

# Haig News

SPRING 2016 HAIG HOUSING'S NEWSLETTER



Portrait of The Queen, taken in 2002  
© John Swannell/Camera Press

## Happy Birthday Ma'am

Haig Trustees will be sending a message of congratulations to Haig Housing's Patron 'Her Majesty The Queen' on the occasion of her 90th birthday. There will be celebrations up and down the country coinciding with her official June birthday and, on 12th June, The Mall in St James's Park will be transformed for its largest ever street party to celebrate her patronage of over 600 charities and organisations.

*Continued on page 2*

## Morden café redevelopment set for Spring start on site

Long term plans to turn the old café and Warden's house site into a practical and much needed development of eight small homes for single ex-Service veterans now has planning approval and is about to become a reality.

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## Manchester Project Nominated for the RICS Awards 2016

The innovative project between Haig Housing, Manchester City Council and Walking With The Wounded, as featured on BBC DIY SOS, has led to nominations for a range of industry awards including:

- The North West Regeneration award of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
- RICS Awards 2016 North West – Regeneration
- UKHA Inside Housing Awards 2016 Outstanding Local Authority of the Year – Manchester City Council
- 2016 North West Regional LABC Building Excellence Awards – Best Inclusive Building
- Property Week 2016 – Placemaking Award
- North West Regional Construction Awards 2016

The two part show 'BBC DIY SOS: Homes for Heroes' which was screened last September, has also been nominated for two Royal Television Society 2016 West of England awards. This comes after previously being nominated for a National Television Award.



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## Birthday Celebrations

*Continued from page 1*

10,000 people will enjoy a hamper-style lunch at tables positioned the full length of The Mall. This iconic event will recognise the unrelenting support and service our Monarch has given to the community over her 63-year reign.

The Trust has two tables at this event and beneficiaries of the Trust, staff and Trustees will enjoy the day. We are grateful to a sponsor for enabling 20 people to attend. The beneficiary places were drawn from the Trust's Volunteer Estate Monitors in recognition of the liaison role they undertake with the Trust.

Princess Elizabeth became Queen on 2nd June 1953 and, on 9th September last year, she entered the record books as Britain's longest reigning Monarch and the world's longest reigning female Monarch overtaking the record set by Queen Victoria who reigned for 23,226 days, 16 hours and 23 minutes (63 years).



Official portrait of The Queen taken in the Centre Room in Buckingham Palace in December 2011  
© Royal Household/John Swannell



Princess Elizabeth broadcasting her 21st Birthday speech on 21st April 1947 from Cape Town where she was on holiday with her parents and sister.

*“I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family, to which we all belong.”*

## RECRUITING NOW!

Resident Member wanted for Haig Housing's Management Committee

From 2007, Haig Housing has had two Resident Committee Members sitting on the Management Committee. We have been well served firstly by Mary Forgie from Edinburgh and Kevin O'Carroll from Southsea and then by Patrick Lyster-Todd from Morden and Gary Bell from Newcastle. Due to his other commitments as a Councillor in the North-East, Gary has decided to step down and so, we are looking for a new Resident Committee Member to serve with Patrick.

Are you interested in becoming a Resident Committee Member?

Management committee members would be expected to attend up to four meetings per year.

Full training, support and travel costs will be given to ensure that the members are all able to fulfil this role but ideally anyone considering this role should preferably:

- Be aware, supportive and understanding of the Trust as a charity and its specific remit to provide housing assistance for the ex-Service community.
- Have some understanding of how a housing association or a charity is run
- Have some experience of being a committee member
- Have some general experience in development or management of people, properties or contracts - core business areas for Haig Housing

If you would like to be considered for this position or would like to know more as to what is involved in being a Resident Committee Member on the Management Committee, please contact Ann Clark at Head Office ([ann.clark@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:ann.clark@haighousing.org.uk)) 020 8685 5783.

Remember, enthusiasm for improving services will be as important as experience.

***Your Trust needs you!***

## Peter Hart FRICS



It is with regret that we announce the death in December 2015 of Peter Hart, a former long-standing Trustee and later Chairman of Trustees of Haig Homes. Peter joined the Trust in 1972, became Chairman in 1992 and then retired from the Council in 1998. He was enthusiastic and dedicated to the Trust; he made many estate visits and, over the years, met many tenants whilst travelling around the country.

Mr Hart served in the Royal Engineers from 1943-1948 and subsequently on the RARO from 1949 - 1975. In 1950 he joined Walfords, the Construction Consultants and Chartered Quantity Surveyors, rising to Senior Partner.

He had many outside commitments, including President of Quantity Surveyors' Division and member of General Council RICS, and interests including beagling, archaeology and history. Peter made a significant change to the profile of the Trust by instigating the successful merger of the 'sister' Trust, The Housing Association For Officers' Families with Haig Homes; a significant move forward for the Trust at the time.

## Congratulations

Marcus Forster, Haig's Grounds Manager has been awarded a Master of Horticulture from The Royal Horticultural Society at a ceremony in February 2016. This is the highest level of qualification awarded by the RHS.

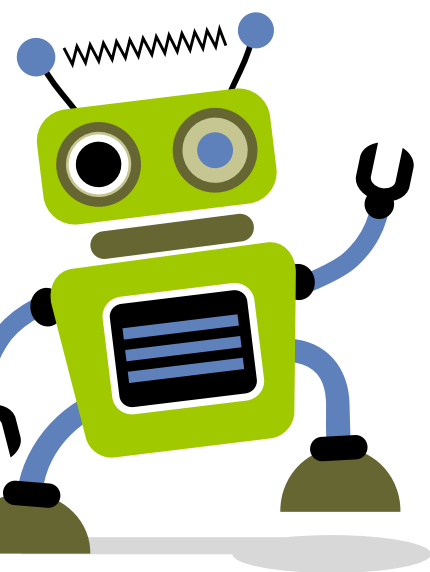




# News and Notes

## Housing Information

Haig's Housing Options team can advise on your housing queries and can be contacted on 020 8685 5777. In addition to the advice that Haig can give, The Joint Services Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) produces useful information on anything to do with housing for the Service and ex-Service community. There are handouts on subjects such as Affordable Home Schemes, Housing Options in Scotland, choosing a financial advisor, understanding Council tax and further information on the UK Local Authorities. Go to [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and use the search facility and type JSHAO



## Smart Trousers – the future for mobility impaired and age-related weakness

Researchers at a number of universities have been awarded £2m to develop soft robotic clothing such as smart trousers, which could help vulnerable people avoid falls by supporting them

whilst walking and give people added strength moving between sitting and standing or even help people to climb stairs. The intelligent clothing or 'second skin' will use artificial 'muscles' made from smart materials and reactive polymers which are capable of exerting great forces. The hope is that this intelligent clothing may eventually replace stair lifts, wheelchairs and other mobility and stability aids.

For further information contact Brian Chenier at [BSOprosthetics@blesma.org](mailto:BSOprosthetics@blesma.org) or phone 020 8548 7080

## FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology)

Veterans in Practice (VIP) is FACT's programme for military veterans from Liverpool. It is open to veterans from all services and is an opportunity to get involved in creative projects. VIP meets weekly and works collaboratively with professional artists to produce creative digital projects such as a green screen project to create alternative images of veterans and workshops discussing the possibilities of wearable tech for veterans.

FACT works in partnership with Liverpool Veterans Project which runs a one stop shop for Veterans in the area.

*"VIP has given me the confidence to go out again and start to mix with people, as a sufferer of PTSD, I found it difficult to mix with anyone other than military orientated people, now I am finding it a lot easier after working with the staff from FACT and the artists and professionals on a number of projects... I now look forward to going to FACT each week to meet the rest of the group." Tom (member of VIP)*



For more information Tel: 0151 707 4421  
[www.fact.co.uk](http://www.fact.co.uk)

# Unmarked Grave of Most Decorated WWI Soldier Finally Receives Headstone

One of World War One's most decorated medics, until now buried in an unmarked grave on the Wirral, has received a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone at Rake Lane Cemetery. Staff Sergeant Wilfred Brooke performed 'several acts of conspicuous gallantry' and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, was mentioned in Despatches and received the Croix de Guerre from the Belgian Government. He died, aged 39, in 1919 and it is only now, 95 years later after a campaign by Warrant Officer Class 1 Bob Dixon, that he now has the recognition he so rightly deserves.



## Family Holiday Breaks

The Royal British Legion provides Veterans' families with free holiday breaks to get away from the stresses and strains of everyday life with some assistance towards the cost of food and transport:

### LEGION BREAK CENTRES

Four centres for a week of fun, free activities and entertainment, exciting day-trips and memorable experiences.

### PARKDEAN AND HAVEN HOLIDAY PARKS

Mobile home accommodation with daytime and evening entertainment and food vouchers.

### CENTER PARCS

Woodland lodge accommodation for outdoor activities or a tranquil break enjoying the English countryside.

You may be able to take guests but do check on the terms.

If you are part of the currently Serving or ex-Service community and if you answer YES to just one of the questions below, then you and your family may qualify for a Family Holiday Break.

- Are you a one parent household because of bereavement or break up of the family?
- Is one parent currently serving on overseas operations or is to be deployed?
- Is one parent caring for a disabled partner?
- Is one parent suffering from mental or physical trauma?
- Have you not had a holiday away from home in 2 years?
- Do you support your household with less than £30,000 gross annual income per year?

For further information on how to apply for a Family Holiday Break, call the helpline on 0808 802 8080 (option 2) or [info@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:info@britishlegion.org.uk).

The Legion also offers Adventure Breaks for young people. <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/social-support/family-holiday-breaks/>

***It may be too late for this year but don't leave it too late to apply for next year.***

## The Poppy Factory's Celebration

In November, The Poppy Factory helped their 500th Disabled Veteran into life-changing employment. The target was set in 2010 along with the mission to be there for disabled veterans whenever they need employment support. They have a network of regional Employability Consultants to build up veterans' confidence in their valuable transferable skills and shows employers how easy it is to recruit a skilled workforce from veterans. This scheme has helped some of Haig Housing's tenants get back into the workforce.

*"This has been such a great success that we would like to employ another ex-Service man or woman, powered by The Poppy Factory."* Chris Barlow, Employer, Director, Cerco Training.



# News and Notes



## Grant Shapps Launches Homes for Heroes Foundation

Grant Shapps former Housing Minister and Chairman of the Conservative Party (currently MP for Welwyn Hatfield) commissioned an investigation which showed up bias against veterans in the housing market. He has worked with Haig Housing and other organisations involved with Veterans housing and has now launched a new initiative, Homes for Heroes Foundation.

He said, *"A hundred years ago, David Lloyd George famously promised soldiers returning from the battlefields of Europe that they would have 'homes fit for heroes'. Today, many Service men and women leave the armed forces after years of serving their country in the most dangerous parts of the world – only to face on their return an uphill battle to find a home for themselves and their families. There are several reasons for this: some veterans suffer permanent physical injuries or post-traumatic stress disorder; others are healthy in body and spirit but have sacrificed the opportunity to put down roots, whilst serving abroad."*

*We want to change this. The aim of this new Foundation is that by the time we reach the centenary of the 1919 Housing Act which made available government subsidies for a major postwar social housing programme, we want Britain to have the finest housing package for returning armed forces of any country in the world. This is going to be a cross-party campaign alongside key military figures and across the housing industry."*

You can read the full script of Grant's launch speech which outlines his aims for the Foundation, here: <http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2016/02/grant-shapps-homes-fit-for-todays-heroes.html>

Grant says of Haig's role in Veterans housing, *"I'm incredibly grateful for Haig Housing for their assistance in this project and together I'm looking forward to making sure that we have the best housing package for veterans anywhere in the world."*



# Two Grant Giving Trusts Managed by Haig Housing

If you are in need of a little extra financial help, please look at the details on these two Trusts to see if you are eligible for help.

## The Mrs Willie James Charity

*Mrs William (Willie) James, born Evelyn Forbes (1868-1929) founded The Housing Association for Officers' Families (HAOF) in 1916. On the merger of the Association with Haig Homes in 1995, the Mrs Willie James Charity was created as a memorial to her.*

The Charity helps tenants of Haig Housing by providing items, services or facilities they need but cannot otherwise afford. All tenants who qualify as beneficiaries of Haig Housing are eligible for assistance. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that they do not have the resources to provide the item or service themselves.



A wide range of assistance may be given with such necessary small items as furniture and white goods; payment for dental work or new glasses; items to improve quality of life or medical condition such as a rising chair or television; courses or equipment to help with a return to work; respite care; occasional expenses, etc.

## The Charles Wray In Memorium Pension Fund

This Fund pays a small 'pension', currently £500 per annum for a period of three years, to those eligible (see below) in financial need.

Pensioners do not have to be tenants of Haig Housing so please pass on this information to anyone you feel might be eligible.

Qualifying criteria:

- members or former members of the Naval, Military and Air Forces of the Crown or

Merchant Navy and who served in any war or on active Service **and** are suffering from any physical, nervous or mental incapacity or disablement attributable or aggravated by their Service.

Priority will be given to but is not restricted to, people born in Yorkshire or Croydon, or who lived there at the time of the Service in the course of which they were injured.

To obtain an application form for either Trust, which will include full details of the process, please ask your Housing Manager or contact the Trust on 020 8685 5777, or email [enquiries@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@haighousing.org.uk). Forms can also be downloaded from the Haig Housing website [www.haighousing.org.uk](http://www.haighousing.org.uk)

# Housing and Property Services

## Are you still a legitimate beneficiary of this Charity?

Feedback from previous surveys and past Haig conferences confirms that tenants do not think it is fair for people to live in Haig properties who are no longer true beneficiaries under the terms of the Trust Deed.

This could include a divorced or separated spouse whose children have grown up and are no longer of an age to be considered to be dependants of a Service person or a family member, who although has

a legal right to do so, has succeeded to a tenancy but is not an ex-Service person.

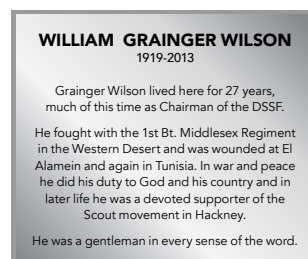
Where we find such a situation exists, Trustees have said that the charitable benefit of a low rent, decorations allowances and Less Able Assistance should be withdrawn. Furthermore the tenant and their family will not be transferred to another property. We are of course talking to anyone who is in this situation and are helping them to make any

necessary adjustments to their life. If you think you might be affected in this way you should contact your Housing Manager.

Some people who realise they are not a true beneficiary of the Trust have recognised that they are depriving a Service family of a home and have taken the honourable approach and moved out of their home to enable it to be re-let to an ex-Service beneficiary.

## Haig Housing Trust takes over 10 Cottages in Hackney

In 2014 Haig took over the administration of the Disabled Soldiers and Sailors (Hackney) Foundation and in February 2016 have become the sole Trustee. These ten houses on Wattisfield Road were built to provide homes for married men who had been enlisted in any of the fighting forces and then disabled. Later the remit was extended to other disabled public servants who served in the police, postal, municipal or railway services. Under the Trusteeship of Haig Housing the cottages will continue to provide affordable rental housing to veterans.



A plaque is due to be placed on the home of a former tenant of DSSHF, William Grainger Wilson (1919-2013) who was a former treasurer and chairman and on his death in May 2013, was still an active Vice-Chairman. His story can be seen in the book A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes, please see page 12 for details.

## Maintenance Contractors Performance Questionnaire

You will find a questionnaire included in this newsletter. Marcus Forster, the Grounds Manager, wants to establish what people feel about the performance of the grounds maintenance contractors and the service you receive for each estate.

This information will show where particular attention should be paid and provide a 'control' level in order to judge whether any future improvements made have had the desired effect.

**Please fill in the questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided by Friday 29th April 2016**



# Coming Home

## Tough Mudder



Housing Manager Michael Marven was flying the Coming Home flag (T-shirt) as he completed Tough Mudder, the 10K assault course with British Military Fitness this Sunday, in alliance with Sports Relief. He was met at the end by his proud daughters.

## Coming Home Activities

After a busy time towards the end of last year with the For Queen & Country event at the Tower of London, the Coming Home Team is now gearing up for this year's events which include a charity Golf Day at Foxhills Golf Club, a picture auction and a book of photographs of Service and ex-Service personnel taken by the world famous photographer Rankin.

## HM The Queen (A Tribute): Christmas record raised funds for Coming Home

In December last year, a musical tribute to Her Majesty the Queen was released by The Four Sopranos. The track, written by Adrian Munsey and Jeff Chegwin featured the unusual addition of the voice of the Queen from her recording of her 1957 Christmas message – the first to be televised. The track also had the wonderful voices of the Treorchy Male Choir and sounds of the London Studio Orchestra.

We were thrilled when it reached Number 15 in the Classical Music charts but got pipped at the post for the Christmas Number One slot by the NHS choir's cover version of Bridge over Troubled Water. 50% of the proceeds were donated to the Coming Home campaign.

You can still buy a CD copy from Head Office at £1.50 or download it for 99p from iTunes, Amazon or The Four Sopranos website. [www.foursopranos.co.uk/](http://www.foursopranos.co.uk/)



The Four Sopranos



# Coming Home



## Enthusiastic or Slightly Bonkers?! You Decide.

Chris Parfitt is one of Haig Housing's newer tenants who moved in with his family in July 2015. He says, *"I am extremely grateful to Haig Housing for rehoming me and I wish to give something back in 2016. I am taking on and hope to complete a number of walking challenges in 2016 to raise money and awareness for Coming Home."*

The challenges will be:

- 30 miles: The **Winter Tanners** is a challenge walk of about 30 miles on Surrey footpaths and bridleways with minimal support in weather conditions which are often adverse.
- 106k: The **Isle of Wight Challenge**. Great challenges need great settings – none better

than the stunning coastal paths of the Isle of Wight from Chale, past the Needles, to half-way point at Cowes and then right round the Island. A true test of determination and stamina but some recompense with the spectacular scenery on the way on May Bank Holiday Weekend.

- 28 miles: just a short stroll after the Isle of Wight challenge in July, the **South Downs Marathon** starts near Eastbourne and traverses the beautiful scenery in the area in just 10 hours.
- 100km: another huge challenge in early July; the **London to Cambridge walk**. Starting at the Olympic Park in East London, the walk

heads up the Lea Valley and on through the countryside to the historic City of Cambridge.

- 100km: The **Thames Path Challenge** from Putney Bridge to Henley with 5,000 fellow challengers on 10/11 September. This will be the last challenge in the year for Chris after an incredible year.

Chris is self funding in all the above events and has set up a JustGiving page. Please support him if you can. Good Luck with them all Chris – keep us posted.

<https://www.justgiving.com/Chris-Parfitt5>



The Seven Sisters at Cuckmere Haven; one of the landmarks Chris will see on his South Downs Marathon



## GGR Racing

'Powered by Passion' – George Grant is raising funds for Coming Home through his motor racing prowess. 2015 saw an action packed race calendar with fixtures at Silverstone, Croft (pictured), Cadwell Park, Anglesey, Brands Hatch, Snetterton and the Endurance Race of Remembrance at Anglesey.

As George's own business is aligned with social housing, he said that *"it seemed fitting to establish a relationship with a charity that offers a wide range of housing assistance and options for ex-Service personnel and their families. I met James Richardson, the CEO of Haig Housing Trust in 2014 and he was telling me about Coming Home's involvement in the Tower of London poppy campaign, which really hit home for me. As a charity they have a huge reach and, with my own interests related to their cause, they seemed a perfect fit! Over 24 months, the aim is to raise as much as we can for the charity through my exploits in motor racing."* You can follow George on his JustGiving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/ggrmotorsport/>



His Mazda MX-5 car sports the Coming Home logo clearly visible on its bonnet.

## Talking to Mother's Union

Carol Hunt from Sheffield very kindly gave a talk to her local Mother's Union about Haig Housing Trust and the fundraising campaign Coming Home. Her talk was very well received and from a fairly small group (numbers were down due to very bad weather) they raised a generous £30 for the campaign. Carol said, *"I began with a bit of history and talked about people who had lost limbs from Nelson through WWI and to Douglas Bader and then brought it up to date with Afghanistan and Iraq. I talked about my personal experience of Haig Housing and how blessed I feel to live in a Haig home and more importantly how grateful my husband and I are for the help and support given to my (ex-RN amputee) step son in getting his bungalow. The ladies were very interested in what I had to say."* Well done Carol and thank you for spreading the word!



Carol (in the Coming Home T-shirt) with Margaret Minns, Chairwoman of Mothers Union, St Johns Alldersdale, Sheffield

## The Old Contemptibles are at it again!

As reported in the last newsletter, Morden resident Alan Spencer is gearing up for his 250 mile, five day hand-cycle challenge with his team of seven other cycling veterans. They will be travelling the route of the World War One battlefields starting from Tyne Cot cemetery near Passchendaele on 25th June and finishing at Thiepval Memorial to the Missing at the Somme on 1st July. They are aiming to raise £20,000 – just £1 for every life lost on the first day of the Battle of the Somme which took place 100 years ago.

You can sponsor Alan on his Old and Bold Battlefield Challenge at <https://www.justgiving.com/OldandBold-BattlefieldChallenge/>



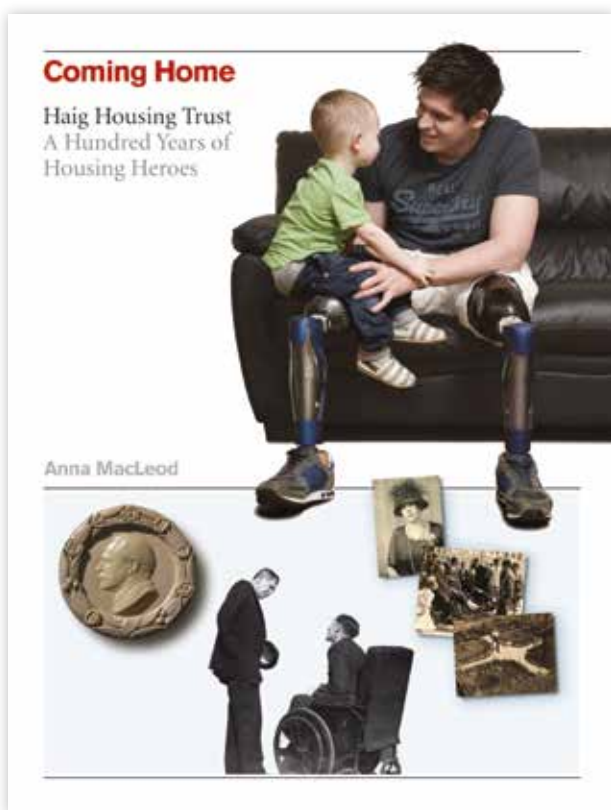
The Old Contemptibles are at it again!



# 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 book should be of interest to all residents of Haig Housing Trust

## Coming Home: A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes



Coinciding with many Military centenary commemorations associated with WWI, this 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.cominghome.org.uk](http://www.cominghome.org.uk) and click on SHOP and then scroll down to find the book or phone 020 8685 5787 to pay by credit card or send a cheque for £25 to Book Orders, Haig Housing Trust, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden Surrey SM4 5NS.**

## A Hidden Talent

Steve Bidgood, who served in the Royal Artillery Commandos both in The Falklands and Northern Ireland, now lives with his family on the Haig estate in the beautiful setting of Worcester's Gheulevelt Park. Although to begin with Steve and his wife Yvonne were reluctant to leave Hampshire where they were living, Steve now says, *"We love Worcester and living where we live is a real privilege. We have bands come to the park and play on a Sunday and we hear the kids playing in the park and it's a very nice noise."*

Sadly Steve suffers from PTSD from his time in the Forces, *"I still suffer from it. I go to sleep and I am back in those places and seeing people's faces. The smell of pork cooking on a barbecue and low flying jets can set it off. When I am in fields, and there is a lot of countryside around Worcester, I think of it as a battlefield and where the military positions would be. When I am walking through the streets, I sometimes think of it like Northern Ireland and wonder if I am safe."*

Recently, he has found a new hobby which is helping him to start overcoming these stresses – wood carving. This started when Yvonne's friend, who is very spiritual and interested in fairies, said she wanted a fairy house. Initially reluctant, Steve hasn't looked back and now makes fairy houses, hobbit houses and wishing wells. His work was displayed at the Worcester City Show last August



and at the Middle Earth Festival - a family-friendly festival celebrating the life and works of J.R.R. Tolkien - in Birmingham last September.

Each piece takes a huge amount of time due to the intricate detail. After 12 hour day and night shifts in the security industry, Steve comes back home from work with lots of new ideas for his carvings and immediately heads for his shed where he puts his creative talents to work.

*"I get completely absorbed and I am learning all the time and it keeps my brain active. All the items I make are bespoke, "If I can't sleep, I come down to the shed and I do some work on the carvings and it relaxes me."*



## Calling all War Veterans

We have been contacted by Ted Wing from Columbus Ohio in the United States. He is carrying out a full year long oral history project, interviewing war veterans from WWI to present. He would like to carry out some long distance interviews. If you would be willing to speak with him over Skype or a phone call please contact Anna MacLeod [anna.macleod@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:anna.macleod@haighousing.org.uk) or phone 020 8685 5777)

## Watching the Rugby Semi-Final at Twickenham

A very generous Coming Home supporter, Brett Jesson, enabled three wheelchair users and their carers to attend the RWC Semi-Final Australia vs Argentina at Twickenham in October.

He said, *"I applied for tickets through the lottery system for the Rugby World Cup 2015 and was successful in being awarded three adult wheelchair tickets to the second semi-final. My connection to the services, civil and military is one close to my heart. I am part of a proud military family as my father, who is no longer with us, joined the intelligence corps as a private soldier and was commissioned during his attachment to the SAS, in Hereford, and served his full term before moving on to the security service in London and finally to NATO in Brussels in 2007. My parents met and married in Cyprus in the late 1960's as my mother was also in the army and posted there and my brother was in the marine band for a number of years.*

*That affinity and my huge admiration for all people that*



Alan and his son Harry soaking up the atmosphere at Twickenham

*decide to serve, especially in the armed services, makes the donation of the tickets I won in the lottery a privilege and is only a small gesture from me to the lucky ones that get to attend the match to say thank you."*

Three deserving beneficiaries were able to go to this extraordinary outing; Norman Cockburn, now a Chelsea Pensioner, Mrs Baxter a recently widowed sports enthusiast and Alan Spencer a disabled veteran who is a committed fundraiser for the trust.

After the event Brett said, *"I am very glad that they feel the*

*appreciation from afar for their dedication, work and sacrifice and as only a small token of appreciation from people like me who are touched and humbled by it."*

Alan Spencer, who was able to take his son with him on the day said, *"I would like to say a big thank you for the opportunity to see the semi final and soak up the atmosphere of a Rugby World Cup. It was a great day and Harry and I thoroughly enjoyed the chance to be part of it."*



## St James's Palace Christmas Party

Last year, the Not Forgotten Association kindly invited four Haig residents to their Christmas Party at St James's Palace.

This year Keith and Charlotte Winter from the Isle of Wight and John Briffitt from Ashted attended with his daughter Rhonda.

Charlotte said of the day, *"We consider it an honour to have been invited. On entering the Palace we were greeted by the sound of a chorus of Christmas songs. We passed through state rooms to the main area where we had pre-*

*allocated table seating and had a continuous service of a selection of delicious sandwiches, salmon fish cakes, hot spicy sausage rolls, cheese and spinach tarts, meringues, Christmas cake, mince pies and drink including mulled wine. We had the pleasure of the attendance of the Countess of Wessex at our table chatting to us all.*

*All in all we had a memorable day and managed to meet up with some old friends later."*

John and his daughter enjoyed the day too and were delighted to have the opportunity to meet the Earl and Countess of Wessex and the celebrities who attended. Meeting people from a generation with interesting stories to tell gave Rhonda an opportunity to see her father in a different perspective and she said, after the event, that it was an emotional experience she is not likely to forget.



Rhonda and her father John Briffitt



## Marjorie Harris

The tenants at Haig Place Birmingham want to pay tribute to a very valued member of their estate who passed away on 28th February. Marjorie Harris had had a very interesting life. She was married to Bill who was a Petty Officer in the Navy during the war while she served as an air mechanic with the Fleet Air Arm. Later, as a member of Equity, Marjorie worked as a supporting artiste in many TV programmes such as Crossroads, Emmerdale, Casualty, Doctors, Ant & Dec Saturday Night and many more. She also worked for many years as a school secretary and served on various committees including the Social Club on the Haig estate and belonged to a Friendship Club enjoying annual holidays with them.

Her friends on the estate say about the popular Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother and Great Great Grandmother, *'she was a friend to us all and will be sadly missed.'*

# Development News

## Major Morden Development Plans (Continued from front cover)

The eight houses will be in a courtyard arrangement and will provide temporary accommodation for single people looking to establish their lives on Civvy Street.

There are plans for the development to be called Parry Court, naming it after John Parry, past Chairman of Trustees from 2001 to 2005 having been a Trustee from 1992. John was instrumental with early plans for the redevelopment of this site.

Work should start on the project in Spring 2016 and we hope to be providing these new homes by May 2017. Tenants living nearby will be contacted when we know the exact start date.

The café redevelopment (see front page) is the first part of a larger planning application currently still under consideration by the local Borough Planners. Using the award from the Veterans Accommodation Fund, we are hopeful of being able to significantly address some of the demand for decent, good quality housing for the ex-Service community by building in the region of 68 new-build homes on the Morden estate.

Residents in the area are being consulted and asked for their opinion on the proposed plans through a series of open days in the Lawrence Weaver Institute.



The site seen from the road. In the background you can see the roofline of The Sanctuary, one of Haig's estates at Morden, which is also easily visible on the architect's drawings of the new development



## Manchester Project Nominated for the RICS Awards 2016 (Continued from front cover)



These are all a testament to the quality of work and support from all the scheme's contributing partners who Haig Housing would like to thank for their incredible enthusiasm, generosity and support. Watch this space for how we get on, fingers crossed!

The first phase of the project was covered by BBC DIY SOS Big Build last year and with the combined efforts, funding, donations and volunteering of all partners involved, it is estimated that £2m worth of

work and material was donated over the course of the programme's build. During the 15 day exercise, following months of preparation, they refurbished eight properties to provide:

- three residential homes with disabled access
- a multi-occupancy unit for ex-Service people on training courses in Manchester
- an office and therapy centre for WWTW



This scheme was the start of regeneration of the area and in 2016, the scheme will continue with:

- the refurbishment of 14 further homes to be made available to ex-Service persons
- Walking With The Wounded's on-going engagement through Project Nova, Home Straight and work experience placements
- resident engagement in plans to create community gardens
- the Veterans' Village model becoming a showcase for other local authorities to replicate

14 more homes will become available to ex-Service veterans through the Summer and if anyone with a Service connection is interested in living in the area or if you are currently a Haig tenant living elsewhere in the UK and would like to move to Manchester please contact us at Head Office on 020 8685 5777.

Pictured on the front page are; l-r, Manchester City Council Empty Homes Jude Millett, Simon Griffin Development Manager Haig Housing, tenant and Volunteer Estate Monitor Lamin Manneh and family, Lucy Powell MP for Manchester, Walking With The Wounded Canada Street centre manager Gary Lamb.

## Colchester, Aldershot and Edinburgh

In addition to the money made available for the Morden development through the Veterans Accommodation Fund for Morden, the award is also funding further housing in Colchester, Aldershot and Edinburgh.

In Colchester, an area of great housing demand from the ex-Service community, we have been able to find 19 properties so far and these will provide homes from people coming through support pathways from other Service organisations. In Aldershot, we have been able to fund 17 homes for ex-Service people

coming through the support system of Riverside's Mike Jackson House, from fully supported to more independent living which will be offered by Stoll's new development of Christmas Lodge and then onto us at Haig Housing for long term independent accommodation. This joint project of the 'Aldershot Consortium' has been nominated for 'Soldiering On' Award.

In Edinburgh, the plans to provide 15 new homes on the estate have evolved to the purchase of new homes elsewhere in the city to improve the spread of housing availability in the area.

If you would like any further info on our development programme please contact Simon Griffin on 020 8685 5777 or [simon.griffin@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:simon.griffin@haighousing.org.uk)

One of the newly purchased properties in Colchester





# THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME, 1916

National commemorative events will take place from 1 July to 18 November to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. At Theipval Memorial in France there will be formal Services of Remembrance then thanksgiving on the anniversaries of the first and last days of the battle and then on the 139 days between, there will be a short daily commemorative service to remember the sacrifice made by individuals and communities.

Fighting at the Battle of the Somme began on 1 July 1916 and lasted four and a half months. For many people, the Battle of the Somme was the battle that symbolised the horrors of warfare in World War One and the futility of trench warfare. In total, 60 nations from across the British Empire and Europe were involved in the fighting across a 25 kilometre front. When the offensive finally came to a halt on 18 November

1916, the Battle of the Somme had claimed a over a million casualties; the British had lost 420,000, the French nearly 200,000 men and the Germans 500,000.

The Allied High Command decided to attack the Germans from the North of Verdun to try to alleviate the pressure on the French who had suffered severe losses there and to inflict as heavy losses as possible upon the German armies.

The battle began with a weeklong artillery bombardment of the German lines. 1,738,000 shells were fired; aimed to destroy their deep trenches and huge barbed wire entanglements placed in front of the trenches; a 'strategy of attrition' endorsed by Field Marshal Haig. However, the Germans were able to move troops to the relative safety of their deep dugouts and, when the bombardment stopped, knowing

that this would be the signal for an infantry advance, they manned their machine guns and mowed down the advancing British and French Armies.

For many years those who led the British campaign have been criticised for the way the battle was fought. Many of those killed and horrifically wounded would have only recently joined up as part of Lord Kitchener's patriotic Volunteer Army. Kitchener himself was a supporter of the theory of attrition – grind down your enemy and they will have to yield but, after the carnage of the battle many spoke of the "lost generation". People found it difficult to justify the near 88,000 Allied men lost for every one mile gained in the advance.





**More about Earl Haig and the foundation of Douglas Haig Memorial Homes can be found in the commemorative book A Hundred Years of Housing Heroes see page 12 for details**

Field Marshal Douglas Haig, 1st Earl of Bismersyde, KT, GCB, OM, GCVO, KCIE, ADC was the Commander of the British Expeditionary Force from 1915 throughout the course of the First World War. He was Commander at the Battle of the Somme, the Third Battle of Ypres and the Hundred Days Offensive which led to the Armistice in 1918. Immediately after WWI, he was revered as an exemplary military leader but within 20 years his leadership skills were derided and he had become a figure of hate. People felt the high casualties suffered under his strategy of attrition showed that Haig had little regard for his soldiers' lives and earned him names like 'The Butcher of the Somme'. Whether we judge him on the standards and expected behaviour of Generals at the time, or on those of a perhaps more informed and caring twenty-first century, make little difference to the tireless work

he did after the war to alleviate the problems facing thousands of disabled ex-Servicemen. He set up the British Legion and the Haig Fund and travelled widely to promote ex-Servicemen's interests. He had visited the Poppy Factory on the day he died. This dedication was recognised and, on his death in 1928, Douglas Haig Memorial Homes was set up in his memory. It was thought that the provision of housing would be a fitting memorial 'to perpetuate his memory and continue his work'.

With the amalgamation of the Douglas Haig Memorial Homes with the Housing Association for Officers' Families (est. 1916) and their subsequent merge to become Haig Housing Trust, this organisation, which carries his name, has been helping ex-Service Veterans for 100 years.

A report from the Front Line by machine gunner George Coppard, described the horrors he experienced on the first day, "The next morning we surveyed the dreadful scene in front of us.....it became clear that the Germans always had a commanding view of No Man's Land. (The British) attack had been brutally repulsed. Hundreds of dead were strung out like wreckage washed up to a high water-mark. Quite as many died on the enemy wire as on the ground, like fish caught in the net. They hung there in grotesque postures. Some looked as if they were praying; they had died on their knees and the wire had prevented their fall. Machine gun fire had done its terrible work."



# Out of Office Hours Emergencies

Don't forget that when Head Office is closed at weekends and on Bank Holidays (next two are 2nd and 30th May), the emergency repair lines will still operate with our Out-of-Hours Service on **020 8685 5797**.

Did you try the **Sudoku With A Difference** in the last newsletter? Using the names of some of Haig Housing's smaller estates, could you complete the grid? The easiest way to do it was to turn the estate names back into numbers. The answers are in red in the chart below.

The following names had to appear once in each 3x3 box:

**Belfast**      **Dartford**      **Penzance**  
**Carlisle**      **Glasgow**      **Romford**  
**Chalfont**      **Grimsby**

Chalfont	Hull	Penzance	Dartford	Carlisle	Glasgow	Grimsby		Belfast
Grimsby	Dartford	Carlisle	Belfast	Chalfont	Romford	Glasgow	Hull	Penzance
Romford	Belfast	Glasgow	Penzance	Grimsby	Hull	Dartford	Carlisle	Chalfont
Hull	Chalfont	Belfast	Romford	Penzance	Grimsby	Carlisle	Dartford	Glasgow
Carlisle	Glasgow	Grimsby	Hull	Dartford	Chalfont	Belfast	Penzance	Romford
Penzance		Dartford	Carlisle	Glasgow	Belfast	Chalfont	Grimsby	Hull
Belfast	Carlisle	Hull	Chalfont	Romford	Dartford	Penzance	Glasgow	Grimsby
Glasgow	Penzance	Romford	Grimsby	Belfast	Carlisle	Hull	Chalfont	Dartford
Dartford	Grimsby	Chalfont	Glasgow	Hull	Penzance	Romford	Belfast	Carlisle

## 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 16/09/16**

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