

Haig News

SPRING 2015

HAIG HOUSING'S NEWSLETTER

The Constable of the Tower's Charity of the Year

Lord Dannatt chooses Haig Housing and the Coming Home campaign

We are delighted to announce that General the Lord Dannatt, former Chief of the General Staff and now Constable of the Tower of London, has chosen Haig Housing for his charity of the year 2015. In commemoration of this and our Patron, HM The Queen's milestone year (see page 2), we will be holding a wonderful event, 'For Queen and Country', in the Tower of London in September 16 this year.

We are grateful to Lord Dannatt, Patron of our Coming Home fundraising campaign, for his continued dedication, commitment and enthusiasm for our cause. Being chosen as Charity of the year follows also choosing us to be one of the charities to benefit from the sales of the WWI commemorative ceramic poppies in the moat of the Tower of London last year.



**Armed Forces
Covenant**

Veterans Accommodation Fund money being put to good use

Some of the £14.6m awarded to Haig Housing last year from the Veterans Accommodation Fund is already invested in the projects. 9 flats have been bought in Colchester and 11 in Aldershot. These properties form part of a 'Veterans Pathway' in conjunction with other Service charities specifically Stoll and Riverside.

Plans are also well underway for 15 new homes on the Haig estate in Edinburgh and for further housing in Morden. Morden is our largest estate with almost 20% of Haig's properties. The area is in high demand as it has good transport links to all parts of London and the South East and is, therefore convenient for employment education and recreation opportunities.

First House bought with Tower Poppy funding

With over £1m expected from the share of the funds raised by selling the 888,246 ceramic poppies at the Tower of London last year, plans are in place to use the funds to provide a number of 'Tower Poppy' Houses. The first house is being purchased in Taunton, Somerset and will suit the mobility needs of an ex-Royal Marine Sergeant who was badly injured in a Land Rover accident in Afghanistan in 2007. We are pleased to announce that Paul Cummins, who designed the Tower of London poppies, will design a commemorative plaque for these houses.





Patron

On September 9, our Patron HRH Queen Elizabeth II will become the longest ever reigning monarch in British history passing the record set by her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria. Buckingham Palace has calculated that Queen Victoria reigned for 63 years and 216 days; 23,226 days, 16 hours and 23 minutes (this includes 15 leap days and precise timings of her accession to the throne and her death).

Queen Elizabeth II will enter the history books taking into account 63 years plus 16 leap days and the timing of George VI's death.

To commemorate this event, Haig Housing is holding a Coming Home fundraising event at the Tower of London on 16 September.

Queen Victoria came to the throne on June 20 1837. She became the figurehead of a vast empire and her reign spanned the rest of the century amid great industrial, cultural and scientific changes to society. From 1861 until she died on January 22 1901, she wore black, mourning the early death of her consort Prince Albert.

At the age of 25, Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth II on the death of her father King George VI, who died in the early hours of February 6 1952. Like Victoria, she has acted as a figure of continuity as the country has modernised. She has served, with the Duke of Edinburgh at her side, through the 20th century, the Millennium and into the 21st century, witnessing new technological advances and a succession of British governments of different political persuasions.

The Queen has reached countless milestones and broken records during her decades on the throne:

- In December 2007, she became the longest living British monarch, overtaking Victoria who died when she was 81
- May 2011, she became the second-longest reigning monarch in British history, when she overtook George III.
- She holds the world record for most currencies featuring the same individual
- In 2012, the Diamond Jubilee river pageant set a new world record for the number of boats in a parade with more than 1,000 vessels taking part and 670 making the complete trip down the Thames to Tower Bridge.

The Queen is the second longest-serving current head of state in the world after King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, who has been on the throne since 1946.

Trustees

Congratulations to Haig's Chairman of Trustees, David Stewart, who was awarded an OBE in the 2015 New Year's Honours list for charitable services especially to the health and housing sectors in London and Surrey. At the Investiture in March at Windsor Castle, David spoke with Her Majesty and was delighted to find that, as the Trust's Patron, she keeps up with and was very interested in our recent developments with the Veterans Accommodation Fund and our involvement with the Tower Poppies last year.



Staff

Chief Executive James Richardson and his PA, Ann Clark (pictured second right and far left respectively), attended the COBSEO 30th Anniversary in the presence of HRH Prince Charles in December. COBSEO, the Confederation of Service Charities, is an umbrella body made up of some 200 service and ex-service veterans organisations, and provides a single point of contact for interaction with the Government.



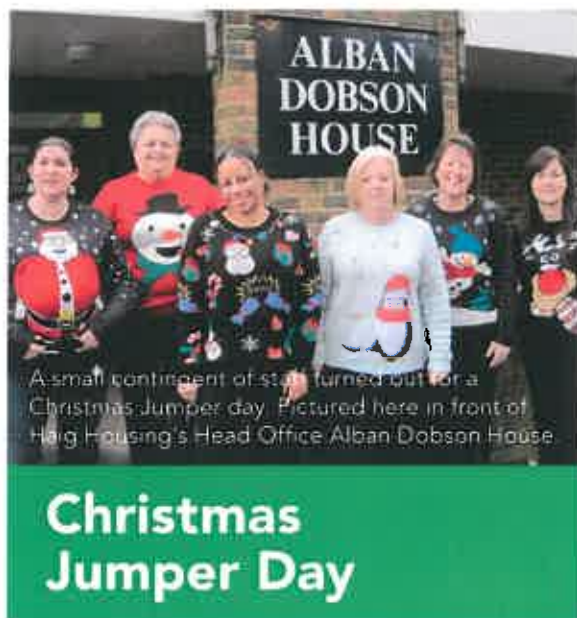
Staff changes

Jo Houghton, the Coming Home Campaign Co-ordinator, left the Trust at the end of 2014. Having developed the fundraising campaign over the past three years, Jo is now working in Community Investment and we all wish her well.

Tracey Pitcher joined the Trust in December as Housing Options Officer.

Simon Griffin has joined the Trust as temporary Development Officer and will be working closely with the Housing Director on the Veterans Accommodation Fund projects.

Yusuf Sidhane joined the Grounds Maintenance team on the Morden estate in January to provide cover for maternity leave.



Tracey Pitcher

Simon Griffin

Yusuf Sidhane



Congratulations to Helen Sitch, Ground Maintenance team member and David Barclay, Case Officer, who have both, separately, had baby girls.



HIDDEN WOUNDS

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING SERVICE

Support for Veterans and families of the Armed Forces community living with the everyday challenges of anxiety, depression and stress.

Please get in touch with the team
9am–5pm, Monday to Friday.

Telephone **01980 844300**
Email **hidden.wounds@helpforheroes.org.uk**

WOULD YOU QUALIFY FOR A F R E E EYE TEST AT HOME ?

If you find it difficult to get to an optician for physical or mental health reasons, you may qualify for a NHS eye test at home. In Scotland, all residents with physical or mental illness would qualify for this and in England and Wales you would qualify if you are any of the following:

- Aged 60 or over
- Registered blind or partially sighted
- Have been diagnosed with diabetes or glaucoma
- At risk of glaucoma
- Aged 40 or over with family member diagnosed with glaucoma
- Receiving benefits or hold a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate
- On a low income and named on a valid HC2 or HC3 certificate
- Eligible for an NHS complex lens voucher

Call 111 to find out who provides mobile sight tests in your area.

Are you eligible to apply for a bit of extra financial help?

Two trusts managed by
Haig Housing might be the
answer

The Charles Wray In Memoriam Pension Fund

Small annual pensions can be paid from this fund to members or former members of the Armed Forces who are suffering from any physical nervous or mental incapacity or disablement either permanent or temporary which is attributable to or has been aggravated by their service.

Priority is given to people whose parents were resident at the time of the applicant's birth in the County of Yorkshire or the County Borough of Croydon or who were resident themselves in Yorkshire or Croydon at the commencement of or during the service in the course of which,

or as the result of which, the incapacity was acquired. (You do not have to be a Haig Housing tenant to qualify so, if you know of someone who might, please pass on this information).

The Mrs Willie James Charity

This charitable fund was set up on the merger of The Housing Association for Officers' Families with Douglas Haig Memorial Homes in 1995 the charity makes small grants or provides items, services or facilities to alleviate need, hardship or distress.

To apply, please call Haig's office on 020 8685 5777, select option 0 and ask for an application form or speak to your Housing Manager next time they visit.



Mrs Willie James, the Founder of the Housing Association for Officers' Families is featured in the new book about the Trust. See page 11.

News and Notes

Armed Forces Day

This year's Armed Forces day national event will be in **Guildford on 27th June 2015**. There is an exciting line-up of events including a service in the Cathedral, a formal Parade in the High Street and a spectacular military show at Stoke Park followed by 'picnic and proms' and an impressive air display. www.armedforcesday.org.uk



ARMED FORCES DAY
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT



There are many events going on round the country; there is a large parade through Morden if anyone from the Morden estate would like to take part. This is the opportunity for people to show their gratitude for all you have done in Service on behalf of us all. If you'd like to take part, please contact your Housing Manager.

In order to celebrate this event, the Veterans Council has produced an Armed Forces Day Emblem pin-badge that is available for a limited time at £2. For further details, go to www.veteranscouncil.org/services/afday.

Haig Housing's Lottery Provider Award

Sterling, the company which runs our fundraising lottery for us, won the Institute of Fundraising's Award for the Best Lottery Provider 2014 and has been short-listed for the prestigious award again this year.

Why not join the Haig Lottery. For every £1 you spend, 50p helps us provide specially adapted housing for fellow wounded and disabled Service personnel. You have a 1:64 chance of winning a cash prize up to £25,000. We have winners almost every week. You can join on-line at <http://www.unitylottery.co.uk/charity/display/coming-home-haig-housing-trust> Or by filling in the application form enclosed with this newsletter



Sir John Holmes Independent Medal review

Following this review, the Government has announced new medal eligibility:

Berlin Airlift: The General Service Medal 1918-62 with 'BERLIN AIRLIFT' clasp will be awarded to all aircrew, RAF and civilians, who took part in the Berlin Airlift from 25 June 1948 to 6 October 1949 inclusive.

Cyprus: 1955-59 for those who participated in suppression of terrorism in Cyprus and 1963-64 for those who served in Cyprus during this period.

South Atlantic Medal: Those qualifying for the medal now include those who served in the Falklands or their dependencies from 12 July to 21 October 1982 when the airfield at Mount Pleasant became operational.

For further detail, information and application form please visit www.gov.uk/apply-medal-or-veterans-badge/apply-for-a-medal



THE POPPY FACTORY

getting you back to work

The Poppy Factory's Get You Back to Work programme

For wounded, injured and sick ex-Forces personnel in England and Wales (and some in Northern Ireland) who, having been out of the Military for two years or more, are looking for employment or appropriate voluntary routes back into employment, the Poppy Factory offers a free of charge one-to-one tailored support through a volunteer network of professional mentors. They who assist with areas of job research and application support, and provide access to a network of industry contacts and roles with organisations who value the skills and experience of ex-Forces personnel. Clients injury's or conditions do not have to be attributable to service in order to receive support.

If you are interested in knowing more about this service please look at www.poppyfactory.org or phone Shaun, the Employability Co-ordinator on 0208 939 1837.



**Armed Forces
Covenant**

Armed Forces Covenant Update

www.gov.uk/the-armed-forces-covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is an agreement between the Government, the Nation and the Armed Forces to commit to supporting the entire Armed Forces Community to ensure that Service personnel and their families are not disadvantaged by the sacrifices they made to keep the nation safe.

Last year:

- a further £40m was made available from the LIBOR fines to Covenant projects bringing the total to £140m
- All Local Authorities have signed up to the Covenant ensuring the needs of Armed Forces families are taken into account on such things as housing and schools
- Over 370 companies have also signed up making a range of commitments from jobs to making it easier for staff to join the reservists

This year:

- a new Service Complaints Ombudsman will be introduced
- The Armed Forces Pension Scheme will be opened up to Reservists
- A new £10m annual fund will be launched to continue delivering Armed Forces Covenant commitments

Have you been disadvantaged because of your service?

Contact either a Services families federation or the MOD Covenant team by emailing covenant-mailbox@mod.uk

Universal Credit rolling out throughout the UK. Will it affect you?

If you are currently on Housing Benefit and/or other benefits, you will be put onto Universal Credit as the programme of welfare reform rolls out.

If you have any worries about what is happening to your financial support, please don't leave it until you are in trouble; speak to your Income Officer at Haig by telephoning 020 8685 5777 and selecting 'Option 4' or speak with your Housing Manager.

Whilst we have tried to minimise the impact of these reforms, we are aware that, especially to begin with, there may be problems. For example, as the money is paid a month in arrears we expect to see more people worried that they are behind with their rent payments. Alternatively, people may feel they cannot afford the extra money needed.

Research by the National Housing Federation has shown

that 92% of tenants say they would prefer their housing benefit to be paid directly to their landlord. If you are one of this percentage and would like a bit more guidance and help, please contact us.

It is important to remember to spend the money allocated to you on rent and other necessary things before spending the money elsewhere.

Reporting crime to the police

If you witness or are a victim of a crime, or you have information relating to one, you should report it to the police as soon as possible and then notify Haig when convenient if appropriate.



Reporting to the Police:

- Call 999 if you are reporting a crime that is in progress or someone is in immediate danger. Calls from landlines and mobiles are free
- For local community policing issues contact your local Policing team – it is a good idea to find this number and keep it handy in advance of any incident
- Call 101 to report crimes that are not an emergency, to give information or make an enquiry. Calls from both landlines and mobile networks cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day you call, or how long you are on the phone
- Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or email <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/> to report a crime or give information completely anonymously
- Call 999 or the police anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 739 321 to report an immediate terrorist threat

Reporting to Haig:

- Contact the office by phone 020 8685 5777 or email enquires@haighousing.org.uk Visit the Haig website to submit a contact: www.haighousing.org.uk
- Send the details in writing for attention of your Housing Manager at Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden Surrey SM4 5NS
- If you live in Morden, you can visit the office and fill out a crime/information sheet

Top 5 Neighbour Nuisance Issues

The most regular complaints are about:

1

Parking

2

Dog Mess

3

Noise/Nuisance

4

Rubbish

5

*Food Waste
Encouraging Vermin*

Please try and ensure that you are not adding to others' unhappiness on these points – be a good neighbour and 'do as you would be done by'.

Rent Payments

The Income Officers are always looking at ways to help tenants with rent payments and are at the end of a phone if there are any problems with paying rent. It is much better to talk to someone than let yourself get behind. Here is some helpful information.

DIRECT DEBITS: Haig Housing is looking at the possibility of setting up Direct Debits as another method of rent payment. If you are interested in this way of paying please contact the Income Team on 020 8685 5777 option 4 to register your interest.

RENT INCREASE NOTICES: If you receive Local Housing Allowance/ Housing Benefit it is your responsibility to take your rent increase notice down to your local benefits office.

STANDING ORDERS: When you receive your rent increase notice you need to amend your standing order, this should be increased on the payment prior to the rent increase. Standing order is between you and your bank and is not something that any Haig employee can change on your behalf.

RENT PAYMENTS: When making rent payments to Haig Housing please use your tenancy number as the reference for your payment. Failing to quote the correct reference can lead to a delay in your payments being credited to your rent account.



Haig Roadshows ²⁰¹⁵

Time for a change! Haig Roadshows 2015

For the past seven years, there has been an annual Haig conference held in locations in the South, Midlands and North. Although the feedback from the conferences show that those who attend find them both enjoyable and informative, we felt that, mainly because only a small percentage of tenants attend each year, it is time to look at other, more exciting opportunities to include and involve more people who may not have been able to get to the conferences in the past.

We will therefore be holding a series of roadshows and will hopefully be able to meet with more tenants across the UK by coming to your doorstep and hear what you have to say!

We would love to see you and your families at one of our six visits to cities between September and **October 2015**. We hope to have an event in **London, Portsmouth, Cardiff, Birmingham, Sunderland** and **Liverpool** or **Leeds**.

A team from the Trust including the Chief Executive, Housing Manager, Surveyor and local services such as the local council benefits section will be on hand to answer any queries and provide any advice you may need. Each event will be a drop-in afternoon with refreshments provided and free to attend.

Further information will be sent in early Summer. In the meantime, if you have any questions or suggestions please contact us by email enquiries@haighousing.org.uk for the attention of: Simon Griffin, Development Officer.



Rubbish dumped on estates

The cost of clearing rubbish dumped on estates is soaring. On the Morden estate alone, the cost of clearing items dumped was almost £350; this cost is added to the service charge paid for by tenants so, if you dump your own rubbish, you are making your neighbours pay for it. We are aware that, in many instances, rubbish is left on the estate by non-Haig tenants. If you have any information on who is causing this antisocial nuisance, please contact your Housing Manager.

This photo is an example, not an unusual example, of what faces the Grounds Maintenance staff at Morden on a Monday morning.

Coming Home

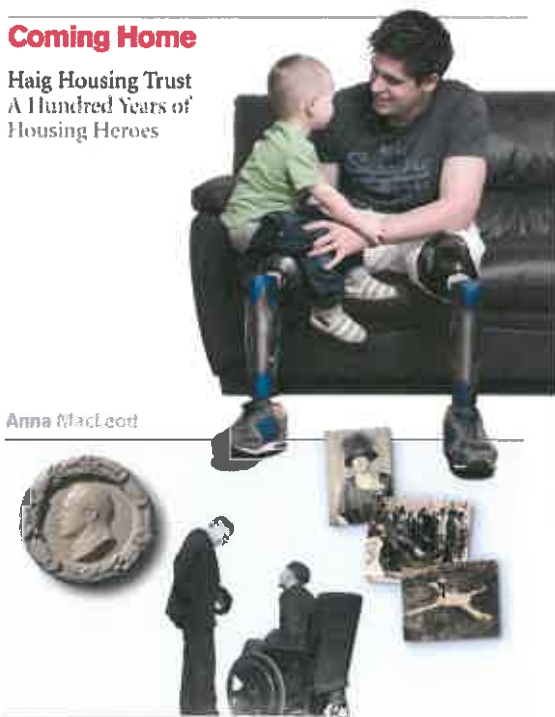
Have you ever wanted to know about the history of the Trust or how your estate came into being. Who were the people involved? Where did the money come from? This new book should be of interest to all residents of Haig Housing Trust

Coming Home: A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes

Coming Home

Haig Housing Trust
A Hundred Years of
Housing Heroes

Anna MacLeod



Coinciding with many Military centenary commemorations associated with WWI, this new book **Coming Home: A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes**, tells the story of this charitable housing association set up to help injured Servicemen coming home from War, facing a very different life than they might have expected.

Written by the Trust's Fundraising & PR Director, Anna MacLeod, the book explores the history of Haig Housing starting in 1928 on the death of the illustrious and later notorious, First World War General, Field Marshal Earl Haig. The then Prince of Wales and other members of Britain's post war society, felt that the provision of good quality

housing would be a fitting memorial to the Field Marshal and his tireless work, after the war, to improve the living and working conditions for the returning disabled Soldier and his family.

By the mid 1930s, a network of houses had been built specifically to accommodate disabilities. The properties were spread throughout the UK and the largest estate was in Morden, South West London, which was opened by the Prince of Wales to great excitement on 29th May 1931.

The Trust has grown through new build and absorption of Regimental Homes and other smaller Trusts such as The Housing Association for Officers' Families, which was formally established, in 1916, by society hostess Mrs Willie James. She helped house Officers' widows from 1914, giving the Trust its 100 year history.

The book is more than just the history of the Trust. It carries spotlights on Royal Patronage, benefactors, tenants, supporters and contributors to the Trust throughout its history. Packed with anecdotes, tales of derring-do, stories and snippets of social and historical interest, the coffee-table style book is illustrated with hundreds of photographs drawn from Haig's extensive and fascinating archives. The book is relevant to all tenants and some current tenants are featured in the book.

Lord Dannatt, Patron of the Coming Home fundraising campaign, says of the book, "Somewhere to call home is the building block for life, and Haig Housing has been providing this for returning Service men and women for a hundred years. This remarkable book tells a remarkable tale about the housing help given to remarkable people."

A Volunteer Estate Monitor (VEM) said, "This morning we received our long awaited Coming Home book, and what an interesting book it is turning out to be. It will be slowly read as the amount of information gathered is astonishing. Very little housework will be done in this house today!"

Gloria Hunniford, a Coming Home supporter, also read the book and said it is, "utterly superb, fascinating and clearly presented."

To order a copy, please go to www.coming-home.org.uk or phone 020 8685 5787 to pay by credit card or fill in the form enclosed.

Coming Home

Tower of London "For Queen and Country"

Read all about this big event on the front page of this newsletter. Taking place on September 16th, this event will commemorate Haig Housing Trust's Patron, HM The Queen, entering into the record books as the longest reigning British monarch (see also page 2).



Golf at Foxhills – a date for 2016

Looking to events next year, we will be holding a **charity Golf Day on 23rd June 2016** at the wonderful Foxhills Golf Course in Ottershaw, Surrey. Using the famous Bernard Hunt course, the day will consist of breakfast baps, 18 hole golf with pro-golfers and celebrities and then a barbeque meal after with a charity raffle and auction.

War Horse Memorial

In the summer of 2016, there are plans for Ascot to be home to the first ever memorial dedicated to commemorating the one million Allied horses that were lost in the First World War.

A larger-than-life bronze sculpture of a typical animal used to transport munitions and men during the four-year conflict will remember their contribution, and signify the last time the horse would be used on a mass scale in modern warfare.

Acclaimed sculptor Susan Leyland has been commissioned to carry out this extraordinary tribute to the hundreds of thousand of horses, donkeys and mules which lost their lives and will be a fitting acknowledgement to the unspoken, uncomplaining and inspirational nobility of the horse.


Coming Home will be one of the beneficiary charities from funds raised through this project.



Susan Leyland with one of her equine studies

How can you help raise money for Coming Home

1. Give as you Live – Please sign up to this and help us raise funds

You may have seen this  Give as you Live® logo when you search for suppliers on the internet. If this sign is next to the name of a supplier, it means that they give a percentage of anything you purchase through them to your chosen charity.

It is a really good way for us all to raise money for charity – it doesn't cost anything and it's free to sign up (Give as you Live make their money from the suppliers who join up to the scheme and are therefore more likely to get chosen by buyers).

Go to www.giveasyoulive.com and sign up, please choose Coming Home - Haig Housing Trust as your charity.

As an example, say if you are looking for train tickets, you'd go to Give as you Live, sign in, search for 'train tickets' and then choose from the selection of providers which come up. You then book your train journeys as normal making sure the bar at the top of the screen still says 'Give as you Live'. Sometimes this bar turns red and looks like it has turned off but it is usually only when you are in a payment page.

The other ways to use this service is, if you have done an internet search, perhaps using Google, look for the providers which have the Give as you Live logo and then sign in to GAYL through the bar on the top of the internet page.

Please sign up and support Coming Home this way – it is true that 'Every Little Helps'



2. Recycle and raise funds

Please dig out old defunct mobile phones and chargers, unwanted media items such as DVDs, CDs and Computer Games and consoles, foreign and obsolete currency. All of these items can be recycled. You can send items to us and we will have them recycled through Forgotten Mobile. We have drop boxes in both the office at Alban Dobson House and at Mountbarrow House if you happen to be passing.

3. 100 Years of Housing Heroes

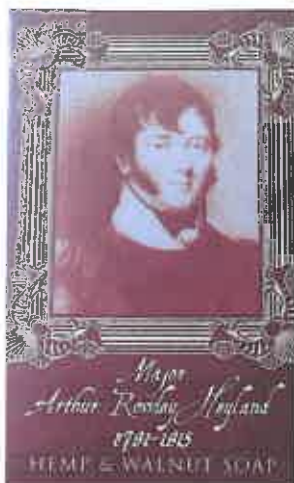
Buy a copy of the history of Haig Housing Trust from the early days of the Housing Association of Officers' Families from 1914, right through to the latest achievements of Haig Housing Trust in 2014 (see page 11)

4. Coming Home candles

There are three wonderful fragrances of aromatherapy candles produced by Heyland and Whittle for Haig Housing's Coming Home campaign. Called Inspiration, Peace and Freedom and inspired by our brave Military heroes, these are sold to raise funds for the campaign. Ideal presents for anyone. Please visit the 'Shop' on the Coming Home website www.coming-home.org.uk

Heyland & Whittle have also produced a wonderful limited edition box set commemorating the battle of Waterloo, 18th June 1815. The box has two soaps; hemp and Walnut and Rose 10% of the proceeds are being donated to Coming Home. A Heyland ancestor, Major Arthur Heyland lost his life at Waterloo commanding the 40th Regiment of Foot. On the eve of the battle, he penned these wonderful words to his wife, clearly the love of his life,

"My Mary, let the recollection console you that the happiest days of my life have been from your love and affection, and that I die loving only you and with a fervent hope that our souls may be reunited hereafter and part no more. What dear children, my Mary I leave you. My Marianna, gentlest girl may God bless you. My Anne, my John, may Heaven protect you. My children may you all be happy and may the reflection that your father never in his life swerved from the truth and always acted from the dictates of his conscience, preserve you virtuous and happy, for without virtue there can be no happiness. My darling Mary I must tell you again how tranquilly I shall die, should it be my fate to fall, we cannot, my own love, die together, one or other must witness the loss of what we love most. Let my children console you my love. My Mary."



Major Arthur Rowley Heyland
1781-1815

Property Services

You said... we did... Improving Your Repairs and Maintenance Experience

Haig values the feedback it receives from tenants and as a result of your comments and suggestions has been trying to gradually improve the repair and maintenance experience which remains an area of keen interest judging by our email box and post bag.

Changes started just over a year ago with a shift to the use of gas contractors who had the capacity to deal with the geographic spread of our properties including an evening and weekend emergency service but also to provide some consistency in the service provided.

Initial feedback seems to suggest that this has been a good decision with a more responsive and consistent service but the work continues and in addition to refining the gas contracts, we have now turned our attention to the general repair service.

A number of small pilot schemes have been started around the country with national contractors. We intend identifying the best repair model for Haig and to incorporate improvements that result from the schemes into new contracts some time next year.

We are still using local contractors where they have proven to be popular and provide a good service and the tenants of those properties included in the pilots and the Volunteer Estate Monitors have been written to separately with specific information and new feedback forms.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

More schemes may come on-line throughout the year so please continue to return your feedback forms after you receive a repair as it remains the most effective way for us to assess where changes are required and of how to shape the future service.



By returning your feedback form, you also stand the chance of winning £25 in the monthly draw, winners over the past year are:

Mrs M Spencer, Liverpool

Mrs M Oldham, Ashted

Mrs R Poole, Birmingham

Mr T Buckley, Salisbury

Mr M Cooper, Portsmouth

Mr A Elliott, Haslemere

Mrs A Capel, Morden

Mrs E Worlock, Leeds

Mrs S Howard, Ashted

Mrs I Law, Belfast

Mrs S Newton, Warrington

Mrs P Bright, Birmingham

Mr G Winn, Salisbury

Exciting news for Haig Housing

Empty properties to become new homes for armed forces veterans in landmark scheme



A typical central Manchester street scene



The BBC's DIY SOS, The Big Build programme is working with the charity Walking With The Wounded and Haig Housing on a significant empty homes project to establish a veteran's community with access to support, education and training in Manchester. Manchester City Council and Adactus Housing have agreed to give 25 empty homes in Newton Heath to Haig to create an armed forces veterans' housing community. With street landscaping to provide disabled access and improve the environment, along with a face-lift of all the properties on the streets. DIY SOS plans to refurbish eight of the properties to create four adapted residential homes for veterans and their families and a veteran walk-in support and advice centre to be run by Walking With The Wounded. The remaining 17 empty properties will be refurbished by Haig Housing. The Big Build refurbishment will work using donated materials, equipment and on-site labour by veterans and their families. Skills will be donated by contractors and local businesses and organisations such as the local Army Reserve (75th Engineer Regiment) which has already offered workforce and equipment.

All parties are very positive about this substantial project:

Cllr Jeff Smith, Manchester City Council's executive member for housing and regeneration, said: "The city council has committed to an armed forces covenant to work with and support our armed forces returning to civilian life. This project is a timely and practical demonstration of how we can provide this support and at the same time benefit

the local residents and the city by bringing empty homes back in to use. Through this programme we hope to offer not only suitable housing but on-going advice and support. This includes training and education, in partnership with local schools and colleges, to help veterans find employment and support themselves in the future."

Edward Parker, CEO and Co-Founder of Walking With The Wounded, adds: "this is a remarkable opportunity for our veterans.... to gain their independence outside the military; two of the key factors for this to succeed is a home and a job. This project will provide both. It also gives the charity the chance to be embedded in the community to extend our reach further into the northwest where there are many veterans and their families who would benefit from our support."

Chief Executive of Haig Housing, James Richardson, said: "We are delighted to be involved with this project. As the leading provider of housing to ex-Service community and with our experience in providing specially designed and adapted accommodation for both Service and ex-Service personnel who have been severely wounded and traumatically disabled, we are well placed to deliver homes which meet the needs of our applicants and tenants."

Paul Lees, Chief Executive of Adactus Housing Group, said: "We are excited to be working in partnership on a project that will make a significant improvement to people's lives, aid regeneration of a neighbourhood and build a sustainable community."



A trip to St James's Palace

David and Karin Grant from Ashtead along with Mike Wisden and Tracey Scott from Bury St Edmunds, were lucky enough to have their names drawn to attend a Christmas Party at St James's Palace by kind invitation of the Not Forgotten Association. Mike said of the day, *"Tracey and I had a great trip to London. It rained all day but we managed to stay dry somehow. The party was a great success. Lots of food and an abundance of mulled wine which I am sure helped get us in the party mood. Meeting a member of the royal family was indeed an experience to be remembered over future years. The party concluded with a very entertaining concert and sing-along. We thoroughly enjoyed the whole afternoon and are thankful for the opportunity to go there. Over the coming years, we will both have fond memories of a remarkable fun day at St James's Palace."*



Governor of Jersey meets tenants

Lieutenant Governor of the States of Jersey, General Sir John McColl, recently made an informal visit to Princess Elizabeth Court, the Haig estate in Jersey. After having a look around the estate and an empty flat, the Governor met two of the residents, Clive Kemp (ex-Royal Engineers) and Archie McNeice (ex Royal Navy)

Clive took part in the D-Day landings and his recollections of liberating Pegasus Bridge are included in the new book about the Trust, *Coming Home: A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes* (see page xx for further information). In the book, you can read about his memories serving with the British Expeditionary Force and, 60 years later, of receiving the Legion d'Honneur. Clive has also written his own book which was published in 2013, called *'Stinker's Nine Lives'*.

Bless 'Em All

Almost 70 tenants and friends enjoyed a concert put on by the Not Forgotten Association in the Lawrence Weaver Institute in March. The energetic and entertaining tribute to coincide with the 70th anniversary of VE/VJ Day was followed by a tea. As one attendee said, *"Thank you for a very*

entertaining afternoon with these wonderful people. I haven't enjoyed so much for ages. We would like to thank you, Lisa (the Morden Housing Manager) and your colleagues for all your hard work. You all look like swans, serene on the top while paddling furiously underneath, thank you so much."



Unusual Visitor to Warrington



Many Haig estates, by virtue of their locations, are ideal for nature lovers with the large variety of wildlife which, without any special equipment or knowledge, can often be observed from the window.

At the end of last year, the estate in Warrington was home to a very rare visitor; a Harris Hawk. Chris Young, who spotted this interloper, says, 'the Harris Hawk is normally resident in South America, in particular Mexico but is popular in the UK with Falconers. This bird was an "escapee" and we worked hard to capture it to re-unite it with its owner. This wasn't easy as it had quickly adapted to the local conditions and was managing to feed itself well. A well-fed bird will, after such a length of time, not easily be lured back to the fist. Sadly this was true and the hawk has managed

to go through the winter and is still at large. The pigeon on which the Harris is dining in the picture (on the porch of one of our

houses) was a break from the local chickens he snatched regularly.'

Chris, the estate's VEM, is interested in wildlife and says, "We see a lot on our estate even though we are on the edge of an industrial town! The bird tally is well over 60 species and our best sighting was a Scarlet Rosefinch two years ago. Ours was one of only two verified sightings that year of a bird normally resident in Scandinavia and probably blown off course."

Have you seen any interesting wildlife on your estate? Write in and let us know.

Macdonnell Gardens Armistice Day Commemoration

Brian Relf, resident in Watford, reported on the Remembrance Day wreath laying at the flagpole in the grounds of the estate. "Our numbers were up again on last year and even though several residents were unwell, fortunately the rest were all fit and well enough to polish off the sherry and snacks provided after the ceremony while we watched the Cenotaph action on TV."



'Mighty oaks from little acorns grow'

Commemorating the Great War in Norwich

At the annual Armistice Day service at the War Memorial Cottages and Bungalows in Norwich last year, two oak trees were planted in commemoration of the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War.

About 150 people overall attended and witnessed the trees being planted immediately after the 2 minutes silence and wreath laying at the War Memorial. They were dedicated by the Royal Anglian Regiment Regimental Chaplain, The Reverend Father Ken Reeve, to the memory of all those who served in The Great War.

Both trees were provided by the contract gardeners, the CGM Group, with one being planted on behalf of Haig Housing by current and former residents and the other by the Crosskill's Artillery Battery Army Cadet Force who were formed by a Royal Norfolk Regiment officer in 1911.



Mrs Doreen Lemmon planting the tree on behalf of Haig Housing. Mrs Lemmon is the daughter of Private L J Ladbrooke of the Royal Norfolk Regiment who was the first resident in No 1 War Memorial Cottages in 1921. Doreen was born in the property

shortly after her family moved in and still lives locally. It is interesting to note that the current resident, who moved in last year, is only the 3rd resident in that property in its whole 93 years.



The Haig Housing Memorial Tree with right to left: Mrs Doreen Lemmon, her daughter Mrs Marion Kerton who was also born at No 1 War Memorial Cottages and WO2 (retired) Paul Kerton Royal Anglian Regiment (nephew of Mrs Kerton and great nephew of Mrs Lemmon).



Past and present residents of the War Memorial Cottages and Bungalows at the tree planting left to right: Mrs Baker (ex-resident No 7 War Memorial Cottages), Mrs Kempster (daughter of Mrs Baker, born in No7), Mrs Lincoln (ex-resident of 14 War Memorial Bungalows who celebrated her 100th birthday in January 2014), Mrs Pitts and Mrs Halfpenny with her son Harrison who was born earlier last year (both current residents).



Tremendous Bravery Recognised

In January this year, a resident at Macdonnell Gardens, had a long overdue recognition of his bravery during WWII. Lieutenant Anthony Eldridge, Tony to his friends, was a member of an elite Submariner group of very brave men who were known as 'human torpedoes' or charioteers. At 19, he signed up for Special and Hazardous Service whilst serving with the Royal Navy and, following secret training, secret even to him and the others involved, in 1944 he found himself in Ceylon, piloting a torpedo shaped chariot on a top secret and highly dangerous mission to blow up a Japanese controlled Italian liner. He wasn't expected to survive the mission to place a 1,000lb warhead onto the hull of the liner.

Tony's dedication that night was recognised with the award of the DSC (Distinguished Service Cross) for 'gallantry, skill and devotion to duty shown while serving in His Majesty's Submarine Trenchant on successful patrols in Far East waters' and his co-pilot, Butch Woollcott received the DSM (Distinguished Service Medal). In recognition of his tremendous bravery, just over 70 years later, Flag Officer Submarines invited him to

visit the Headquarters in Northwood and stay for lunch at his official residence. Tony had a marvellous time and is pictured here with Haig's Chief Executive, James Richardson and Admiral Matt Parr, Commander operations and head of the Submarine Service in front of the Jolly Roger the emblem of the Royal Navy Submarine Service. In World War II it became common practice for the submarines of the Royal Navy to fly the Jolly Roger on completion of a successful combat mission where some action had taken place. This was seen as an indicator of bravado and stealth rather than of lawlessness the Admiral of the Fleet, Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, pronounced about submarine warfare in 1901. He said it was "Underhand, unfair and damned un-English" and that the Royal Navy should "treat all submarines as pirates in wartime".

You can learn more about Tony's extraordinary feat of bravery in the new book about the Trust (see page 11)



The winner of the 'Wintery Scenes Competition' winning £25, is Barry Higgott with his lovely photo of his estate in Meadowhead, Sheffield.

Photographic competition

The winner of the competition last time was Tom Godwin MBE from Watford who said, about winning the £25 prize, "what a pleasant start to the New Year! [others have said] that they were going to enter and I pointed out that "was going to, never won anything!" Tom is also a published author with his recent book *"From Pit to Palace"* which was published in late January. The book is about his career from his first job deep underground as an electrician in a Yorkshire colliery, then a brief spell in the Army followed by Police work and then re-joining the Parachute Regiment; from there on there was never a dull moment. The book is available on Amazon.

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If you are on Facebook, check out and 'like' the new Haig Housing page and follow us for news updates. Also, while you are on the site, 'like' Coming Home and Coming Home Gals and keep up to date with the events and fundraising events, opportunities to join in on things like sponsored runs and deals on Coming Home Merchandise.

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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 **BRAILLE**, please contact Haig Housing, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS or telephone 020 8685 5777

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