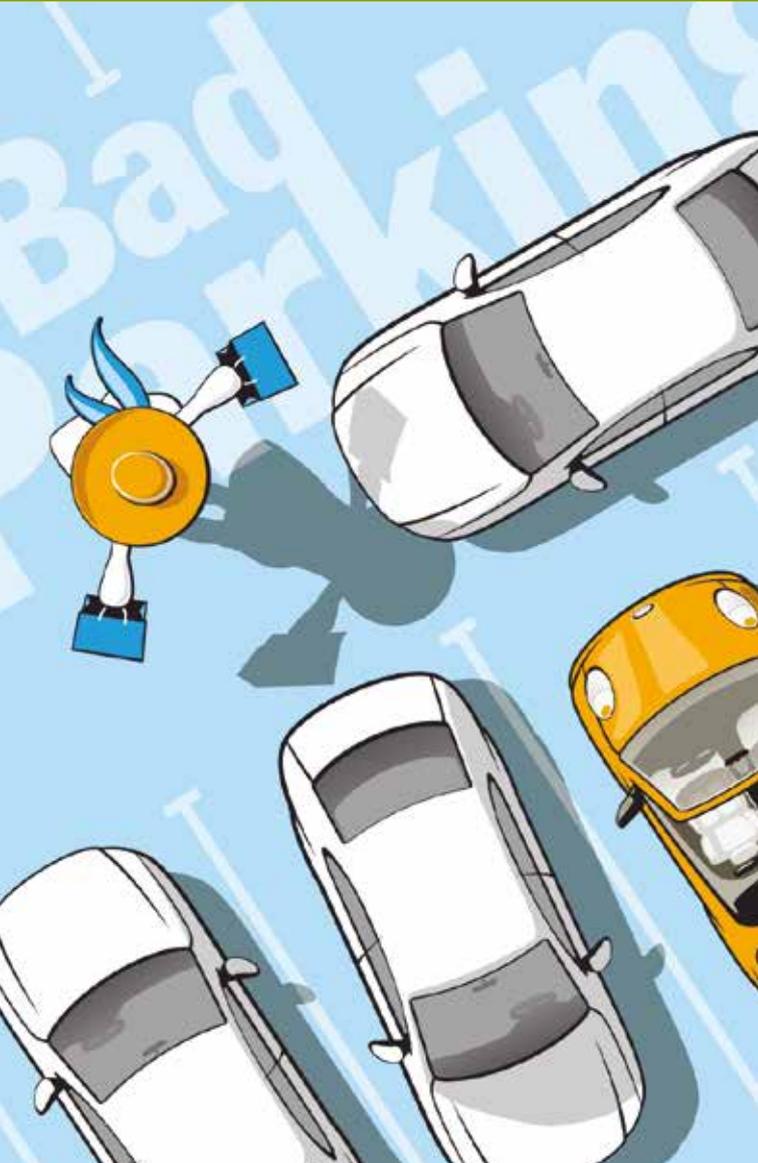


## Can we use the decorating allowance for items other than the ones currently specified?

Some tenants would like to spend the decorating allowance on things other than the basis decorating items such as items which improve the overall look of the houses and the estates. We will look into it and see what flexibility there is with the system we are currently using.

## How do we know, when we use the out of hours service that anything is going to be done?

*We will investigate whether it is possible for Pinnacle, our out-of-hours service, to call back and confirm what is going to happen.*



## Why can't we have individual parking spaces or more parking?

The question of parking is raised once again. Where possible, the Trust has, over the past few years, tried to provide additional parking provision on many estates. The reality is that many of the estates, particularly those built in the 30s and 50s, were not designed to have anything like the level of car usage as there is now. We regularly ask that people behave in a neighbourly manner and, if you are able to walk well, that you leave parking spaces nearer to homes for the elderly, less able and those with small children. Haig's priority is the provision of housing, not the provision of parking and we do what we can, where we can but, regrettably, parking is always going to be a problem on some estates.

## Haig could do with significantly larger housing stock at its disposal. Under its Military Covenant, the Government has a duty to support this. Should Haig be lobbying?

Chief Executive, James Richardson, took the opportunity to outline the findings of Lord Ashcroft's Veteran's Transition Review and to inform conference attendees on the LIBOR funding. He said, "Last week, Lord Ashcroft produced his Veteran's Transition Review which made some recommendations for Veterans' transition. Before I talk about his specific recommendations about housing, I would like to give a quick outline of his more general observations:

- There should be a big push to show that veterans are normal, well adjusted, skilled and attractive for employment. Wounded, PTSD and other situations needing intervention are a tiny minority.
- Training for resettlement should be an entitlement much earlier in a military career rather than only for those who have served at least 6 years.
- There should be a move away from resettlement courses to work placement encouraging industrial partnerships

His recommendations on housing in particular were:

- Housing advice should be given earlier
- COBSEO should be encouraged to be the coordinating entity across all veterans' charitable areas, especially in housing.

Alongside this, the LIBOR funding – the funds to be given to charities from the fine imposed on banks for rigging the London Interbank Offered Rate - will have £40m ringfenced to be spent specifically on housing for veterans. I am delighted to say that I have been approached to be a member of the panel responsible for reviewing the appeals and distributing the £40m and, I hasten to add, that my position does not exempt us from applying.

The Housing Minister is keen to ensure that the projects for funding should promote collaboration and partnering which puts us in a good position as we work closely with other Service organisations including The Officers' Association, SSAFA, The Soldiers' Charity and have the privilege of being the strategic housing partner of Help for Heroes. We work closely with Stoll and its Chief Executive Ed Tytherleigh with whom I co-Chair the COBSEO Housing Cluster.

Lord Ashcroft has identified that, in particular, there is a need for further social housing and specifically for single Service leavers – this type of accommodation is in short supply. Some single Service Leavers find it difficult to find their own way in civilian life, or may initially transition well only to fail at a later stage through unemployment

or other problems. We are aiming to increase our provision of single accommodation to go some way to address this need and our bids for some of the LIBOR money will reflect that. We are working on bidding for funds to provide move on units in the South East; a partnership with other Service organisations to provide move on accommodation in Garrison areas and exploring the possibility of building further, smaller accommodation on some existing Haig sites.

In addition to applying for funding, we are also delighted to announce the take over of 10 properties in Hackney (see page 7), the acquisition of 5 flats in Reading and we are still hopeful of getting planning permission for the development of the café site in Morden into seven or eight single occupancy units. It is an exciting time for us.



## **Bereavement Gift**

One of the charitable gifts the Trust also distributes is a payment on bereavement of the main tenant or their spouse/partner.

When this bereavement gift was first introduced in the 1930s, the Trust gave the bereaved a month free of rent in order to help with the cost of the funeral and other expenses. Later, this was changed to a one off payment of £350 – a month's rent at the time. The Trustees felt it was time for a change in the bereavement payment and, after consultation with the Tenants Consultation, have decided to increase this charitable gift to £450.

## **Tenants Consultation Panel**

If you are interested in having your opinion about some of things the Trust is considering taken into account, then sign up to become a member of the Tenants Consultation Panel. Anyone can join. The trust will consult on things like policy updates, procedural changes, suggestions and ideas.

# Coming Home

**Haig's fundraising campaign continues to develop with supporters and fundraising activities increasing.**

## Recent Events

**Since the last newsletter, the Coming Home campaign has featured in several events.**

### The Lord Mayor's Show



Knight Frank again sponsored the Coming Home float in the Lord Mayor's Show in November. The Coming Home Team did not let the pouring rain dampen our spirits as we rode through the streets of the City of London, in front of half a million spectators. Beneficiaries of the charity joined us on the float, along with their families and staff from Knight Frank. Eventually the sun came out as we reached the home straight and managed to dry us out just before the end!

### British Military Tournament

Coming Home joined the other major military charities with a stand at the British Military Tournament in December at Earls Court. Over two days, thousands of spectators came to watch the spectacular show demonstrating the history, pomp and ceremony of the Armed Forces, as well as displays of modern military vehicles and equipment. Coming Home chocolate soldiers and the lucky dip proved to be very popular with the younger crowd, much to the annoyance of the parents!



### Lewis Moody Dads and Lads Rugby Training Day

England rugby legend Lewis Moody very kindly donated his time to help raise funds for the campaign by running a training session for staff from BNY Mellon and their children, raising almost £1000! All participants sported smart Coming Home rugby shirts to train in and Lewis had his work cut out signing them all!



### Candle launch – Tower of London

Coming Home Patron Lord Dannatt and his wife Pippa kindly opened the doors to their home at the Tower of London to host a sparkling drinks reception to raise awareness of the campaign. Phillip Hammond, Secretary of State for Defence, Iain Duncan-Smith and Gloria Hunniford were amongst the high profile guests, along with Merrill Powell, who has generously donated the range of Coming Home Candles which have been flying off the shelves since the event!

Capt Ed Addington poignantly spoke about the huge importance for specially adapted housing for injured Servicemen, having been seriously injured himself in an explosion in Afghanistan a few years ago.



## Barclays pop-up shop

Barclays Bank in Sloane Square hosted a Coming Home pop-up shop in March, where our range of candles were sold to their customers, raising over £1400 in just one day. Such was the success of this enterprise it is going to be repeated in other branches later on in the year.

## Events Coming Up

### Station Collections

We have several collection days lined up in London tube and train stations. We need volunteers to help with collection – if you would like to volunteer to collect at train/tube stations in London, or you would like to organise a collection in your local area, please get in touch. Telephone 020 8685 5787

### Run Challenges

British London 10km Run 14th July, Bupa Great North Run 7th September and Great South Run 26th October – places still available – get in touch!

### Ascot Lawyers Foundation Ball and book launch

This signature event will be held at Beaumont House, Old Windsor, 4th October

## How can you support Coming Home?

**Follow us on Twitter** @ComingHomeOrg and retweet and talk about us as much as possible. The more people who hear about us the better.

**Follow us on Facebook** and keep up with what's going on. Search for Coming Home or Coming Home Gals.

## Proud of Haig's Coming Home Supporter

Michael Swain is awarded an MBE



Rifleman Michael Swain, 24, who was one of Haig Housing's first Coming Home beneficiaries (we helped him with house searches and then some adaptations to his home in Luton) has been awarded an MBE. In a ceremony on 15th April at Buckingham Palace, the war hero who lost both his legs in a Taliban bomb blast in Afghanistan, received his honour for his charity work. When the news broke, he spoke of his joy at being awarded an MBE. He said, *"I started doing charity work to prove to myself that so much can still be done despite my injuries — it also gave me a focus and kept my mind busy. To get an MBE at such a young age is overwhelming, I feel immensely proud."*

Michael was only 20 when he was injured by the roadside bomb, just two months into his first tour of the country. When it happened, he was so convinced he would die following the explosion in Sangin, Helmand, that he said goodbye to each of his platoon friends. Since surviving the explosion, Michael has raised £250,000 for charities including Coming Home by taking part in events ranging from skydives to marathons. He launched the Coming Home Campaign in May 2011 (pictured here with Derek Derenalagi at the launch) and co-launched the Coming Home lottery with Sarah Harding last October.

# Coming Home



## Alan Spencer's next fund-raising challenge

Alan Spencer and his brother-in-law Dave Heath both Morden residents, Dave's son Robert Heath and friend Dave Minchin are all taking part in the next hand-cycle challenge. Alan says, "with the others there to support me, I am going to undertake a huge challenge to hand-cycle along the route of the first day of the Normandy landings to show respect and gratitude to our British, American & Canadian Servicemen and women of the 21st Army Group who gave the ultimate sacrifice to free us from Nazi occupied Europe. This June will be the 70th anniversary of the Allied Landings. We will be raising money for Coming Home, Haig Housing Trust's campaign to provide specially adapted homes for wounded and disabled Service and ex-Service personnel.

*It is a cause close to my heart being ex-REME myself and disabled. I have very limited mobility and therefore hand-cycling is a challenge. I only have the use of one arm so there is a danger of me going round in circles instead of along the beaches! (although I am good on any roundabouts!). We will start on 2nd June at Sainte-Mere-Eglise, which was secured by the American Airborne on the first day of the allied landings, and then cycling along the beaches - Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword, and finishing at Pegasus bridge on 6th June, the actual 70th anniversary.*

*This will be about 80 miles in total; we are hoping to average about 16 miles a day which is twice the amount I have ever hand-cycled in a day. That was last year in London's Freecycle and it was just one day which was exhausting - this will be five days on the go.*

**If you would like to support me and Coming Home, please visit my page at [www.justgiving.com/Alan-Spencer-NormandyorBust](http://www.justgiving.com/Alan-Spencer-NormandyorBust)**

## Huge thanks to Manchester Haig Volunteers

Mrs Sharon Berry and Mrs Wendy Broughton from Wythenshawe, Manchester, raised £340 collecting for Coming Home at the Russell Watson Concert at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester.

We are so pleased that they were able to go and see the concert. Sharon said, "it was amazing and nearly brought me to tears!"

If you'd like to volunteer to be a collector for Coming Home and see an event, please contact Jo Houghton on 020 8685 5787 or at [jo.houghton@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:jo.houghton@haighousing.org.uk)



**We are always looking for volunteers to help with events or collections, all over the UK. If you think you would like to give up some free time to help the Coming Home Campaign, please call the office on 020 8685 5787**

# Property Services

## Corporate Clear-up Day

Residents at Macdonnell Gardens in Watford were the lucky recipients of a corporate 'clear-up' day by members of Argos in Milton Keynes. 12 people from Argos's Commercial Development team spent a cold wet day on the estate pruning roses, clearing pathways, creosoting fences and benches and generally cutting back and tidying the estate. Haig's Housing Manager Andy Duffy, Grounds Maintenance Manager Marcus Forster and Fundraising & PR Director Anna MacLeod joined in on the exhausting but satisfying day.

The day was organised by

Luke Beesley, Commercial Development Analyst who enthused his team with the words, "I am calling you to dig out your wellies.....get your spades out the shed and have your paintbrushes at the ready..... **LET'S GO GARDEN!**"

Before the team descended on to the estate, all residents were consulted and asked to make requests for some personal work to be done or general work on the estate. In a case of 'you can't please all of the people all of the time' the gentle pruning of the lovely rose garden was a disappointment to those who wanted a dramatic cut back.

When this was then done, some residents were unhappy with the extent of the cut back! The results as to the success will be seen this summer and we wait with interest.

We are very grateful to the Argos team who put in over 100 man hours of work between them on the estate and made a really great and significant difference to the appearance of the grounds. Also thanks are due to some residents who kindly lent tools, made tea, made their houses available to the team to take shelter from the awful weather and plied us with good things to eat and drink.



# Property Services

## Keeping Records Up to Date

It is very important for Haig to have your correct contact details. Please let us know if you have done any of the following in the past few years:

- Changed your mobile phone number
- Changed or got rid of your landline phone
- Changed your email address

It may not seem an important issue for you but there are good reasons why we have to have current information:

If you phone for an emergency repair and we need to get back to you, if our information is out of date, your repair may be delayed

Contractors won't be able to contact you not only for emergencies but also for planned works such as kitchen and bathroom upgrades and window refurbishments as they work on the information we give them

**If you know you have changed any of your details, please complete and send in this form to the address on the back page.**

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Landline Telephone No:

Mobile No:

Mobile No:

*It will save everyone time and money if we have the correct contact details*

**You could benefit from lower bills by switching to My Home Energy Switch for your gas and electricity use.**



My Home Energy Switch is an energy supply service from the National Housing Federation to help tenants reduce their energy bills. This service is completely free and impartial and on average customers save £72.84 on their energy bills.

All you need to do is call 0800 0014 706 or go to [www.myhomeenergyswitch.org.uk](http://www.myhomeenergyswitch.org.uk). You will need your postcode and a current energy bill and then the My Home Energy Switch team will do the rest.

## Works Order Questionnaire Winners

When you return your Works order questionnaire, your name gets put into a draw for a £25 prize.

RECENT WINNERS ARE:

**Miss M Crawford – Belfast**

**Mrs D Sloan - Hull**

**Mr K Souter – Morden**

**Mr T Holden – Harrow**

**Mr A Brooker – Liverpool**

**Mrs D Vallender – Gloucester**

**Mr T Chappell – Morden**

**Mrs E Reynolds – Isle of Wight**

**Mrs M Dearnley – Hull**

**Mr J Broderick – Grimsby**

**Mr M Stricker – Manchester**

**Mr M Rushforth – Sheffield**

**Mrs D Cummins - Salisbury**

From now on, a return of a VERY POOR satisfaction rating on a Works Order feedback form will be treated as an official complaint

**LOTTERY | LOTTERY | LOTTERY | LOTTERY | LOTTERY**

**WIN £25,000**  
**AND MANY OTHER PRIZES EVERY WEEK**



*Please help our wounded Service heroes by playing this weekly lottery*

**Play the Coming Home Lottery**

You could win prizes of up to £25,000 every week! By playing this lottery, you will be directly helping to support our wounded heroes in the process because 50p of your £1 entry goes directly to providing specially adapted houses for severely injured Service and ex-Service personnel.

**How do I join?**

You can sign up online at [www.unitylottery.co.uk/charity/display/coming-home-haig-housing-trust](http://www.unitylottery.co.uk/charity/display/coming-home-haig-housing-trust) or call the Coming Home office on 020 8685 5787 to request an application up form.

**Sign other people up for our lottery and make some cash**

If you sign up 10 people to play our lottery, Haig will pay you commission. For further details, please speak to Anna MacLeod on 020 8685 5781.



## 100 years old! Congratulations

Haig has its first centenarian in over 30 years! Mrs Doris Fryer of Paul's Place Ashted hit the significant birthday on 31st March and received her card from the Queen and a bouquet of flowers from the Trust. She spent the day quietly with her son Kevin. Mrs Fryer, who has lived at Paul's Place for 63 years, said, "I feel very privileged to have been a tenant of Haig all these years".



## Christmas Visit to St James's Palace

Yvonne and Kevin Charnley, a lovely Haig couple from Hull, were lucky enough to have their names put forward for a trip to the Not Forgotten Association's Christmas Party held at St James's Palace. They had to brave the awful weather coming all the way up to London but it was worth it. Yvonne told us, "*we had a lot of problems getting there due to bad weather up North, however once we arrived it was so special to us everyone made us welcome the Duke of Gloucester was very kind to us as was everyone involved. We had our photos taken with Anton du Beke, Chris Andre and Laurel and Hardy*". (Don't tell Yvonne and Kevin but we think the last two might have been lookalikes - Ed)

## A Much Missed Member of the Community

### Mary Lowther of Denmark Court

Residents of Denmark Court in Morden lost Mary Lowther, 93, a much loved member of their estate, just before Christmas. The residents clubbed together to provide a wreath and a rose bush to commemorate her life and wanted to say the following in her memory.

Mary was a formidable and elegant lady who enjoyed life to the full, spending time living in the Channel Islands, Fulham and then finally moving to Denmark Court in Morden with her husband and children in 1974.

During World War II, with her husband away fighting, Mary worked in the munitions factory and then later as a window dresser.

Mary was always happy and participated readily in events organised by Denmark Court Residents and was the Guest of Honour for our Jubilee celebrations.

Mary will be missed greatly. Her son, Paul, would like to thank the residents of Denmark Court for their kind and generous flowers.



## Commemorative Book on Haig's History

As a tribute to the almost 100 years of providing housing for Service and ex-Service people and their families, Haig is producing a commemorative book detailing the history of Haig and its various components – The Housing Association for Officers' Families, Douglas Haig Memorial Homes, Haig Housing Trust and the Coming Home appeal along with the various regimental homes and other organisations absorbed into the Trust over the years. There will also be descriptions of well known (and some not so well known) tenants over the years and various associations, businesses and charitable trusts who have supported us through the years.

As Alison Bridger of Denmark Court said, when remembering her friend Mary Lowther above, *"slowly and sadly, the loss of the stalwart veterans and their widows leaves empty spaces of knowledge, wisdom and history in our lives, so to honour them helps us to teach each generation the sacrifices that are made."* It is for this reason, so well put, that if you have any anecdotes of your estate, its history or the people who have lived on them which you think might sit well in a commemorative book, please send details to Anna MacLeod at Head Office. Please see page 5 for a pre-order form.



## Calling all photographers

*Take a photograph of your estate and possibly win £25!!*

We are always looking for interesting photographs of the Haig estates. If you are handy with a camera and could take some good clear photographs of your estate and send them in by email to [anna.macleod@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:anna.macleod@haighousing.org.uk) we will enter your name into a draw for a £25 prize. The deadline for this will be October 17th which gives you time for capturing images across at least two seasons and the winner will be announced in the next newsletter. Please use as big a pixel size photo as possible. Any kind of photo would be appreciated – they could be arty, colour/black and white/of all of the estate or part of it – just needs to be clear and in focus!



## Remembrance Wreaths

On some estates, tenants like to mark Remembrance Day with a Haig poppy wreath. Graham Driver sent us these photos of the tribute on the estate in Carlisle last year. He said, *"here is the "Haig "poppy wreath being proudly displayed at Princes Court prior to laying it alongside others at Carlisle city cenotaph. Our wreath was clearly visible on the local TV news later in the evening. All residents remarked how pleased they were to see a wreath at Princes Court and hope this can be repeated next year".*

**If you would like a Haig wreath to display on your estate or for part of a larger organised event, please let your Housing Manager know.**



The Haig Brain Teaser in the last newsletter was the Coronation Quiz, devised by Jo Houghton, Coming Home Campaign Co-ordinator, which was presented at the Coronation Ball at Ascot Racecourse last year.

## A RIGHT ROYAL QUIZ - ANSWERS

1. Is it Ali G impressions or Trigger from Only Fools and Horses which gives the Queen the giggles? **Ali G impressions.**

2. The Queen's first horse was a Shetland pony was called Peggy or Susan? Peggy. **Susan was her first corgi.**

3. The Queen's HM's alcohol intake never varies. **It is a gin and Dubonnet before lunch, with a slice of lemon and a lot of ice, wine with lunch and a dry Martini and a glass of champagne in the evening.** (This comes to 6 units per day, which makes Her Majesty a binge drinker by government standards!).

4. The Queen demoted one of her footmen for **feeding her corgis whiskey**

5. How many Prime ministers have been in power during the Queen's reign? **12: Winston Churchill, Sir Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Harold Wilson, Edward Heath, James Callaghan, Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron.**

6. In 1986, the Queen became the first British monarch to visit **China**

7. The Mayfair address where the Queen was born on 21 April 1926

is now a **Chinese restaurant called Hakkasan at 17 Bruton Street.**

8. What item of clothing has the Queen never worn? **Jeans.**

9. Is the Queen the patron of The Royal Hawking and Bird of Prey Council or The Royal Pigeon Racing Association? **The Royal Pigeon Racing Association.**

10. Did the Queen send her first email from an Army base in 1976 or when a computer was installed at Buckingham Palace 2 years later? **From an Army base in 1976.**

## This is your newsletter. Is there something in it for you?



If you feel that this newsletter doesn't include anything from your estate... don't complain... send something in. Let us know of your celebrations, anniversaries or commemorations in your area. Do you have a 'social group' or is there anything you want to say about your estate? Or do you want to know more about the history of your estate for example?

If you need translations of any Haig information, or need a translator for any verbal communication with Haig Homes, please make contact

with our Head Office to arrange this. You can contact the office by telephoning 020 8685 5777 or by writing to: Haig Housing, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS.

If you need copies of any Haig information in **LARGE PRINT** or **BRILLE**, please contact **Haig Housing, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS** or telephone **020 8685 5777**

This newsletter is printed using recycled paper.

Do you want to comment on or contribute to the newsletter? If so, contact Anna MacLeod, Haig Housing Newsletter Editor, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS. Tel 020 8685 5777 Fax 020 8685 5778 Email [anna.macleod@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:anna.macleod@haighousing.org.uk) **Deadline for contributions 11/11/14**

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