

Haig News

SUMMER 2018

HAIG HOUSING'S NEWSLETTER

MENIN GATE

Ypres, Belgium

**THE
LONG
WALK
HOME**

Haig's exciting event commemorating the centenary of the ending of the First World War, and details of how you can join in, or volunteer to help us.

See Page 6

PARRY COURT

Parry Court was officially opened on Thursday 14th December 2017.

See Pages 2 - 3

Introduction

It is already high Summer 2018 and it has been too long a gap since we published our last newsletter. However, I hope you find this current newsletter informative and interesting as it certainly has been a very interesting time for Haig.

Last December we were able to invite the Chief of Defence Personnel, Lieutenant General Richard Nugee to our estate in Morden to open Parry Court. This is a development of 8 single bedroom homes designed to assist Service Leavers with low cost accommodation as they make their transition out of the military to roles and jobs in the London area. The homes were filled immediately and with all the new tenants in employment it is certainly meeting the target we set.

In Morden the largest build and growth we have done for some considerable time is taking shape. We recently received the great news that we have permission to call the main part of this development Queen Elizabeth Terrace and the remaining homes and blocks after notable gal-

lantry award winners. By this time next year all will be completed giving opportunity for transfer to more suitable homes for our current tenants and also new homes to meet the growing demand Haig faces.

We have opened 15 new build houses in Hamilton to meet the demand there and extend our footprint in the central belt of Scotland. At the same time we have completed buying properties in Aldershot and Colchester that will be used as a pathway project working with other military charities to move veterans out of hostel accommodation, through supported housing before finally moving to a Haig provided home. This is a very new initiative but one that meets the growing need for military charities to work more closely with each other and also tackle veteran homelessness.

I have been very pleased to have conducted roadshows at various Haig estates; nothing beats getting to see our beneficiaries in their own homes. We have found this method of communicating much more effec-



tive than holding an annual Tenants Conference which unfortunately didn't get to reach all the parts we seek. Having now visited Portsmouth, Cardiff, Cheltenham, Levensden, Belfast, Gloucester, Worcester and Haslemere we need to turn our attention to more of these visits.

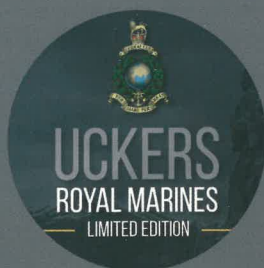
James Richardson
Chief Executive
July 2018

Competition!

We have 3 prizes to give away with this edition, partly by way of apology for this edition being so late!

All you have to do is write down your name and the first line of your address, state which prize you would like (UCKERS, COIN or PEN) and send this to:

**Newsletter Competition,
Communications & Fundraising,
Haig Housing, Alban Dobson House,
Green Lane, Morden SM4 5NS**
to arrive by 29th August.



The first is a board game called **Uckers!** If you've never heard of it before then go and have a word with a Navy or Royal Marine Veteran! It's a bit like Ludo – but after having had too much to drink. This is the limited edition Royal Marines edition.



The second recognises the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force and is a Brilliant **Uncirculated Centenary £2 coin** from The Royal Mint.



Finally, we have a **beautiful hand-made biro** with a chrome and copper bullet 'knib', chrome bolt-action mechanism and polished driftwood body.

Chief Executive James Richardson will draw the 3 winning entries on 30th August and one of these fabulous prizes may then be on its way to you!



More about Parry Court

The homes at Parry Court are provided on a 2 year tenancy, as a 'stepping stone' while the tenants establish themselves in new careers, with an affordable rent set at less than 60% of the current open market rent.

Parry Court was officially opened on Thursday 14th December 2017 by the Chief of Defence People, Lieutenant General Richard E Nugee CVO CBE, seen in this image handing over the keys of his new home to REME Craftsman Jordan Collings, together with the Chief Executive of Haig Housing, Brigadier James Richardson MBE.

The new properties were constructed on the site of a redundant warden's cottage and a disused estate café, using funding from the Ministry of Defence's Veterans Accommodation Fund.

The development was named after the late John Parry, Chairman of Haig Trustees from 2001 to 2005 and previously a Trustee since 1992. Haig was delighted to welcome his widow, Mrs Mary Parry, to the opening ceremony.



There have been more than a few changes and new faces in Haig since the last Newsletter was sent. Some newcomers are shown here, and others will be featured in the Winter Newsletter.



Joanna Long has joined our Property Services team as Repairs and Contract Officer. She has previously worked for Peabody Housing Association and brings a wealth of experience in customer service.



Shirley Skinner is the new PA for the Chief Executive, James Richardson, and the Corporate Director, Pat Horgan. Shirley has an amazing family connection with the Trust as her great-grandfather was on Field Marshal Douglas Haig's staff during the Great War.



Kellie Spargo has been recruited as Events & Communications Co-ordinator, working with our Communications & Fundraising Manager, **Patrick Lyster-Todd**. Both come with a wealth of experience in their respective fields and other areas that will benefit the Trust.



Our New Surveying Team

You may well see these faces as they travel round the country looking after the Haig properties.



James Flight is our Senior Surveyor, managing and monitoring all major work and planned programmes to our widely dispersed stock, and surveying our properties in the southern part of the country.



Surveyor **Deanne Robson** has many years' experience of property maintenance and is based in the north of England from where she can more easily visit our northern estates.



Nick Fellows is our Voids Surveyor and travels all over the country managing and co-ordinating the works required to ensure that properties aren't empty any longer than necessary between tenants.

WE ARE SORRY TO ANNOUNCE

Brian Lewis, who some of you may remember from the 13 years he worked with the Trust as an Estate Surveyor, passed away peacefully in March 2018. Brian, who was in his eighties, was a cheerful, larger than life character who was much loved by all those he came into contact with. Condolences have been passed to his family.

Rent Payment

A MESSAGE FROM JAMES RICHARDSON

The last rent rises applied in April 2018 were different to those previously applied. As a Private Landlord, Haig no longer follows the direction of the Homes and Communities Agency in their rent setting. Added to this, Trustees asked for us to complete work to ensure that rents were set at the appropriate level for our beneficiaries. As a result, some rents rose significantly in our high housing cost areas while in other areas, where the cost of housing is much lower, the rise was small or frozen. This work is continuing with the assistance of an external consultancy with the Board of Trustees seeking to make a decision before the next rent rises are applied in April 2019.

If you are concerned about the rent rises or will struggle to pay your rent if it has risen considerably you should contact the Income Team on 020 8685 5777 so they can offer advice.

The Income Team have some tips that may be useful to you:

Rent Increases and Tenancy Agreements should be kept in a safe place. They are legal documents and you will need to supply them if you ever make a claim for Universal Credit Housing Element or Local Housing Allowance through your local Council.

If you are claiming Universal Credit Housing Element or Local Housing Allowance, please make them aware that Haig is classified as a private landlord.

Please make sure we have your current contact details. If not, please call the office on 020 8685 5777 so that we can update our systems.

Did you know that if your account has been

in credit for a minimum of six months and you have been a tenant for more than a year, you might be entitled to a Decoration Allowance? Please contact the Finance Department to request this.

If you are absent from your home for more than 30 days you need to let us know, and if you claim benefits you should make them aware as this could affect your entitlement.



CHRISTMAS CARDS

Almost too soon to be thinking about it especially in the current warm weather, but we are looking for an image we can use for the Haig Christmas Card 2018. If you have a photo (or artwork) of a suitable wintry or festive scene featuring your estate, please email it to communications@haighousing.org.uk by the end of November at the latest.



It would be great if our Christmas card, a version of which will be available for purchase by staff and beneficiaries for personal use, could feature a different Haig estate every year. A £25 shopping voucher of your choice will be awarded for the winning image, which will also be featured in the Winter 2018 Newsletter.



The Long Walk Home is Haig Housing's national event commemorating the centenary of the ending of the First World War. It consists of a pilgrimage by foot of 100 Veterans from across the United Kingdom who will walk the 100 miles from the Menin Gate in Ypres to the Cenotaph in Whitehall, timed to arrive for the National Service of Remembrance on Sunday 11th November 2018. Planned as a mark of respect to those who died in the Great War, it will also raise funds for the charity.

It is also an important milestone for Haig Housing which has been in existence since 1916 and which gained its subsequent name soon after the Great War as a memorial to Earl Haig, the British Commander for much of the war.

Do you want a challenge and to take part in a once in a lifetime event? Can you still walk 100 miles?

The Trust is really keen to recruit Walkers from across its estates.

Each Walker will be taken by coach on Tuesday 6 November to Ypres in Belgium - scene of three major battles and Headquarters of the British salient in the First World War - where they will begin their journey home. Over the next four days they will walk a hundred miles in stages, firstly from Ypres to the Belgian coast and after being transported to Dover, across Kent to London for the subsequent 3 days. On the Saturday night before Remembrance Sunday the Walkers will stay in a central London hotel before marching to the Cenotaph the following morning.

The Trust will look after all accommodation and meals during the event with the people of Kent being asked to host Walkers in pairs overnight. Along the way we hope that the public, politicians

THE LONG WALK HOME

and celebrities will join in too to raise awareness of this momentous centenary and to raise funds for the charity.

If you are interested in becoming a Walker then please visit the Haig Housing Website here: www.haighousing.org.uk/donation-fundraising/the-long-walk-home where you will find more information and how to apply. Please ask yourself, though, if you will be sufficiently fit to complete the distance, possibly in adverse weather conditions.

We realise that some applicants may need to travel some distance to and from the starting point in London and the Trust will be looking to cover the cost of this (and overnight accommodation if necessary).

We are asking each Walker to fundraise towards a target but will provide as much help as we can with this. Ultimately it's the taking part in this act of commemoration that matters most.

We also need volunteers!

Several teams of volunteers with specific skills and experience are also being recruited and you may be interested in one of these positions: details can also be found on the website.

Finally, if you know of anyone who might be able to host a pair of Walkers over-

night in Kent then do please direct them to our website!

This is your chance to become involved and take part in a real adventure and something momentous. Please also let any friends know who are Veterans but may not be Haig tenants.



RBLI Centenary Bike Ride



United Living and Haig Housing took part in the Royal British Legion Industries Centenary Bike Ride from Aylesford to Ypres, which took place on the 8th-10th June 2018.

United Living is the contractor currently building the new properties on the Morden estate and they were represented by their Commercial Director, Dave Saunders, Pre-Construction Manager, Richard Borg, and Senior Estimator, Roy Saunders. Haig was represented by Andy Duffy, Housing Manager, and Phillip Johnson, Operations Manager, who are on the left in the photo above.

The ride took place over two days, with the participants commencing from the RBLI HQ in Aylesford, Kent to Dover, where they boarded a ferry before cycling a short distance to their hotel in Calais. The second day was a similar 75 mile ride to the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium, arriving in time for the Last Post Ceremony, during which members of the RBLI laid wreaths. Currently the United Living/Haig Housing team have raised in excess of £5,000 for the RBLI.



MICHAEL MARVEN'S HIMALAYAN PEAK CLIMB



I love a challenge and, having obviously got out of bed the wrong side on New Year's Day 2018, decided to climb a 6,000m (that's 19,685 feet to those who still do £sd) Himalayan peak, called Island Peak, as this year's challenge. As you can see from the photo on the right, we had some illustrious fellow travellers on the way there, as Ben Fogle and Victoria Pendleton were on our flight to Lukla. They were attempting to climb Mount Everest in aid of the British Red Cross and were being filmed by the BBC. Also present was Kenton Cool, 12 times Everest Summiteer, and probably Britain's greatest climber. He is a personal hero of mine, so I felt very lucky indeed to meet him.

Unfortunately myself, Graham my climbing partner, the guide and porter were unable to summit, reaching an altitude of 5700m, 400m short. This was due to our two summit days being reduced to one because of poor weather, so we only had one shot at the top. We went to high camp sooner than we had wanted to and after leaving the tent at 01.00hrs we all became ill with altitude sickness and had to retreat back down the mountain to alleviate the symptoms. The porter had to be medically evacuated due to his worsening condition, but was thankfully ok in the end. And I raised over £500 for Haig.

Team Haig

Chris Young is a Haig Housing tenant and one of our new local Fundraising team, "Team Haig". If you, too, would like to find out more about becoming a local fundraiser for Haig then email us at communications@haighousing.org.uk



Back in 2009, having arrived back in the UK with only a few personal possessions, my wife and I were very fortunate in being allocated a Haig dwelling relatively quickly. In short, a small business I had established had fallen victim to the recession of 2008/9 and, coupled with some other factors, we found it impossible to stay on in Germany where we had enjoyed life since my local discharge in 1992 after 20 years in the Army.

Life was very hard at first but with some help, including that of family and old Army friends, we soon established a new life and after some months I was fortunate in finding work nearby not easy at the age of 58. In time we found ourselves once again able to relax and enjoy life as before. It was then that we decided to do what we could to repay Haig for what they had done for us. The Trust doesn't expect that – their primary aim is to meet their charitable objects in providing housing for Veterans.

Over the ensuing years we have undertaken to raise annually what we could, in order that we could ourselves contribute to others being helped by the Trust, especially via the Coming Home fundraising appeal. Suffice to say that the funds raised so far go into the thousands. Amongst the activities we have undertaken are:

- 2x Charity Dances at a local Sports & Social Club
- 2x Raffles for donated prizes at the above dances
- Attendance at various Car Boot Fairs selling items donated within the local neighbourhood, marketing this with a 'flyer' mailshot
- Setting up a stall at various events such as Armed Forces Day
- A direct appeal to approximately 129 organisations that traditionally support the military (including Veterans) which raised a healthy four-figure sum

We have plans for more appeals each year, each time directed at differing types of organisations, all with links to the areas in which Haig has estates. The pleasure that can be derived from such activities is immense, not to mention the pleasant contact made with total strangers who are, in the main, most happy to help with our endeavours. Of course, we do sometimes get "no" for an answer, but if you don't ask then you don't get.

We are convinced that there are many other Haig tenants out there who might wish to do their bit to help the Trust in their ongoing work in housing experience to start off, just follow a few guidelines, and you'll find your confidence growing quickly to the point where you will want to get more adventurous. If you feel you would like to give it a try please do not hesitate in contacting the team at Haig (contact details above) who will be more than pleased to help you get started and, should you wish, put you in touch with me if you have any questions or feel I can help in any way.

Chris Young
July 2018

Thanks to Chris for this article. Here are some other ways you can help, by using these schemes that Haig is registered with:



Haig Housing Shop

We are currently running down stock of items branded with our Coming Home logo (which will soon be replaced by Haig Housing ones) and have some amazing bargains. All items can be ordered through our website (www.haighousing.org.uk/donation-fundraising/shop) with instant payment by PayPal.

Postage and packing costs are as indicated for each individual item/box. For multiple orders please email us at communications@haighousing.org.uk or telephone 020 8685 5786 and we can advise the appropriate postage and packing cost.



INSPIRATION

Orange, Sandalwood
and Clove



PEACE

Jasmine, Patchouli,
Bergamot and Lemon



FREEDOM

Frangipani, Rose, Freesia
and Lily

Candles in glass made in England using pure soy sustainable wax, to burn cleanly, slowly and evenly with a natural fragrance. Made by one of the UK's leading bespoke candle makers, you will not find anything nearly as good at these prices.

Individually boxed and with an approximate 40 hour burn time – all at £7 each, plus p&p £3.50

Triple box (one of each fragrance, approx. burn time 10 hours) – £12 per box, plus p&p £3.50



Wristband (adult or child)
£1 including p&p



Mug blue ceramic
£3 plus £3.50 p&p



5" Teddy Bear with Coming Home t-shirt £3 plus £3.50 p&p



Umbrella – Small £5, Large
£12 plus £3.50 p&p



T-shirt in white (S, M, L or XL)
£5 plus £1 p&p



Running Vest in blue (S, M, L
or XL) £3 plus £1 p&p



Travel Mug stainless steel
thermos £3 plus £3.50 p&p



Queen & Country Limited Edition

£25.00 plus

We are honoured to have Rankin photograph our beneficiaries and supporters for a beautiful limited edition book of those who served their Queen and Country



100 Years of Housing Heroes

£5

From the early days of the Great War through to the present day, this fabulous book spotlights the people, anecdotes and history of Haig Housing Trust

Remembrance November 2017

MORDEN

On a bitterly chilly day – notwithstanding valiant attempts by the sun – and with glimpses of a bright blue sky, the Trust's annual Service of Remembrance was held in the Memorial Garden at the Morden estate on Sunday 12th November.

Following the local Service at St Lawrence's Church, the Service commenced at midday, with the Reverend David Heath-Whyte ably at the helm and David Hobson from the Royal British Legion (Morden Branch) as Parade Marshall and Chris Parfitt (a local beneficiary) as Haig's Standard Bearer. Wreaths were laid on behalf of BLESMA The Limbless Veterans, South London Nepalese (Ghurkha) Association and the Rotary Club (Morden Branch) while Pat Horgan (Corporate Director) and Councillor Kelly Braund laid wreaths on behalf of, respectively, Haig Housing and the London Borough of Merton.



After the Service everyone retired promptly to the warmth of the Lawrence Weaver Institute, appropriately set up with tables covered in loose poppy petals. A fine selection of Nepalese food supplemented by sandwiches, small cakes and fruit and hot beverages provided much needed sustenance while Haig's diverse local community came together to remember those who gave their lives in service of our

country and to celebrate the life and freedoms that we all enjoy today in consequence. It was a very special and memorable day.

Thanks go to Haig's growing Gurkha family, the small army of helpers from the staff team and to local beneficiary Howard Varney who provided a magnificent display of military memorabilia and uniforms.

Kellie Spargo

NORFOLK



Regimental Standard Bearers and Flag Party in front of the Norfolk estate War Memorial.

The tradition of the Armistice Day service, whichever day of the week this falls upon, was maintained at the War Memorial Cottages in Norwich on Saturday 11th November and went very well on a clear, bright if some-

what chilly day with the gardens in good order and tidied specially for the occasion.

Some 70 people attended including Brigadier Marriner CBE QCVS, Chairman of The Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Regiment Association who laid a wreath on

behalf of the Association, accompanied by ex-members of the Royal Norfolk Regiment and the Royal Anglian Regiment, a local cadet detachment who also laid their own wreath, representatives of the Coldstream Guards

Association (Norwich Branch) who likewise laid a wreath – plus myself, laying a wreath on behalf of Haig Housing. Also present were a number of the residents from both the War Memorial Cottages and Bungalows, as well as relatives of past residents. Of particular note was the attendance of Mrs Lincoln, who lived in 2 War Memorial Cottages from 1969 to 1982 and then 14 War Memorial Bungalows which she left in late 2012 for sheltered housing - a total of 43 years. 104 years old in January, she was very happy to be able to attend (with thanks to Mr & Mrs Pitts from the Memorial Bungalows who have remained in close contact and provided transport).

Ian Lonsdale

Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

30th May 2017



On the 30th May 2017 my wife Karin and I were fortunate enough to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in the presence of HRH Prince Harry KGVO. We had been given this privilege by the Not Forgotten Association, nominated by Haig Housing being tenants of the same.

We duly arrived at the Palace by car and, being early, waited outside the gates of the Palace. Whilst waiting we spoke to Mr Blaine who was an elderly veteran from the Royal Artillery age 92 who was a POW in Malaya, imprisoned by the Japanese. He was being presented to Prince Harry and

was very proud as were his family, who were with him.

The time came for us to go in and Karin and I were taken to the garden of the Palace. Many Veterans were there and the atmosphere was convivial with everyone dressed very smartly. We settled down and had some traditional refreshments at around 2.15 pm. All the while, the band of the Corps of Royal Engineers was playing beautiful music.

Then at around 3pm, Prince Harry arrived, looking very smart in a blue suit, white shirt and regimental tie, sporting a full beard. He seemed

extremely polite and amiable and we were fortunate enough to take some decent shots of him.

During the time we also met some famous people such as Aled Jones, Pam St Clement from Eastenders, Richard Arnold from GMTV and Tony Blackburn, to name but a few. We both had a marvellous time and the weather kept dry. We managed to take some good photographs of the day and are extremely grateful to the Not Forgotten Association and Haig Housing who allowed us to attend such a prestigious and joyful occasion.

David and Karin Grant

Portsmouth Roadshow Daisy and Les Harris

– 9th August 2017



On 9th August 2017 our CE James Richardson conducted what was a very successful roadshow with many of our beneficiaries in Portsmouth. While there he met a couple who were about to celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary.

Daisy and Les Harris moved into their home in Fitzpatrick Court when it was just built in 1950, and brought up three children there. They now have 9 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. We noted that they have had one new kitchen in those 67 years, it is still in good order and they definitely don't want a new one but we are going to change their front door for them. Mr Harris was in Bomber command in the war and was also a Blind Approach Trainer, talking planes down when the weather was so bad the pilot couldn't see.



TENANT MEMORIES

by Irene Knowles

**WE ARE DELIGHTED BE ABLE TO SHARE THIS ACCOUNT OF
LIFE WITH HAIG FROM MRS IRENE KNOWLES, WHO HAS LIVED
IN NORWICH FOR 68 YEARS**

My husband and I were looking forward to having our own house because we were living with my parents. We had a child and were expecting another. It was a bit of a full house at times.

My husband was in the Royal Norfolk and at 20 years old he unfortunately lost the lower half of both legs. However, this did not stop him doing anything everyone else did. He did lots of walking, rode a bike and climbed ladders when he wasn't supposed to. Nothing stopped him. At last we were offered a house on Douglas Haig Road. We couldn't wait to move in.

I was 22 years old and my husband was 25 when we moved into our first house at Douglas Haig Road. I had my one

year old daughter and I was expecting my son, Stephen. We thought it was lovely having our own house at last and we could just manage the 9/- rent it cost each week.

We didn't have much furniture and we didn't even have a radio but we were happy. All we had in the kitchen was a gas cooker and a copper in which to boil the clothes. We soon found out when winter came around how cold the house was. We had no carpets and the windows were metal framed. When it was really cold and snowing, the windows used to ice up with snowflake patterns.

I remember one Sunday morning when my husband was out, I was looking out of the window when I saw some

teenage boys in the garden walking all over the vegetable patch looking for chestnuts. I went out and told them to clear off but they just laughed, so I went indoors to get my copper stick. I then went back outside and told them to clear off again. I held the copper stick in the air and one of the boys shouted, "She's got a copper stick!" I shouted, "Yes and I bloody well know how to use it." With that they turned and jumped back over the fence into the woods.

Another time when we were short of money and couldn't afford much, I used to spend my evenings knitting fairisle gloves to sell at 5/- a pair and also tank tops. My husband decided to get some chickens so we could at least have plenty of eggs. He also got a few cockerels that he planned to fatten up

and sell at Christmas. He had to build a wire pen at the bottom of the garden. He thought he had built it high enough but one day while I was looking out of the window I noticed the cockerels were wandering just inside the woods. They got through a gate which my husband had made in the fence. I couldn't catch them all so I asked a friend at No. 22 if he could help. Well, he came over and managed to get them all back in the pen. What my husband didn't realise was that to stop them flying off you had to clip one wing.



When Christmas got near we had to prepare the cockerels for sale. They were fattened up nicely and were ready for our friend to come round, kill and pluck them. One year he was in the shed sitting on a chair with a tin bath in front of him to catch the feathers. He had a shelf behind him with hooks so he could hang them when he'd done. He was about to hang the last one when the shelf partly collapsed. The cockerel flew off the hook, landed in the feathers, which in turn flew into the air and completely covered him. He looked such a sorry sight. It was the last time he did that job for us.

In the summertime we had a man with a horse and cart who came round

selling fruit and vegetables. He always came into the close where he stopped to give his horse a drink. Well my husband was always watching out of the window to keep an eye on the horse because 9 times out of 10 the horse used to leave behind a nice pile of manure. When that happened my husband was out there like lightening with a bucket and shovel. He wanted all that manure for his roses. He has the best roses on the street.

I remember when it was Guy Fawkes night, our friendly neighbour who lived across the road used to collect wood and anything else that burned, to build a bonfire for the children. He used to pile it up in the middle of the close and

"We didn't have much furniture and we didn't even have a radio but we were happy. All we had in the kitchen was a gas cooker and a copper in which to boil the clothes."

all the children who lived on Douglas Haig Road used to bring their sparklers and fireworks and gather around the fire. He always made sure they were a safe distance away and he never had any trouble. Of course there were no cars in the road because back then people didn't own a car.

We did all our own decorating in those days even though we didn't get a



decorating allowance then. We couldn't afford to pay anyone to do it so my husband did it all. He even painted the ceiling at the top of the stairs. He used to use two ladders and a wide piece of wood between them to stand on even though he had two artificial legs. There wasn't much he couldn't do inside or outside the house. The house looks a lot different from when we moved in, we now have double glazed windows instead of metal ones and we also have a front porch, where all we had before all we had was a red brick step in front of the door, which I used to polish with red cardinal polish. The window sills were also polished with red cardinal as was the fireplace. Now that is all gone, housework is a lot easier.

These are a few of my memories while living here for 68 years. There must be many more events but at 90 years old I have a job to remember.



If you would like to share your memories please send us your story, with photos if possible, and we will do our best to include it in a future issue.

The Patrons Lunch



On Sunday June 12th 2016, The Mall in St James's Park was transformed for its largest ever street party to celebrate The Queen's patronage of over 600 charities and organisations on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

Her Majesty The Queen was joined by the Duke of Edinburgh and other members of the Royal Family to celebrate the occasion. Their Royal Highnesses, The Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry were Joint Presidents of The Patron's Lunch; honouring the dedication shown by Her Majesty to so many charities and organisations.

Some staff and tenants of Haig were lucky to attend, and Housing Manager Lisa Waterman recalls: "Despite the dismal weather there was a wonderful atmosphere of celebration and camaraderie; it was an event for all, from top hat and tails and cocktail dresses, to socks and sandals.

The sun came out eventually just in time for the parade – everything was soggy by then, but it didn't matter. The Royal family looked so happy as they enjoyed their walkabouts, smiling and shaking hands, and The Queen was beaming as she was driven past. It was a very special occasion, filled with fun and laughter."

Headley Court Cenotaph Remembrance Parade 2018



The Headley Court Charity was established in 1940 and in 1947 acquired the estate at Headley Court in Surrey for the purpose of providing a facility for the medical rehabilitation of pilots and aircrew of the RAF, since expanded to all members of the Armed Forces.

This year the clinical facility will move to a new purpose built facility at Stanford Hall in the East Midlands and will vacate Headley Court.

In recognition of the significant role that Headley Court has played in the lives of so many Servicemen and women over almost 70 years, the Royal British Legion has agreed that a Headley Court Charity contingent of 70 veterans drawn from former patients and staff should form part of the Remembrance Parade for 2018.

This is a once only occasion, and former patients and members of staff who are veterans are invited to register their interest by writing to:

Toby Elliott, 38 Opulus Way, Monmouth NP25 5UW

Please send a self addressed envelope and also indicate whether you are a former patient or former member of staff, the year that you were at Headley Court and, if a staff member, the appointment held.

Applications to be received by 13th September 2018 at the latest.

Security is tight and entrance to St James will only be permitted on surrender of an appropriate ticket. Tickets for carers can be provided.



LIVING AS NEIGHBOURS

and avoiding disputes

We at Haig recognise that, as tenants of the charity, it is not possible to choose your neighbours. One day they will just arrive, to live next door or in the flat above or below you. Perhaps they already lived there when you moved in and you will probably have little or no idea who they are, what they are like or what living in close proximity will mean to you. One thing we do know is that they are likely to be a daily presence in your life. They are physically close, so you may be able to hear them through the walls or floor, or across the boundary fence, if you live in a Haig house. They can probably hear you too and this close proximity and how you both live can sometimes lead to irritation, particularly if you have different daily routines or do not have similar interests.

So, neighbours can make a big difference to your lives and being considerate to them and receiving consideration in return is more likely to result in minimising irritations that can lead to disputes. That being said, we all know that sometimes things go wrong and our advice is that it is easier to bring it up and deal with if you are on speaking terms, so keep in touch with your neighbour if you can, particularly if they are elderly or live alone.

TIPS TO KEEP IN TOUCH: A friendly greeting when you meet; chat about the weather, gardens, children, pets or local issues; inform them of events such as a party, or visitors; offer to give a helping hand if they need it.

CAUSES OF FRICTION: We all have different tolerances. Some people like peace and quiet generally, whilst others need to sleep early because of work patterns. Some people can't stand particular smells, such as cooking or smoking.

We ask that as a Haig tenant, you try to be aware of the impact that your activities, or those of your family and friends or pets have on your neighbours and to show some consideration if they have particular needs. If you have pets or children, be aware that their behaviour, often when you may not be there, can cause friction. If you are a night owl, or a DIYer, or maybe just because you are up late, try not to overdo the noise level by running up stairs or banging doors, carrying out repairs or cleaning, playing music or the TV, clomping around on wooden floors or running the washing machine late into the evening.

Cooking and rubbish smells cannot always be controlled, but please be aware that if you have your windows

open or if you leave rubbish outside it may cause irritation, and if you share a common entrance, remember that obstacles in lobbies or balconies can cause difficulties for elderly or disabled people.

Finally, if you are having problems with your neighbours, remember that the Trust is your landlord and we are here to help if possible, but we are not the Police or the Local Authority and we are not always able to become involved or to guarantee sorting out matters. We wish neighbours to respect each other and the homes that we provide and we will become involved where appropriate but this is normally limited to those rules that you signed up to when you took up your tenancy. Your Housing Manager will be able to give you more specific information but there is a limit to what we can do.

For a helpful leaflet on how to avoid neighbourhood disputes, please send an email to the following address: enquiries@haighousing.org.uk or call 020 8685 5777.

New Gas Contract

The current gas contract has been in place for the last three years and has largely proven to be a success. Both British Gas and All England Gas have worked hard to fulfil the three star type service the Trust wishes to provide. Haig wishes to continue providing the same level of service to our Residents. Due to the cost of the contract we were required to go to tender and the two companies appointed are TSG Ltd who will cover London and the South East, and Robert Heath who will cover the rest of the country. Belfast, Jersey, Scotland and all electric properties are excluded.

They will start working for the Trust on 6th August 2018 and the contract is for a period of five years. All affected residents will be written to and informed which company will provide the service to their home. We will also be trying a new system of reporting faults by asking residents to contact their respective provider direct. This will be covered in the letter.



Image by Oleksandr Delyk / stock.adobe.com

GDPR

We wrote to you on the 21st May 2018 about the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force on 25th May 2018, explaining that the emphasis of the regulation is to give individuals greater control over their data.

If you did not receive this letter and the enclosed Privacy Policy please let us know so we can resend it to you.

As we stated in our letter, we would like to assure you that confidentiality and the privacy of your data is an important part of our work as a charity. We would never knowingly pass to other parties, without your permission, data that is not directly concerned with the management of your home.

AND IF THAT HAS ALL GOT FAR TOO SERIOUS, TRY THIS!

A man is flying in a hot air balloon and realises he is lost. He reduces height and spots a man down below. He lowers the balloon further and shouts "Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?"

The man below says "Yes, you're in a hot air balloon, hovering 30ft above this field"

"You must be an NCO", says the balloonist. "I am" replies the man. "How did you know?"

"Well" says the balloonist, "everything you have told me is technically correct, but it's no use to anyone".

The man below says "you must be an Officer"

"I am" replies the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well", says the man, "you don't know where you are, or where you're going, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were before we met, but now it's my fault."

One Hundred and counting!



All best wishes to our sisters and brothers in light blue who this year celebrate their Centennial – one hundred years of the Royal Air Force.

It was formed on 1 April 1918 in the closing stages of the First World War, with headquarters located in the former Hotel Cecil (a grand Victorian hotel on the Strand, London now replaced by the Shell Mex building) by the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). It is the oldest independent air force in the world. Since its

formation, it has played a most significant role in our military history, especially during the Second World War where it is best known for its most famous campaign, the Battle of Britain.

Sometimes the butt of inter-Service joshing and rivalry, especially as the 'junior' of the three Services, we should never forget the incredible sacrifice made by members of the RAF. The Royal Air Force is often best known for Churchill's words at the end of the 'Battle of Britain' – "The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed

throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the World War by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few".

However, for some, it is also known for the sacrifices of Bomber Command where, aged mainly between 19 and 25, 57,205 were killed, 8,403 were wounded in

action and 9,838 became prisoners of war out of a total of 125,000 aircrew. That's a total of 75,446 airmen (60 percent of operational airmen) killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

Somewhere, in Lincolnshire, in a small parish graveyard, lies a memorial to a solitary Lancaster crew. Its inscription reads: "Went the war well? We died and never knew. But ill or well, we died for you."



VETERANS' GATEWAY

The first point of contact for veterans seeking support

The Veterans Gateway Programme

The Ministry of Defence has set up with the support of the Covenant Fund, The Royal British Legion and other charities (including Haig Housing) a one-stop service to better support the UK's Armed Forces veterans community. The £2 million Veterans Gateway programme is intended to help Veterans find and access advice and support on a broad range of issues, including healthcare and housing.

The new service provides a 24/7 phone number, with an empathetic and professional voice at the end of the line, a dedicated website and a mobile app to make it easier for former service personnel to access support on a range of issues including housing, employability and health. It gives Veterans, regardless of age or location, a simple point of contact to turn to for advice and help in accessing an array of public, private and charitable services which are out there.

For support from the Veterans Gateway either:

1. Visit online at www.veteransgateway.org.uk where you can find out more, chat online or email
2. Telephone 0808 802 1212 – all calls are free whether from a mobile or a landline
3. Text 81212 where you can leave your contact details and ask for a call back

All calls and communication are totally confidential.

BATTLEFIELD CHALLENGE 2017

A PILGRIMAGE TO PASSCHENDAELE

by Alan Spencer

This year's challenge would be much different to ones I have attempted before and I wasn't sure if it was achievable in such a short time frame - nor whether it might not put too much strain on me physically as well as mentally.

Our Pilgrimage to Passchendaele would entail hand cycling (on my part) & cycling (on the part of my 3 colleagues: my son Harry Spencer plus friends Mark Auckland and Dave Stonnell) to the 1917 battlefield area, stopping briefly to show our respect along the way by laying a wreath at the four major memorials at Cambrai, Arras, Messines Ridge and Passchendaele. This we were to undertake on behalf of Haig Housing and to raise money for their fundraising campaign, Coming Home,

We started our challenge at Cambrai, cycling from there to the Louverval memorial that commemorates 7,048 men with no known grave, where we laid our first wreath. We then carried on towards the higher ground where the Hindenburg Line ran through Bullecourt, Croisilles & Summit Trench cemetery down towards Arras. On arriving in Arras on a very warm Friday afternoon we were surprised to find that the roads around the Arras Memorial were closed to traffic on account of a rock festival, so instead we pushed on to two of the largest

cemeteries in that area: the German cemetery at Neuville St-Vaast & the huge French and smaller British cemeteries at La Targette. Here we laid our second wreath and, as the



evening swept in, decided to have a last ditch effort to get to Vimy on this first day, thus completing our first target of 43 miles, before heading for our accommodation at the Peace Village at Messines Ridge.

On a very wet and overcast Saturday morning we got our early start, on what was going to be a very long and demanding day. Keeping strictly to our schedule would be vital and, after returning to La Chaudiere cemetery in Vimy, we set off in the direction of Loos and Hill 70, passing La Basse, Auber's Ridge & Armentieres. With driving rain and a brisk wind this posed a considerable challenge but within a few hours the rain

eased and the wind calmed. It then just proved a case of keeping to the sensible pace set by Mark and Harry. With our fitter members encouraging us to keep going, we stuck to the D947 & D171 roads which follow the trench lines of the major 1915 battles of 1915 Loos and Neuve Chapelle.

The subsequent road to Armentieres provided a welcome opportunity to regain our breath from the hills we had cycled earlier (and the pressured cycling from the day before) but as the day passed we still had little chance of easing up for long as we cleared Armentieres and then turned onto the D933 heading for Pont-de-Nieppe Cemetery. Carrying on from there to Bailleul Communal Cemetery (and once again having to hand cycle towards the high ground of Heuvel) we finally had a welcome breather at Kemmel Chateau Military Cemetery. Almost sensing what we had already achieved that day, the sun finally broke through and, with some common sense, we decided not to carry on to Poperinge as the day had already taken its toll, especially on myself and I knew that I needed to retain something for the final part of the challenge on Sunday. We therefore amended our planned route, visiting instead the Pool of Peace and the Lone Tree Cemetery where huge underground mines had been exploded on the attack on Messines Ridge in 1917. From there it was only short way back to our

overnight sanctuary at the Peace Village, having hand cycled another 48 miles over ten hours.

Casting our eyes at the way the clouds were thickening and darkening on Sunday morning, our final day threatened to be arduous and, probably, very wet. Laying our third wreath at the Messines Ridge Cemetery, we set off, passing the Irish Peace Tower, south to the Ploegsteert Memorial and Strand Cemetery. We then turned north towards Spanbroekmolen and Wijtschate Cemeteries before heading towards Ypres via the Bedford House Cemetery. Entering Ypres, we passed the very tranquil Rampart Lille Cemetery and took a short break taking in Ypres' famous Cloth Hall - reduced to rubble during the War but painstakingly rebuilt between 1933 and 1967 and today housing the 'In Flanders Fields' Museum - iconic when viewed with the pictures of its previous ruins.

Leaving Ypres, we cycled along the canal coming across Essex Farm. Cycling now in pouring rain, we pushed on towards Pilkem and Artillery Wood Cemetery, along the ridge line that overlooks Ypres to the north and where the various cemeteries become ever more poignant through their sheer size, with Cement House & Poelkappelle showing the price of the long Ypres Salient stalemate. With no let up in the weather, we pushed on to Staden where we turned and visited Passchendaele

New Cemetery before entering Passchendaele itself. Here we visited the Memorial to the Canadians who finally took the ridge with such great losses to their Division. With the end



now in sight, we coasted downhill to the Tyne Cot Cemeteries. Taking a welcome breath, albeit to deal with a punctured rear wheel, and with very little energy left, we finally limped into Tyne Cot - the most moving and largest British Cemetery on the entire Western Front.

Our final act was to lay our fourth wreath for Haig Housing and Coming Home at Tyne Cot Cemetery, feeling vastly elevated when the sun finally broke through the clouds. Warming ourselves in the late evening sunshine, we were able to reflect on our Challenge, feeling elated with our achievement - that we had set out to do what we did and

thus show our respect and gratitude to our forebearers who had paid in their hundreds of thousands to gain Passchendaele in this, the War to supposedly end all Wars. And, on this final day, we had completed a further 35 miles, making a total of 126 miles.

I would like to thank the residents and staff of Haig Housing Trust (headquartered in Morden, Surrey) for their very generous donations and kind words of encouragement. Thanks too to our local sponsors, Rapid Ready Mix and OCD Construction & Design plus Createur Promo who produced our very smart polo and cycle shirts. A very special mention also goes to my good friends Dave Stonnell, Mark Auckland and my son Harry Spencer, without whose constant support over the weekend I wouldn't have been able to finish this gruelling challenge. If you feel we showed our respect and gratitude - and were able to honour the sacrifice of our forebearers - then please give (via Haig's Fundraising Team) a small donation towards our Challenge.

Our thanks to Alan for his amazing effort which has raised over £3,000 for Coming Home and for this fascinating article. If you wish to donate please phone 020 8685 5786 or email fundraising@haighousing.org.uk

HOW TO CONTACT HAIG

Our postal address is **Haig Housing, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS.**

Our telephone number is **020 8685 5777**. This number is staffed Monday to Fridays from 9am to 5pm. Outside these times and on Bank Holidays the number will automatically transfer, after a short delay, to our Emergency Maintenance Operator. Please note if you have a **GAS EMERGENCY** you should phone **0800 111 999**.

Our email address is **enquiries@haighousing.org.uk**. You can also contact us on social media Facebook (Haig Housing) but should note that we may not be able to reply outside working hours.



This is your newsletter. Please help us to make it relevant to you.

It may be rather late coming this time but we do want to make it a good and useful read. Please write in with suggestions for items, articles and information to include in future issues. There will be things we have missed from the last 18 months so please let us know of anything that was important to you and we will try to include it in a future issue. If you know of a neighbour who has a special anniversary or celebration coming up then let us know, and try to send us something we can include after the event as well. If you have an article we might consider including, please send it in.

Is English not your first language?

If you need any Haig official information translated or need a translator for any verbal communication with Haig Housing then please contact our Head Office to arrange this.

Do you have a visual impairment?

If you need copies of any Haig information in **LARGE PRINT** or **BRILLE** then please contact our Head Office.

PRODUCTION

Produced by Haig Housing with contributions from beneficiaries, Veterans, staff and supporters. Thank you to everyone who has contributed, and in particular for the support of the Communications Team.

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If you want to comment on this edition or contribute to the next newsletter please contact Ann Clark, Haig News, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden SM4 5NS, telephone 020 8685 5777, email ann.clark@haighousing.org.uk

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